Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
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 eleven HN verification/development visits took place in session 2013–14. Nine of the visits were under the new quality assurance system and two under the old system.

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

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All assessors in the centres visited demonstrated a good level of familiarity with the relevant Unit specifications and exemplars. Where available, most centres were making use of assessment exemplars and all were aware of the most up to date versions of the Unit specifications. In all instances the instruments of assessment were deemed to be appropriate and fit for purpose.

Evidence Requirements

All of the centres visited in session 2013–14 demonstrated a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for all of the Units verified. There is a good awareness of the availability of assessment exemplars in all centres. Assessment exemplars are being used consistently for Units where an exemplar is available. Where centre-devised assessments were being used, a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the related Units was demonstrated.

Administration of assessments

All centres visited are using assessments at an appropriate level. All centres are using the assessment exemplars provided by SQA or using centre-devised assessments that match the standards set within the Unit specifications. Contextualised assessments matching the varying and diverse courses assessing Computer Aided Technology were used effectively. The administration of assessments within all centres visited was of a good standard ensuring fairness, validity and consistency in line with SQA requirements.

The quality assurance arrangements in all centres were of a good standard and reflected SQA requirements. A robust internal verification process by the centres was demonstrated on all of the visits. All staff members in the centres were aware of the internal verification process within their centre and were implementing the procedures appropriately.

General feedback

In session 2013–14, there was a positive increase in the number of EV visits where candidates were available for interview. The new quality assurance system encourages a more proactive approach from centres to ensure that the

EV is given access to candidates. This was also evidenced in session 2012–13. Candidate feedback was generally positive in all instances where candidates were available for interview. Centres should be making 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. Each centre had made provision to provide either written or verbal feedback to their candidates. Most centres were found to have set aside time to provide constructive feedback. It was evident during visits that there is an increase in the number of centres using a virtual learning environment (VLE) for candidate feedback, as well as, delivering assessments. In all instances the use of the VLE was deemed to be appropriate and well managed.

All centres visited provided fair access to assessment. All centres demonstrated a proactive approach to providing assessments that were in line with a quality and equality learning and teaching materials (QELTM) process.

Areas of good practice

Contextualised assessments are being used in several centres covering a broad range of courses and industry disciplines. The interpretation of the Unit specifications in all instances was deemed to be appropriate in meeting the national standards, as well as, meeting the needs of industry performance. This should be encouraged and is considered to be good practice; however, as a cautionary note, all centres are encouraged to seek prior verification on centre-devised assessments to ensure validity.

Specific areas for improvement

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

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

F328 35 Computer Aided Draughting and Design: Graded Unit 2

General comments

There was one HN Graded Unit verification visit in session 2013–14. 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 a high 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 Graded Unit specification. Evidence was provided by the centre of candidates' use of centre-devised checklists reflective of the Unit specification checklist; this helped to establish consistency and ensured coverage of the main elements required by the specification.

Evidence Requirements

Candidate submissions provided clear evidence that the centre is fully aware of the Evidence Requirements for the Graded Unit. The centre has developed marking schemes which clearly demonstrate their understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Graded Unit. The marking schemes are being used effectively and the grades awarded were consistent and fair.

Administration of assessments

The centre visited demonstrated a robust process in administering the assessment of the Graded Unit. The assessments for the Graded Unit were at the appropriate level. All candidates were interviewed at the start of the Graded Unit to agree their project with the project supervisor. Deadlines for each stage of the Graded Unit were established at the start and strictly adhered to. All Graded Unit projects were double-marked prior to internal and external verification.

The centre has a well-established and robust internal verification (IV) process. The staff members implemented the IV procedures fully, reflecting the requirements of SQA.

General feedback

At present there are no other significant issues with the delivery of the Graded Units within the Computer Aided Technology grouping. Feedback to candidates is appropriate and consistent. The feedback from candidates interviewed was

very positive. Overall, the candidates were positive about the Graded Unit activity, both from a learning and assessment perspective. They enjoyed the industrial integration for the project-based Graded Unit.

Areas of good practice

The following points highlight good practice evidenced for Graded Unit verification activity in session 2013–14:

♦ Graded Unit Projects are student-generated and approved by the project supervisor. This harnesses interests/hobbies and gives good motivation.

♦ All HND Computer Aided Draughting and Design Graded Unit projects have industrial input that links the course with industry practice. This should be encouraged in all centres delivering HNC/HND courses within the Computer Aided Technology group.

♦ Students are given an opportunity to showcase their project work at an end-of-year design show attended by employers and industry experts. This should be encouraged in all centres as a source of motivation to the students to perform at their very best.

Specific areas for improvement

Based on the verification activity for session 2013–14, there are no issues within the Computer Aided Technology grouping that requires attention, at this time.