



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2013
Care**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National Qualifications in this subject.

Higher National Units

General comments

This year's visits examined the Professional Development Awards in Health and Social Care Supervision, Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice, Administration of Medication, and Personalisation in Practice. We are pleased to note that the number of centres coming forward for approval to offer these awards is increasing month by month.

It was apparent from the external verification reports that centres are very positive about the new Professional Development Awards. They have developed their training in line with the Units and are making good use of the materials provided by SQA.

The team also looked at HNC Social Care to ascertain the level of demand for the award and to seek the views of the sector on their needs and aspirations for the current revision of the HNC programme. A sample of the mandatory Units was examined to ensure consistency.

This report looks at the PDA awards and the HNC Social Care in part one and the HNC Social Care Graded Unit in part two.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The reports show that centres are managing the awards well and are working in line with the assessment strategies.

PDA's

Centres have commented positively on the assessment exemplar materials provided for the PDA's by SQA.

The provision of the PDA Open Learning packs and exemplar materials have created opportunities for candidates, particularly in relation to distance learning and e-learning, and opportunities for group learning — all of which are very cost-effective methods for employers and support the increase in demand for the awards.

Reports identified:

- ◆ Copies of all the assignments and case studies were made available and were in every portfolio.
- ◆ Candidate work was of a very high standard overall and followed the Unit guidance on sufficiency.
- ◆ The candidate evidence was sufficient in each case, meeting the assessment specification and guidance.

- ◆ Workbooks for each of the Units aids consistency of input across groups and candidates reported that these were very helpful.
- ◆ Centres used the resources recommended in the support notes provided and also developed a workbook of their own with questions.

HNC

Centres are making more use of online materials to support learning and assessment for the HNC.

Online materials designed to support learning and assessment for the HNC is increasing.

The majority of centres use holistic assessment and reports show that these are tracked well to ensure coverage of all Evidence Requirements for each of the Units.

Reports indicated:

- ◆ Candidates were fairly judged against the Evidence Requirements.
- ◆ Marking guidelines, that were available at external verification, highlighted the expected content of assignments.

Evidence Requirements

The reports show that, in the main, centres are able to understand and comply with the Unit Evidence Requirements and have accepted advice and guidance where required.

PDA's

Reports indicated:

- ◆ There was clear and sufficient evidence. A word count was provided for all the assignments.
- ◆ Double-marking of all scripts ensured standardisation. Team meetings were also held to discuss marking as well as course delivery.
- ◆ Minutes of standardisation meetings were available to see.
- ◆ There was evidence of assessment decisions being discussed and action points being made.

HNC

Reports indicated:

- ◆ The whole marking and verification process was reported on one set of forms per assignment. This made it very easy to track across different markers and Verifiers.

- ◆ The assessment instruments were all valid reliable and fair.
- ◆ Copies of the assessment instruments used were also attached to the work of the candidates.

Administration of assessments

The majority of centres are now working with the online administrative arrangements and reports indicate that they are very happy with the new system.

PDA's

Reports indicated:

- ◆ Very detailed records were available.
- ◆ Clear evidence of sound judgement and any additional evidence required.
- ◆ Level of double-marking was high, staff were clear that this was their first real cohort. In future they will sample the work rather than 100% verification and 100% double marking.
- ◆ Comments given were appropriate and helpful.
- ◆ Changes have been made to teaching and also to the information provided by assessors on how they made their judgements.
- ◆ Prepared copies of major reports and government publications/ recommendations regarding dementia practice was good to see and helped support candidates.
- ◆ Remediation was clear and easy to confirm. Oral clarification was also recorded; the candidates had clearly worked hard and undertaken additional research.

HNC

Internal assessment and verification procedures were once more of a high standard and many of the reports noted good practice in these areas.

