Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Computer Aided Technology

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

A total of seven HN verification/development visits took place in session 2014–15 in the Computer Aided Technology group. All of the visits carried out in this session were under the new quality assurance system.

All centres that were visited demonstrated a consistent understanding of the requirements of the national standards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres demonstrated a robust level of familiarity with the most up to date Unit specifications and exemplars. All centres were aware of the availability of assessment exemplars and they were being used appropriately in all instances. The instruments of assessment from all centres were deemed to be appropriate, fit for purpose and matched the requirements laid out in the Unit specifications.

Evidence Requirements

All of the centres visited in session 2014–15 demonstrated a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for all of the Units verified and the evidence recorded and processed was deemed to be appropriate. Where centre-devised assessments were being used, a clear understanding was demonstrated of the evidence requirements for the related Units.

Administration of assessments

All centres were appropriately administering the assessment process in line with SQA requirements and all were using assessments that were deemed to be fair, valid, accessible and consistent for all candidates. The assessments sampled across all centres were of an appropriate level. Contextualised assessments were used effectively.

Session 2014–15 was a significant year for mergers within the centres visited. All centres were working hard to implement new quality assurance processes and procedures. This provided a significant challenge to the centres, however, the quality assurance arrangements in all centres were considered to be of a good standard and reflected SQA requirements.

A robust internal verification process was demonstrated on all of the visits conducted. All staff members were aware of the internal verification process within their centre and implemented the procedures appropriately. Positively, as the centres are updating the quality assurance processes, there seems to be a standardisation of procedures across the sector. This is reflected in the way in which information is provided and stored.

General feedback

In session 2014–15, there was a continuing positive increase in the number of External Verifier visits where candidates have been available for interview. There continues to be a positive response to the new quality assurance system which encourages a more proactive approach from centres to ensure that the External Verifier is given access to candidates. Candidate feedback was positive in all instances, generally citing that the curriculum was enjoyable, challenging and relevant. Centres should continue to make every effort to ensure candidate availability during visits and External Verifiers should be taking every opportunity to communicate with the candidates where possible.

Feedback on performance from centres to candidates was evident on all visits in this session. All centres have a system of ongoing candidate performance review throughout the session. This ongoing review process varies in form from centre to centre, but generally provides an opportunity to give meaningful feedback to the candidates on performance, as well as giving candidates the opportunity to raise concerns with the staff. All centres had made provision to provide either written or verbal feedback to their candidates. The use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for candidate feedback continues to be evident in some centres. The standard was good and deemed to be appropriate where the VLE was used to provide feedback to the candidates.

It was evident that centres are working hard to ensure fair access to assessment, and, in general, reviews of internal quality policies during visits highlighted the importance that centres are placing on alignment to a quality and equality of learning and teaching materials (QELTM) process.

Areas of good practice

In session 2014–15, a good standard was evident in all centres. One particular area which is reflective of good practice was evident in a few of the centres visited in this session. The sharing of external visit reports via a central online repository was seen in a few of the visits. This has come about as the newly merged centres implement their updated/new quality systems. The storage and sharing of visit reports in this fashion has provided open access for all staff to quality information that can be beneficial across the curriculum. The dissemination of EV reports is considered to be important in the quality enhancement process and should not be restricted to the curriculum area that is being directly reported on. The sharing of the content of reports to a wider audience could and should raise important delivery, assessment and review issues that would benefit all. It will also highlight what is considered to be good practice in the various areas of the curriculum.

Specific areas for improvement

All centres visited were found to be working to national standard.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DW15 34 Computer Aided Draughting and Design: Graded Unit 1

General comments

There was one HN Graded Unit verification visit in the Computer Aided Technology group in session 2014–15. It was evident through the external verification that the centre visited was aware of the documentation provided by SQA for the delivery and support of the Graded Unit. The work presented for verification was considered to be of an appropriate standard and consistent with the requirements of the national standards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The centre visited was using the most up to date Unit specification and was aware of the assessment exemplar that is available.

Evidence Requirements

The centre visited is fully aware of the evidence requirements of Graded Unit 1. The candidate submissions provided for sampling fully met the requirements of the Unit. The marking of the candidates' work was considered effective and the grades awarded were considered to be consistent and fair.

Administration of assessments

The centre visited demonstrated a robust process in administering the assessment of the Graded Unit. The assessment of the Graded Unit was considered to be at the appropriate level and well structured.

General feedback

There are no issues to report for session 2014–15. The Graded Unit activity continues to be of an appropriate standard, meeting the requirements of the Unit and SQA.

Areas of good practice

As there was limited verification activity of Graded Units within the Computer Aided Technology group there is little in the way of new information with regards to good practice. In general, centres should continue to provide a challenge to candidates undertaking the Graded Unit and where possible relate the project activity to industry practice.