



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2014 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 report reflects on another successful year in the delivery of HNC Social Care and covers a range of Care-specific awards at HN level.

During this session, the team undertook external verification of Professional Development Awards containing Units at HN level as part of the Group Award and HN Units offered on an individual basis.

The following Professional Development Awards were verified:

- ◆ PDA Dementia Skilled Practice
- ◆ PDA Health and Social Care Supervision
- ◆ PDA Administration of Medication

Overall, External Verifiers found a high level of knowledge and understanding of the awards in the majority of centres.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The External Verifiers' reports show that assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications across all Care HN provision and, overall, candidates are meeting the Assessment Standards.

Assessors are becoming familiar with the recommended instruments of assessment in the Professional Development Award Units and candidate numbers in this area are increasing.

Centre reports from verifiers commented:

- ◆ *PDA awards showed an impressive audit trail with a clear picture of candidate progress and any remediation required.*
- ◆ *There is clear evidence that the PDAs are working well and benefiting the organisation and candidates.*
- ◆ *Assessment specifications for the Units were available, correct and up to date.*
- ◆ *The centre is using integrated assessments that have been prior verified by SQA.*
- ◆ *Assessment tasks were designed around meeting the Outcomes, in line with the Assessment Specifications for the Units examined*
- ◆ *The evidence-gathering pro forma aids assessor judgement and identifies clearly where any remediation is required.*
- ◆ *The centre's assessment process was easy to follow in both paper and electronic formats.*

- ◆ *Assessment decisions were sound and the work that was examined reflected the Outcomes of the assessments.*

Evidence Requirements

The majority of centres visited were able to show which Evidence Requirements had been met by candidates. External Verifiers' reports show that tutors have a sound understanding of their role and are providing appropriate support to candidates.

Reports commented:

- ◆ *Good pieces of work were produced to a high standard.*
- ◆ *Completed assessments demonstrated sufficient evidence.*
- ◆ *Remediated assessments were accompanied by the original work.*
- ◆ *Remediated work was good and showed how candidates responded to feedback.*
- ◆ *Detailed feedback on candidate achievement was provided and signed by the tutor and verifier.*

Administration of assessments

Centres reported they are using the assessments recommended in the Unit specifications and that they find it helpful to have detailed guidance in the Unit Support Notes.

Reports commented:

- ◆ *Learning action plans are in place that ensure candidates' readiness for assessment. Implementation of these has resulted in the need to consider some additional Core Skills learning.*
- ◆ *Records of internal verification were clear and in line with the college policy on internal verification.*
- ◆ *Cross-marking is used the first time a tutor delivers a new Unit.*
- ◆ *Cross-marking is used to ensure consistency. Feedback ensures marking is monitored and improved.*
- ◆ *When there was a case of suspected plagiarism, this was investigated through the cross-marking process and the candidate was required to undertake a full new assessment for the Outcomes. This was good practice in internal verification.*
- ◆ *A standardisation panel meets on a regular basis. Their agenda covers marking procedures, processes and resources.*
- ◆ *Detailed marking schemes provide good quality feedback to candidates.*
- ◆ *Online assessment was easy to follow and contained relevant feedback to candidates.*

General feedback

Reports commented:

- ◆ *Many candidates thought the award was relevant and appropriate to their needs and praised the style of delivery.*
- ◆ *A mix of online feedback, written feedback sheets and feedback on actual candidate scripts is to be commended.*
- ◆ *Candidates were given verbal feedback during candidate interviews.*
- ◆ *In one centre the method of feedback appeared to depend on tutor preference, while the variety of methods is good, this could make internal verification a lengthier process than necessary.*
- ◆ *A range of assessment methods is recommended. One centre included case studies, class presentations and an interesting audit of policy.*
- ◆ *Overall comments on PDAs were positive. In one centre, candidates praised the organisation for allowing them work-based study time and they described their tutors as wonderful.*

Areas of good practice

There were many aspects of good practice evidenced in the reports. The following represent a sample of practices centres may wish to consider adopting:

- ◆ One centre uses open learning packs supported by tutorial time. This allows a wider range of option Units.
- ◆ Another centre has devised a very good assessment for social policy. Candidates carry out a placement audit of organisational policies and write a critical commentary to accompany the audit.
- ◆ SVQ Units in HNC include direct observation by tutor undertaken through practice placement visits.
- ◆ A system to track and review assessment procedures included an annual internal audit of learning and assessment materials.
- ◆ The use of regular programme team meetings is to be commended.
- ◆ Candidate work showed good use of referencing with a bibliography.
- ◆ Activities carried out in practice were reflected in the assessment and showed good engagement with social care as a profession.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres could consider the following:

- ◆ Outlining Outcomes in marking schedules for integrated assessments.
- ◆ Providing detailed feedback on marking schemes as this may help candidates complete remediation at the first attempt and avoid multiple re-submissions.
- ◆ Actively encouraging candidates to adhere to cut-off dates for presentation of assessments for marking.

- ◆ Tutor observation of candidates in the workplace, and/or a record of professional discussion during practice placement, to provide evidence for SVQ units.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

F29 34 HN Social Care Graded Unit 1

F92E 36 Leadership and Management for Care Services

General comments

- ◆ All candidate evidence examined met Unit standards.
- ◆ There was evidence of candidates taking responsibility for their own learning, which is to be commended.
- ◆ Candidates were provided with good support materials and clear guidance.
- ◆ Clear teaching plans led to candidates being able to demonstrate a wide range of theoretical concepts and appropriate research in their Graded Unit assessments.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres are using SQA materials to support the delivery and assessment of the Graded Units in both awards.

Centres followed the SQA Assessment Strategy and guidance, ensuring the assessments were valid, reliable and fair.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence Requirements were clearly identified in the Graded Units examined.

Reports commented:

- ◆ *Candidates covered the Evidence Requirements to a high standard.*
- ◆ *Overall scores showed an increase in marks for the development stage and reflected candidates taking responsibility for their learning.*
- ◆ *Tutors acknowledged that marks for the planning stage were lower this year and, in discussion, this was agreed to be acceptable.*
- ◆ *There was clear guidance given to the candidates in line with the Arrangements documents.*

Administration of assessments

This is a strong area in centres as they now have considerable experience in the delivery of Graded Units.

Reports commented on some very good practice:

- ◆ *Candidates were only able to embark on the Graded Unit once their proposal was agreed with their placement supervisor and the course tutor.*
- ◆ *The centre works with electronic master folders containing copies of all administration procedures — including marking and verification records and minutes of standardisation meetings.*
- ◆ *Updates were provided through PowerPoint presentations, then placed on Moodle.*
- ◆ *The operational plan identified course delivery procedures. These were amended and updated annually.*
- ◆ *Assignments have a front sheet for candidates to sign to confirm that the work is their own.*
- ◆ *The marking sheet clearly shows the first and second marker and there is space for comments date and signatures.*

General feedback

Work examined met the standard in all centres visited; verifiers reported accurate tracking from the planning and development stages through to final evaluation.

The External Verifier team was able to interview candidates about their centre visits, either in person or by telephone discussion.

Reports commented:

- ◆ *Candidates had enjoyed their Graded Unit. They felt well supported and praised the style of delivery.*
- ◆ *Feedback provided by staff via marking sheets was commendable.*
- ◆ *Candidates felt supported and received feedback.*
- ◆ *Candidate support is now provided online. This development was welcomed.*
- ◆ *Candidates spoke very positively and confidently about their experience, stating how they felt well supported.*
- ◆ *Scripts were double marked; however, where there was a lack of agreement the internal verifier became in reality a third marker.*

Areas of good practice

The following areas of good practice were identified in the verification reports.

- ◆ *One centre ensured candidates are able to use the Graded Unit to provide evidence for SVQ Units within their HNC. This is highly recommended as good practice.*
- ◆ *Observing workplace practice ensures validity and in addition provides evidence for SVQ Units.*

Specific areas for improvement

There was one instance where the implementation of assessment and internal verification were not supporting the required standard. The following points emerged:

- ◆ A candidate had been penalised for low scores on one specific area of the planning stage. Centres should note that a candidate who achieves only 1 mark for a section of their plan, but achieves more for the other sections can still achieve an overall pass mark for their plan providing the total marks are above the baseline, ie 18 marks or more.
- ◆ Candidates who do not achieve a 50% pass mark overall or have a 0 score in any section of the Evidence Requirements are required to remediate the whole section.