Reports indicated:

- ◆ Integrated assessments and a workbook approach which enabled candidates to record their own learning.
- ◆ Guidance for the assessment was very clear and Evidence Requirements were detailed on each assessment instrument.
- ◆ The marking was in the main consistent although some slight discrepancy in the length of the responses by candidates was noted.
- ◆ The whole marking and verification process was reported on one set of forms per assignment; this made it very easy to track across different markers and Verifiers.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates

PDA

- ◆ Assessors provided very full and detailed feedback to candidates, which is good practice.
- ◆ Candidates are being encouraged to use their assessments as SVQ evidence where they are progressing to a Level 4 award, which is excellent.
- ◆ Clear feedback was given to the candidates, especially on how well they met the requirements.
- ◆ Marking sheets with comments were also available for all candidates.

HNC

It is particularly evident from the HNC reports that centres use formal procedures for providing and seeking feedback from candidates as part of their internal quality reviews.

The following examples from the reports identify the range of methods used to achieve this.

- ◆ Feedback to candidates was good and the verification very thorough.
- ◆ There was evidence of candidates needs being met through the marking.
- ◆ Discussions confirmed that feedback information was provided
- ◆ Copies of the assessment instruments used were attached to the work of the candidates.

Feedback from candidates

This is an aspect of the verification process much valued by the team as it provides the opportunity to hear from candidates directly. Throughout the reports it was noted that the Verifier had often been able to either meet with candidates face to face or to talk to them via the telephone.

Comments on the reports included:

PDA

- ◆ Candidates spoke with great enthusiasm about the PDA Health and Social Care Supervision.
- ◆ They liked the set teaching days and were very complimentary about the tutor.
- ◆ The programme flowed well. Candidates particularly valued the fact that the organisation gave them protected time for their learning.
- ◆ Candidates felt the programme worked well for them as they were a small group who also worked with each other and felt this was helpful.

- ◆ Candidates complimented the staff group on their ability to make sense of the information and help them to apply this to their practice.
- ◆ They said it was a challenging experience but worthwhile as they are now more aware of their practice and feel more confident in their roles as supervisors.
- ◆ [One] candidate felt more confident in her practice and noted the difference in her practice.
- ◆ Understand how to use different styles and methods in their supervision practice.
- ◆ They felt challenged by the material and reported that it was having a real impact upon their practice.

HNC

- ◆ Candidate representative fed back the year group's satisfaction with the personal action plans.
- ◆ Had comprehensive induction and were fully aware of all expectations in relation to the course.
- ◆ Were well supported during the course and had effective feedback on course work and assessments.
- ◆ The assessment load was fair and well spaced.
- ◆ Have become more reflective practitioners because of the course.
- ◆ Praised the course organisation and the approach of the tutor.
- ◆ Felt they were well supported and given good guidance and direction in relation to their studies.
- ◆ Felt they were challenged to produce good work but were supported in doing so.
- ◆ Given good direction when remediation was required.
- ◆ 'Had avoided doing HNC for a very long time thinking I would not be able to do it, however once I started I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and now regret delaying for so long.'
- ◆ 'I would pass on to new students the need to listen to what was being taught and discussed.'

Access to assessments

Commitment to ensuring candidates can gain access to and equality of opportunity was noted.

The reports from centres showed:

PDA's

- ◆ Candidates came from a wide variety of projects and it is a credit to the teaching that each was able to identify their own practice clearly within the assignment and provide good evidence of meeting the assessment requirements.

- ◆ The centre has a fair selection process for the award and the candidates involved are given fair access to assessment for the PDA.
- ◆ Candidates are in appropriate work roles to allow them to generate evidence for the PDA.
- ◆ Evidence of tutor ensuring candidates understood what was being asked of them and appropriate support offered.

HNC

- ◆ There were monthly tutorials and individual meetings plus telephone and e-mail contact.
- ◆ Plenty of support for candidates to complete their workbooks.
- ◆ Centre has a pre-course application process.
- ◆ All candidates fill in the application form and provide a detailed personal statement.
- ◆ Access is based on ability and workplace registration requirements, and is fair.
- ◆ Candidates all working full-time and doing the qualification as day-release students.
- ◆ Tutors were flexible with delivery to accommodate candidates.
- ◆ Good e-mail and telephone support between classes.
- ◆ Additional support available to candidates when required — for example, one candidate has dyslexia and another has physical challenges which require special support to be in place.

