



**Higher National Qualifications 2011
Internal Assessment Report
Drama**

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

Within the verification group for Drama and Theatre Arts (16) there appeared to be a clear and accurate understanding in centres of the national standards for HND Acting and Performance, HND Musical Theatre, and HNC Technical Theatre. The standards across the centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level.

The following Units were verified.

DG49 34 Professional Development for Actors
DP93 34 Vocal Techniques 1
DP8H 35 Vocal Techniques 2
DG3L 35 Acting 2: Applying Skills in Performance
DG48 35 Production 2: Applying Skills in Performance
DG3K 34 Acting 1: Developing Skills
DG3X 34 Devising Theatre
DM2M 34 Creating Devised Theatre
DG48 35 Production 2: Applying Skills for Performance
F389 34 Stage Management
DP8T 34 Performance 1: Developing Skills for Musical Theatre

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, centres used the SQA assessment exemplar materials if they were available. The majority of centres adopted their own house style of the material for delivery.

Centres that had delivered the Units for some time demonstrated a high level of familiarity with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification material, and this aided the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across the centres. Some difficulty arose with centres who were offering the Units for the first time. These difficulties were in the main caused by unfamiliarity with the exemplar materials. In some assessments the standards were not consistent with HN level. These centres were given guidance in the approach required in order to achieve consistency and standardisation of assessment.

Evidence Requirements

All centres (other than some offering HN Units for the first time) demonstrated a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements. All evidence was easily accessible and easy to track. This applied to both written evidence and recorded video evidence. Some centres offering Units for the first time misunderstood the Evidence Requirements at some points and related marking was askew. A difficulty arises for centres delivering HN Units for the first time in establishing the correct level of applied marking for HN level. There is a tendency to mark subjectively. There were signs that written Evidence Requirements were beginning to be submitted electronically in centres where a virtual learning environment (VLE) is being employed for learning and teaching.

Administration of assessments

Centre assessments (other than some offering Units for the first time) were at an appropriate level. Standardisation was achieved where centres employed a robust and well documented internal verification (IV) procedure.

Further general feedback

Feedback to candidates was generally significant and detailed throughout. Some centres could increase the amount of detail given on reasons why marks were lost as this would aid the verification process, both internal and external. However, there was a significant amount of evidence that the use of comments and ticks in written work and checklists supported the marks awarded. Candidates across centres were very enthusiastic about their courses. In some centres the use of a VLE such as Moodle was used for delivery of some teaching and assessment material.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ All centres offered very well laid out Unit folders and candidate assessment material.
- ◆ Recorded video evidence was very good throughout and easily accessible for verification.
- ◆ Use of a VLE for delivery of the HN Unit Professional Development for Actors (DG49 34) and access to learning materials. This enables the candidate to learn and apply new IT skills.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Detailed comments should be used in written work to enable candidate reflection.
- ◆ Internal verification needs to be active and robust.
- ◆ All candidates' evidence should show signs of having being marked. Use relevant comments and ticks where appropriate.
- ◆ Development of a clear tracking procedure for candidate evidence from paper to video evidence.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified

DG4T	34	Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 1
DG4V	35	Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 2
DP9P	34	Musical Theatre: Graded Unit 1
DP9R	35	Musical Theatre: Graded Unit 2
FA03	95	Technical Theatre and Production: Graded Unit 2

General comments

There appears to be a clear and accurate understanding of national standards for both Graded Unit 1 and Graded Unit 2 in Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre. The standards across the centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level. However, the Musical Theatre Graded Units proved to be problematic with some centres who were delivering them for the first time. Marking tended to be holistic and at an incorrect level. One centre was verified for HND Technical Theatre and Production Graded Unit. This is the first year this has been offered so comparison across centres is not possible. The centre had a successful verification visit and national standards at HN were achieved.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, centres used the SQA assessment exemplar material for Graded Unit 1 and Graded Unit 2 in Acting and Performance, Musical Theatre and for Graded Unit 2 in Technical Theatre and Production. The majority of centres adopted their own house style of the material for delivery. One centre was visited for Technical Theatre and Production: Graded Unit 2.

The high level of familiarity with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials aided the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across the centres. Some difficulty arose with centres who were offering the Musical Theatre Graded Units for the first time. These difficulties were in the main caused by unfamiliarity with the exemplar materials. The centres were given guidance in the approach required in order to achieve consistency and standardisation of assessment.

