Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Creative Industries

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 session there were eight centres verified in the Creative Industries cognate group and the following Units were included in the verification:

DM0V 34   Creative Industries: An Introduction
DJ3A 34   Working in the Creative Industries
DM2L 35   Working in the Creative Industries 2
DM0W 34   Creative Project
DM10 35   Editing to a Directors Brief
DM22 34   Camera: An Introduction
DM2J 34   Television: Planning and Production
F45P 34   Television Research
F45R 35   Television Scripting: Factual Programmes
H4A1 34   Creative Industries: An Introduction

Most centres continue to undergo re-organisation, but they now appear to have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of national standards. It is apparent that improved training and liaison is taking place within centres and this is resulting in a more standardised approach to quality management.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As college re-organisation begins to settle down, this session has seen a marked improvement in assessors' familiarity with materials and procedures in most centres.

Centres continue to improve their adoption and dissemination of material through various VLE systems but there still is a variety of approaches and inconsistency amongst centres, which would benefit from standardisation.

Qualification Development Teams (QDT) have been active this session and continue to review and update material. As a result, assessment and support material continues to be improved and modernised. Sharing of good delivery practice is also apparent.

Evidence Requirements

This session there appears to be a clearer understanding of Evidence Requirements for Units with exemplary centres continuing to expand an integrated and contextualised curriculum delivery.

All centres are exploring alternative approaches to evidence gathering with the support of QDTs and External Verifiers.

This appears to be resulting in evidence requirements more accurately reflecting industry norms and practices.

Administration of assessments

As reported last year, all centres continue to demonstrate improved methods of delivering assessment and feedback, with all now utilising a variety of electronic communication (VLEs). Disappointingly, the quality and performance of these continues to be mixed and could benefit from standardising.

Again, internal verification procedures do not appear to be keeping pace with developed assessment methods, with many centres still using paper-based recording and not fully integrating internal verification with assessment developments and procedures.

It is to be hoped that with the adoption of more sophisticated electronic communication and VLE procedures, centres will continue to expand the integration of internal verification procedures into curriculum development.

General feedback

The challenges experienced during centre mergers and re-organisation appear to have abated somewhat, with marked improvements in curriculum development, learning and teaching being reported.

Again this year, candidates are reporting an improved level of 'virtual' communication with assessors, but unfortunately the diminution of personal assessor contact appears to be continuing as assessors are under more time pressure.

The paucity of candidate action and development plans (especially employability and progression plans) in some centres is still worrying.

As has been noted for many years now, in some centres, direct links with industry are lessening and as a result 'real-world' teaching continues to decline. Disappointingly, the focus towards delivering candidates with employability skills appears to be being replaced by a concentration on progressing learners to HE.

Encouragingly, this year has seen major QDT developments that are resulting in a more modern curriculum, standardised assessment procedures and improved communication. The ensuing sharing of good practice amongst centres augurs well for a contextualised and integrated approach to Creative Industry disciplines in the future.

Areas of good practice

A few centres are displaying excellent and holistic use of VLE environments to fully reflect industry practices. Such experience has major implications for learners' future employability.

Many centres are now including other curriculum areas within the Creative Industries to reflect industry developments. This is assisting in the standardisation of delivery, assessment and investment in appropriate equipment.

Exemplary centres are adopting course design with a strong focus on employability. Individual learner support and guidance being provided by the teaching team and industry partners, combined with extensive supported work experience.

Current industry practice is being used as a key driver for course developments in many centres. This has been evidenced in assessment specifications, standards and workflows. Importantly, many centres are conducting peer group reviews where practicable.

Specific areas for improvement

There appears to be no standardised approach amongst centres to candidate personal development plans. Centres should be encouraged to facilitate a candidate-initiated vehicle that can track their personal objectives and skills development throughout the course.

Many centres would benefit from further developing their virtual learning environments and new media communications to match expectations and requirements of Creative Industries candidates.

Staff CPD in some centres is not reflecting industry developments. Centres are advised to review resources and CPD opportunities regularly to stay current.

Higher National Graded Units

The following HN Graded Units were verified this session:

H49S 34   Creative Industries: Television: Graded Unit 1
DM2T 35   Creative Industries Television Graded Unit 2
H49T 35   Creative Industries: Television: Graded Unit 2
DM2P 34   Creative Industries: Radio: Graded Unit 1
F37J 34   Audio Visual Technology: Graded Unit 1

General comments

As HN Units.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As HN Units.

Evidence Requirements

There now appears to be a clearer understanding of Evidence Requirements for Units with exemplary centres tailoring evidence requirements to accurately match and reflect industry practices.

All centres now appear to be adopting a more integrated and contextualised curriculum delivery and are exploring alternative approaches to evidence gathering as they share good practice with other centres.

Following centre re-organisations, there appears to be a new generation of motivated staff who are even more committed to improving the student experience and employability. Unfortunately, staff continue to operate under considerable time and budget constraints.

QDTs are now actively encouraged to explore and initiate alternative methods of gathering and recording evidence.

Administration of assessments

As HN Units.

General feedback

As HN Units.

In addition, it was noted that there were some very high quality submissions in evidence this year.

Areas of good practice

The following areas of good practice were reported this session:

♦ Good assessment specifications/briefs that interpret requirements in a student-friendly manner

♦ Good GU1 briefs that stated a fixed duration but still allowed for candidates to showcase their skills and creativity
(Fixed duration was seen as helpful in terms of setting a level playing field with candidates meeting key requirements of a brief plus helpful for tutors when marking.)

♦ Detailed marking schemes with comprehensive feedback, justification of marking decisions and tracking of candidate progress

♦ Cross-marking and team teaching that resulted in the standardisation of approach and marking of candidate work

♦ Use of a VLE (eg Dropbox and Mahara) to submit and store work
(This supports industry practice, organisation and showcasing of candidate work, time-stamping of work submitted. It also it holds all evidence in one place allowing easy access to candidate evidence for EV purposes.)

Specific areas for improvement

♦ Improvement of Graded Unit assessment deadlines and evidence
(It is important that all assessors and candidates understand that GU is marked stage by stage and that they must pass each stage before progressing to the next)

♦ Storage of candidate assessment evidence
(Whilst some centres are initiating collating evidence digitally others have not yet developed an infrastructure that supports this. In some cases there is a mix of paper, personal external drive storage, Facebook, YouTube and printed production folders — all of which require some time to source and plough through or cross reference.)

♦ Internal verification systems and procedures
(Many are still local or paper based rather than electronic or centralised across college. The merging of systems across new college structures has caused some confusion and inconsistency with information.)

♦ Remediation records
(In many instances, remediation records have not been retained for inspection)