Points for consideration

PDA's

Portfolios showed many of the candidates have difficulties with referencing and some focused work on this should be considered.

Centres are asked to ensure bibliography/references are attached to candidate assignments.

HNC

One area that appeared in several of the reports was related to the recording paperwork which Verifiers felt could be clearer in relation to providing more transparent feedback to candidates.

Another area that is recommended is the use of separate marking schemes for each assessment to enable Internal Verifiers to check that all of the Evidence Requirements have been met for each of the Units in the award.

One centre was still using individual Unit assessment rather than adopting a holistic approach. We would like to take this opportunity to remind centres that SQA encourages a holistic approach to assessment in the HNC Social Care.

Areas of good practice

Developments in the use of technology and in particular the growth of virtual learning environments to support teaching and learning, featured in the good practice identified by the Verifiers.

PDA

Reports indicated:

- ◆ Verification system was really robust — [the EV was] able to see all the evidence as well as any remediation.
- ◆ Standard of the internal verification was excellent and was enhanced through the meetings of the assessors and the Verifiers.
- ◆ Verifier gave very clear and detailed written feedback to assessors which is supporting them in their new role.
- ◆ Work showed good integration of theory and practice and it was clear that the candidates had engaged well with the taught material and assignments.
- ◆ Feedback from the assessors and the Internal Verifier was helpful and related well to the Evidence Requirements.
- ◆ The IV process was well signposted with the use of feedback sheets on each assignment.
- ◆ The PDA programme delivery, which the candidates praised so highly, is to be commended.
- ◆ Course tutor feedback to candidates is detailed and clearly shows how each of the Evidence Requirements have been met.
- ◆ Good use was made of the evidence generated by linking it to relevant SVQ Units.

HNC

Reports indicate:

- ◆ The centre has developed excellent workbooks covering the whole HNC.
- ◆ Candidates have monthly tutorial days where there is direct input from the assessor and which include interactive exercises that require candidates to participate and present ideas.
- ◆ All remediation was easy to track and the original work was retained making it easy to see what had been added to address the issues raised.
- ◆ Candidates used appropriate references to support their work and were relating their learning to their practice.
- ◆ The video link for feedback to all the partner colleges was great and gave the EV the opportunity to see and hear from each of the teams within the centre.
- ◆ The student representative spoke highly about the student experience and the course.
- ◆ All of the development points raised in the previous EV report had been addressed. The centre is to be congratulated on the quality of delivery and student experience.

- ◆ The assessment tasks comprised a range of different activities which provided opportunities to connect learning to practice.
- ◆ The centre uses a feedback proforma for each of the assessment tasks.
- ◆ Candidates were given clear and specific feedback about what has been achieved and what required remediation.
- ◆ When remediation was required, the assessor gave detailed feedback about level and sufficiency required in a helpful and constructive way.
- ◆ Candidates were issued with a comprehensive workbook which comprised appropriate learning activities and pointers to research.

Specific areas for improvement

These are areas for quality improvement and should not be viewed as detracting from the overall impressive results achieved in this year.

HNC and PDA

Centres are asked to note that SQA does not identify specific levels of achievement other than in the Graded Unit and that the use of the terms Merit and Distinction are no longer recognised for any awards in Care.

Where candidates have yet to complete the SVQ Units it is recommended that some work is undertaken to map the Outcomes of the taught Units and the SVQ Units more formally.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

F92E 36 Leadership and Management for Care Services

F291 34 HN Social Care Graded Unit 1

General comments

This year the external verification team again looked at both the HNC Social Care and the PDA Leadership and Management for Care Services Graded Units.

The overall standard in both was good and confirms that centres have a clear understanding of the standards and are, in the majority of cases, marking and verifying candidate work appropriately.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Reports show that assessors and internal verifiers are familiar with the Unit specifications and assessments are in line with the requirements.

Reports also confirm that the correct instrument of assessment is being used in both Graded Units examined.

Evidence Requirements

It was noted that centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements and that candidates are provided with detailed and substantial information.

