



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2016
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

The HNC Social Care verified during this session has now been in place for a number of years and centres are experienced in the delivery of the award.

Centres took the opportunity of their verification visits this year to seek support and guidance from the external verification team on their plans for the delivery of the new HN Social Services (validated in 2015) which will take the place of HNC Social Care in the 2016–17 session. Centres are now preparing and planning to offer the new group award.

HNC class groups appeared smaller this year and there was a higher proportion of direct entry students under 21 entering the award having completed a National Certificate programme.

There has been a marked increase in the number of PDA awards in the Care area being offered in centres. The greatest increase was in the delivery of the PDA Health and Social Care Supervision, which is frequently used to meet SSSC registration requirements as well as for continuous professional development.

The awards verified were:

G7ME 15 HNC Social Care
G9AM 47 PDA Health and Social Care Supervision
GK2D 47 PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice
G9V5 47 PDA Health and Social Care: Administration of Medication
GH80 47 PDA Children's Hearings in Scotland: Panel Members
GG2C 47 PDA Domestic Abuse Advocacy

The HN team of five external verifiers undertook 62 verification visits for HNC Social Care and Professional Development Awards during session 2015–16.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The external verifiers' reports show that centres are fully conversant with the unit specifications in both the HNC Social Care and the PDAs.

There was increased evidence of centres using integrated assessment and greater use of electronic media for teaching and learning, leading to a more holistic approach.

Robust evidence was observed of centres undertaking regular quality reviews and revision of assessment materials.

In addition, there was good evidence of the use of training and development days for teaching staff.

Evidence requirements

In the majority of reports there were no issues reported regarding the evidence requirements for the units in the HNC Social Care. This was also the case for the majority of PDA awards.

The increased use of holistic assessment in both HNC and PDA awards is now more evident across the sector.

Administration of assessments

All centres were deemed competent in the delivery, marking, and administration of assessments.

Internal verification procedures were clear and well evidenced in the reports filed.

Robust methods of assessment and internal verification are now well established and there is good evidence that staff are working well together to deliver awards and maintain a quality product.

Specific examples from external verifiers' reports show:

- ◆ *Teaching, administration, and feedback forms completed to a high standard. All typed so easy to read.*
- ◆ *Merger of colleges had its influence over various aspects, however staff appear settled and continue their quality delivery.*
- ◆ *The quality team member is a good resource. Assessment and internal verification procedures were well developed.*
- ◆ *Quality assurance is evident throughout with good support via the Quality Unit staff and also senior managers.*
- ◆ *Evidence concurs with the staff working to SQA policies and procedures.*
- ◆ *Staff are very competent and experienced in their pedagogy and knowledge within social care.*
- ◆ *Candidate work is to a high standard and this mirrors the staff teaching practices.*
- ◆ *Use of electronic system to validate candidate work is good practice.*

General feedback

It is clear from the visit reports that centres are preparing for the new HNC Social Services and that they are open to and considering new approaches to the delivery of this award, including greater use of electronic systems for delivering learning to students.

One centre is already delivering the new award and this will provide valuable feedback. All candidates are provided with a knowledge handbook as well as detailed material on legislation, and they work through the material gathering evidence for their assignment. Regular tutorials are held with teaching input and time for reflection on learning.

Feedback to candidates continues to be robust and supportive overall. One centre reported they reviewed their experience in late 2015 and made some changes to the programme delivery starting in 2016 based partly on candidate feedback from evaluation forms. They also reviewed their underpinning knowledge materials.

HNC candidates who were interviewed spoke with enthusiasm about the course and their tutors.

Specific examples from reports included:

- ◆ *Out of 23 students, five will progress to university, which is an excellent proportion.*
- ◆ *Candidates have a forum in which to raise any matters or issues. They completed a quality questionnaire on course completion which matched their comments.*
- ◆ *Candidates who were met were fully satisfied with their learning and development.*
- ◆ *Access to assessment was reported as being very good.*
- ◆ *Centre layout and functional areas facilitate an excellent environment for the teaching staff to enhance the candidate learning experience.*
- ◆ *Staff were well organised and had vast experience of the subject matter. All were clearly working to SQA policies and procedures.*
- ◆ *Centre staff have a very positive attitude towards their teaching delivery, administration, assessment and feedback to all students.*
- ◆ *Overall, a centre with committed staff doing a good job.*

Feedback relating to PDA awards identified:

- ◆ *Candidates now relate theory and practice as the PDA has become established in their work environments. They would recommend the course to others.*
- ◆ *Discussion with two students individually both confirmed learning opportunities were excellent and although having difficulties at the start of the programme, they noticed changes in their practice and this was confirmed by their managers.*
- ◆ *Students feel confident in moving forward in their careers, following the completion of their PDA*
- ◆ *Learners confirmed the PDA course had been beneficial in looking at the role of the supervisor.*
- ◆ *Appreciated the quality of the support from her assessor.*
- ◆ *Noted the value of reflecting on practice as a supervisor.*
- ◆ *Candidate development needs and prior achievements all taken into consideration when applying for the award.*

Areas of good practice

There were many examples of very good practice in the reports from across the sector.

Student feedback noted that resources and staff support were excellent. Candidates felt supported in the classroom and cited the resources that were of particular use when writing their assessments.

