Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2016
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 2015–16 in Verification Group 295 Computer Aided Technology. All of the visits carried out in this session were under the new quality assurance 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 at the centres visited in 2015–16 session were fully aware of the most up-to-date unit specifications and exemplification material. From the evidence provided and the discussions that took place during the verification visits, all assessors were considered to be using the unit specifications and exemplar material in line with SQA requirements. In all verification visits for session 2015–16 the instruments of assessment from all centres were deemed to be appropriate and fit for purpose.

Evidence requirements

All of the centres visited in session 2015–16 demonstrated a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for all of the units verified. The evidence recorded and processed for all of the units verified in this session was deemed to be appropriate in all centres. 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.

Administration of assessments

All centres visited in session 2015–16 were judged to be appropriately administering the assessment process in line with SQA requirements. All centres are using the assessment exemplars provided by SQA or using centre-devised assessments that match the standards set within the unit specifications. All centres are administering and using assessments that are deemed to be fair, valid, accessible and consistent for all candidates. The assessments sampled across all centres were of an appropriate level. Contextualised assessments matching the varying and diverse courses assessing computer aided technology were used effectively.

Progress was evident in most centres with regards to full implementation of new quality assurance processes and procedures post-merger. Mergers provided a significant challenge to all centres. However, from the visits carried out in session 2015–16 there is now clear evidence of the new quality assurance arrangements in all centres bedding in. Implementation of verification procedures were considered to be of a good standard and reflective of SQA requirements in all centres visited. All staff members were aware of the internal verification process

within their centre and were implementing the procedures appropriately. Similar standardisation of assessment and internal verification procedures across the sector was evident from the visits carried out during the session. This is shown in the way in which information is provided and stored within each centre.

Overall, the quality assurance arrangements in all centres were considered to be of a good standard and reflective of SQA requirements. A robust internal verification process by the centres was demonstrated on all of the visits conducted in session 2015–16.

General feedback

From the external verification visits carried out in session 2015–16, it was evident that each centre had made provision to provide either written or verbal feedback to their candidates with regards to their progress. Most centres were found to have set aside time to provide feedback. The use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for candidate feedback as well as delivering assessments was evident in some of the centres. In all instances the use of the VLE was deemed to be appropriate and well managed.

All visits in 2015–16 were considered to be successful with no significant issues. There was positive engagement with candidates on all visits which provided good feedback on candidate satisfaction with regards to course delivery and content, as well as the assessment process. Candidate feedback was generally positive in all instances with regards to staff, facilities, assessment process and course content.

Centres should continue to ensure that every effort is made to drive candidate participation during verification visits, and external verifiers should be taking every opportunity to communicate with the candidates where possible.

All centres demonstrated a proactive approach to providing fair access to assessment that is in line with a quality and equality learning and teaching materials (QELTM) process. All centres visited addressed this issue within their quality assurance process and procedures.

Areas of good practice

The use of contextualised assessments was evidenced in some of the centres visited. The interpretation of the unit specifications in all instances was considered to be appropriate in meeting the national standards, as well as meeting the needs of industry performance. The use of contextualised assessments 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.

The sharing of external verification reports with delivery teams at all centres was evident. This is considered to be particularly beneficial where delivery teams are spread across multiple campuses within the newly merged centres and should help in the standardisation process. The dissemination of external verification

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. 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 the national standard.

Higher National graded units

Titles/levels of HN graded units verified:

DW15 34 Computer Aided Draughting and Design: Graded Unit 1
F52R 35 Computer Aided Architectural Design and Technology: Graded Unit 2

General comments

There was one HN graded unit verification visit in the Computer Aided Technology group in session 2015–16 which looked at the two graded units listed above. 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 for both graded units in line with SQA requirements.

Evidence requirements

The centre visited is fully aware of the evidence requirements of the graded units. A very high level of student skill was demonstrated in the candidate submissions provided for sampling. The samples for both of the graded units fully met the requirements of the units and were considered to be at the top end of national standards. 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 units. The assessment and internal verification documents were considered to be in very good order, satisfying SQA requirements. 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 from session 2015–16. The graded unit activity continues to be of an appropriate standard meeting the requirements of the unit and SQA.

Feedback to candidates was considered to be 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 units and the chance to showcase their skills at the end of year exhibition.

Areas of good practice

In general, centres should continue to provide a challenge to candidates undertaking the graded units and where possible relate the project activity to industry practice.

The centre visited in session 2015–16 works with a real-world client to provide a project that candidates work on. The client is involved at every stage of the graded unit activity, setting the requirements for the design task. The industry client is also involved in supporting the assessors in the assessment decision. The candidates have access to the client throughout the design process of the graded unit activity. Bringing real-world activity and clients to the graded unit project is considered to be good practice.

All HNC Computer Aided Draughting and Design graded unit projects have industrial input that provides a link between the course and industry practice. This should be encouraged in all centres delivering HNC/HND courses within the Computer Aided Technology group.

In the centre visited, the candidates are given an opportunity to showcase their project work at an end of year design exhibition. The exhibition is attended by the public, employers and industry experts. This type of exhibition should be encouraged in all centres as a source of motivation for the candidates to perform at their very best, as it provides a public platform to present their work.

Specific areas for improvement

There are no issues within the Computer Aided Technology grouping that require attention, at this time.