The Graded Unit reports identified that all assessments in use are valid.

Examples of comments from verification reports are:

- ◆ There was evidence of clear guidance and rigorous quality assurance.
- ◆ The centre used the assessment guidance from the Unit specification.
- ◆ Judgements reflected the Evidence Requirements within the Unit specification for the Social Care Graded Unit and cross-marking showed consistency across markers.
- ◆ Records of standardisation made available from the centre reflected a range of discussions on a variety of topics and good decisions were made.
- ◆ Marking sheet highlighted areas which required further work from the candidates.

Administration of assessments

Statements from their placements or employers which confirm the candidate participation in the assessment process have improved greatly and Verifiers are now seeing more clear and specific evidence from employers and placements which verify the candidates' involvement in their project.

Reports identified that:

- ◆ Centres have developed marking grids which they use with the Graded Unit.
- ◆ It was clear that the marking schedule allowed candidates to integrate the values and skills of critical analysis as well as evaluate their practice.
- ◆ Assessment was supported with worksheets to direct and guide candidates to identify the required knowledge points for application to practice.
- ◆ Clear timescales had been set for candidates.
- ◆ Documentation was very well maintained in master folders with appropriate indexing.
- ◆ Checklists made it easy for the External Verifier to navigate through scripts.

General feedback

Centres are doing a very effective job in relation to the delivery and the support of candidates throughout the process of the Graded Units.

Very effective support is being offered to candidates and there is clear evidence that centres are completing the individual meetings required for each candidate.

Overall, the assessment decisions made were sound. It was noted that there were clear differences between the work of the candidates. In addition, justification of grades was good and accompanied by constructive feedback to candidates.

The full range of grades was used.

It was noted that where assessment recording documentation was well maintained in master folders with appropriate checklists it made it easy for the External Verifiers to navigate through them.

The timescales set for the candidates gave enough time between assessments for candidates. In one case, different dates had been set to meet the needs of the classes — ie the day-release class and evening group.

Feedback from candidates noted:

- ◆ 'Enjoyed the full course and felt that the Graded Unit had given an excellent opportunity to integrate knowledge and practice.'
- ◆ 'Loved being allowed to plan, carry out and evaluate an activity as it brought theory to life.'
- ◆ 'Thanks to the staff for their approach to teaching and for their support.'

- ◆ 'Student learning pack for the Graded Unit was very helpful.'
- ◆ 'Learning pack was excellent and helped work on the planning for the Graded Unit project as it had very good planning paperwork.'
- ◆ 'Tutors were very approachable and the level of support for individual students was excellent.'

Feedback to candidates noted:

- ◆ Types of activity identified for the project were very appropriate.
- ◆ Feedback on the plan and development sections was detailed and helpful.
- ◆ Where remediation was required clear guidance was given.
- ◆ Marking sheets with comprehensive comments were available to candidates.
- ◆ Good feedback from assessor was evident with comments highlighting areas the candidates had completed well and clear explanations for what was required through remediation.

Areas of good practice

Some really innovative practices were identified:

A workbook for candidates to prepare them for the placement was created in one centre. They had prepared an exercise on 'How well do you know the service user?'. This asked questions about the individual they would be supporting and provided guidance regarding what the candidate should know in order to make the building of relationships effective.

A sheet of questions is completed by the candidate prior to commencing the activity selected for the Graded Unit.

One centre provided an Equalities Scheme updated in January 2012 to meet the needs of the Equalities Act 2010. In general, the reports identified that attention to detail in all stages of the Graded Unit was of a very high standard.

Reports show:

- ◆ Very strong evidence of reflective practice from candidates who were all in appropriate roles.
- ◆ Marking and verification forms were clear and accurate — and it was very easy to see how the decisions were reached.
- ◆ The standardisation process was thorough and included a high level of cross-marking.

HNC Specific areas for improvement

Centres are advised to ensure that their marking scheme is clear and explicit.

Specific areas for improvement

PDA Graded Unit F92E 36

No specific areas for improvement were identified.