Teaching materials/presentations and learning packs were of very high standard. Online candidate material has been developed in several centres and this was found to be excellent and very supportive to learning.

One centre was noted as delivering the PDA Health and Social Care Supervision as part of a Leading to Deliver programme. This innovative method brings a variety of learners together.

Specific examples in the external verifiers' reports show:

- ◆ *Candidates were very complimentary about the support given by the tutor, both on study days and via e-mail outwith these days.*
- ◆ *Credit is given to staff for the administrative and the quality systems put in place to ensure compliance with SQA standards.*
- ◆ *Records relating to candidate development needs were very clear and specific.*
- ◆ *Involvement in the delivery from managers throughout the organisation, as well as the tutors directly supporting the PDA, is very good practice.*
- ◆ *A centre of excellence where a very tight team of professional trainers work to ensure the candidates' needs are fully met.*
- ◆ *No physical barriers whatsoever for any candidate.*
- ◆ *Team ethos is total inclusiveness and the resources are excellent, atmosphere is very conducive to learning.*
- ◆ *Centre wishes to enhance the external verifiers' visits within their new working practice by using different venues for verification so that closer detail of the working environment of the candidates is shown to EVs.*

Specific areas for improvement

One centre delivering a specialised PDA was identified as having an issue in that lack of live observation had not taken place for a small number of learners. As this is a compulsory part of the final unit assessment, the centre was given a timescale in which this could be rectified.

Higher National graded units

Titles/levels of HN graded units verified:

F291 34 HNC Social Care Graded Unit 1 at SCQF level 7

F92E 36 Leadership and Management for Care Services at SCQF level 9

General comments

Both graded units have been in place for a number of years and were therefore very familiar to centres.

Planning for the revised Graded Unit in HNC Social Services is now underway in centres, in preparation for the delivery of the new group award. Centres are making good use of the materials provided by SQA through the secure site to assist in their forward planning.

Verifier reports evidence that marking showed consistency and that work presented was of a good quality with some outstanding examples seen.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Overall, reports show good use of marking schemes and clear robust marking with good feedback provided to learners.

All centres were using the correct unit specification and all adhered to the assessment requirements.

Evidence requirements

The reports reflect robust evidence of achievement with clear and explicit marking and accurate judgements. All met SQA requirements, with double marking recorded.

Examples from reports show:

- ◆ *Centre has established methods of assessment and internal verification required by SQA and implements these well.*
- ◆ *Range of candidate grading across sample was accurately judged and appropriate.*
- ◆ *Resources and staff experience were very good, enabling candidates to grasp the different concepts within the award which in turn motivates and assists their learning.*
- ◆ *Candidate feedback reflects good teaching practice and individual support.*
- ◆ *Staff were very competent. All assessment materials, plans, procedures and reviews were in place.*

- ◆ *Internal assessment and verification procedures were implemented well in the centre, ensuring standardisation.*
- ◆ *Candidate development and contact discussed under SQA-required conditions; retention of evidence, teaching, delivery and administration clear to see.*
- ◆ *Brief provided for candidates was clear and specific.*

Administration of assessments

Evidence of centres' ability to adhere to the arrangements document and guidance for the graded unit was clearly seen.

Feedback from the EV reports showed:

- ◆ *Online computer system good, fulfils the requirements for data storage. Also uses robust password protection.*
- ◆ *Procedures and practice, standardisation/quality assurance system arrangements well recorded.*
- ◆ *Quality data and storage, standardisation and QA minutes, assessment methods/instruments, assessment decisions/candidate evidence were all in place and clear and easy to follow.*
- ◆ *Assessor standardisation arrangements in place.*
- ◆ *Assessment and internal verification procedures and practices were clear.*
- ◆ *Records relating to candidate development needs were all clear and explicit.*

General feedback

Students spoke highly of their experience overall, one report noted it was good to meet such an enthusiastic tutor and speak to students who had clearly benefited from the whole experience of learning and development throughout the course.

One student explained that before her course she just did her job and often didn't think too much about the reasons behind a young child's behaviour, but now she feels more able and willing to see the wider picture and to think about the psychology behind their behaviour.

Overall, marking for the graded unit is robust and recording of results was found to be detailed and specific.

Reports specifically noted:

- ◆ *Centre exhibits an excellent learning environment.*
- ◆ *Teaching and motivation is led by both tutors.*
- ◆ *Centre has a very good team spirit that is evident.*
- ◆ *Quality team member is a good resource. Assessment and internal verification procedures are well developed and can be evaluated quickly.*

Areas of good practice

- ◆ *Excellent graded unit examples presented with a variety of grades.*
- ◆ *Centre has a well-developed course that meets SQA requirements for the delivery of the qualification.*
- ◆ *One candidate mentioned the difference the HN had made to her practice and gave an example on how her confidence had improved: she is more ready to find information herself or research the web.*
- ◆ *Staff were well experienced in their field and their academic qualifications enhanced good teaching practices.*
- ◆ *Candidate feedback mirrors the quality delivered at the centre.*
- ◆ *Good judging and assessment decisions were recorded for the graded unit. Evidence of all remediation was clear.*

Specific areas for improvement

No specific areas for improvement were identified in any of the external verifiers' reports for the graded units.