Evidence Requirements

All centres (other than some offering Musical Theatre Graded Units for the first time) demonstrated a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements. All evidence was easily accessible and easy to track. This applied to both written evidence and recorded video evidence. Some centres offering Musical Theatre Graded Units for the first time misunderstood the Evidence Requirements at some points and related marking was askew. A difficulty arises for centres delivering Graded Units for the first time in establishing the correct level of applied marking standards for HN level and there can be a tendency to mark subjectively. There is a DVD available for Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 1 and this offers an example of assessing the Graded Unit through the stages. There were signs that written Evidence Requirements were beginning to be submitted electronically in centres where a VLE is being employed for learning and teaching. Some issues arose in Musical Theatre: Graded Unit 2 regarding the submission of photographs. While these photographs have to be of a professional standard, it is not expected that the candidate should

necessarily outlay a considerable amount of money to satisfy the requirements of the Unit. The photograph has to have a professional look about it but does not necessarily have to be taken by a professional photographer.

Administration of assessments

All centres' assessments (other than some offering Musical Theatre Graded Units for the first time) were at an appropriate level. Standardisation was achieved by robust and well documented IV procedures. This was a feature across a number of centres. Consistent and appropriate marking was achieved sometimes through a double-marked system.

Assessments were marked by two assessors, each with an individual score sheet, and an average mark taken from the two results. This was particularly beneficial in the marking of the practical assessment and logbooks in Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre Graded Units. There was evidence in some centres of internal verification taking place throughout the delivery of the Graded Units — once after the Stage 1, once after Stage 2, and once after the final stage. This system enables problems to be picked up early on and corrected if necessary, rather than waiting until the Unit has been delivered to discover a problem in Stage 1.

Further general feedback

Feedback to candidates was generally significant and detailed throughout. Some centres, perhaps, could increase the amount of detail given on reasons why marks were lost as this would aid the verification process, both internal and external. This would be particularly helpful in the practical assessment checklists. However, there was a significant amount of evidence that the use of comments in logbooks and checklists supported the mark awarded. Candidates at one centre commented on the fact that feedback was very good and felt they benefited from it, whereas candidates from another centre would appreciate more written feedback for reflection. All centres offered fair access to assessment and learning support if required. In Acting and Performance: Graded Unit 1, candidates felt they gained skills in creativity, confidence, knowledge of the production process, general theory of the subject area, organisation, and time management.

Some centres have introduced (or are considering the introduction of) a 'mini Graded Unit' at NQ level in order to prepare students for study at HN level. Candidate feedback suggested that mentoring sessions were very helpful. In one centre candidates had developed a forum on Facebook to share information and in some centres the use of a VLE such as Moodle was found to be very useful for the candidates as they could submit logbooks electronically. Candidate feedback on the Technical Theatre and Production: Graded Unit 2 stated that the Unit offered a good opportunity to tie all of the learning from the core Units together.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Many centres offered very well laid out Unit folders and candidate assessment material.
- ◆ Recorded video evidence was very good throughout and easily accessible for verification.
- ◆ Some centres had external industry representatives in the audition panel for the practical assessments and *viva voce*.
- ◆ Double-marking was employed to assist with appropriate level and standardisation of marking.

- ◆ Internal verification was carried out throughout the delivery of Graded Units thus reducing potential problems that otherwise might not be picked up soon enough. This also helped to maintain standardisation.
- ◆ Candidates created a forum on Facebook to support each other.
- ◆ Strong evidence of learning support available for students.
- ◆ Utilisation of a VLE for submission of written assessments and access to learning materials. This enables the candidate to learn and apply new IT skills.
- ◆ Electronic template for logbooks issued to candidates. This provides a consistent layout of material and allows for easier marking and verification.

Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Detailed comments are consistently required on logbooks and checklists to indicate why marks have been lost.
- ◆ Use of ticks to clarify where marks have been awarded.
- ◆ Detailed comments should be used in logbooks to enable candidate reflection.
- ◆ Candidates should be given strict guidelines for submission of logbooks with regard to layout. On some occasions the candidates' material was not presented in an orderly fashion making marking and verification very time consuming and difficult. The use of a logbook template may resolve this type of problem.
- ◆ Internal verification forms and checklists should allow enough room for comments.
- ◆ Use of the same personnel on *viva voce* panels throughout for consistency.
- ◆ All appropriate checklists should be completed before the external verification visit.
- ◆ Marking in the Musical Theatre Graded Units should be carried out by an appropriate subject specialist, eg in singing, dancing, and acting.