Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Drama and Theatre Arts

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 Drama and Theatre Arts verification group there continues to be, in by far the majority of centres, a clear and accurate understanding of the national standard for HNC/D Acting and Performance and HNC/D Musical Theatre. The standards across the centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level.

The following Units were verified across centres:

DG47 34   Production 1: Developing Skills
DG48 35   Production 2: Applying Skills in Performance
DP8T 34   Performance 1: Developing Skills for Musical Theatre
F1VB 35   Acting for Dancers: Advanced
H1KV 35   Acting 2: Applying Skills in Performance
H1KW 34   Voice 1: Developing Skills
H1KX 35   Voice 2: Applying Skills in Performance
H1L1 34   Singing Skills 1 for Musical Theatre
H4SJ 34   Acting 1: Developing Skills
H4SL 35   Movement 2: Applying Skills in Performance
H4TP 34   Professional Development for Actors
DG4W 34 Singing Skills for the Actor 1
DP8R 34   Musical Theatre Repertoire
DG3R 34   Acting for Radio
H1L2 35   Singing Skills for Musical Theatre 2

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, centres used the SQA assessment exemplar materials if they were available for the Unit. The majority of centres adopted their own house style of the material for delivery. Centres and candidates appeared to respond well to the revised/updated Units in Acting and Performance and Musical Theatre.

Most centres had delivered the Units for some time and demonstrated a high level of familiarity with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials and this aided the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across centres. There was a continued high standard of presentation of material in all centres.

Evidence Requirements

Centres demonstrated a clear understanding of evidence requirements. In most instances written and practical evidence was accessible and easy to track. Centres used clear methods of identification of candidates on video evidence. There was continued significant use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) in teaching and learning and written evidence requirements were being submitted

and stored electronically. The use of a VLE was an aid to addressing issues relating to plagiarism and log book submission deadlines. Turnitin was also being used to address issues of plagiarism.

Centres should note that there a number of new SQA assessment exemplars available for mandatory Units. A few revised Unit specifications are also available along with revised assessment exemplars (where appropriate).

Administration of assessments

Centre assessments were at an appropriate level. Standardisation was achieved through centres employing robust and well documented internal verification (IV) procedures. Internal verification of assessments was generally robust.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates was considerable and supportive across the majority of centres verified. There was a significant amount of evidence where the use of comments and ticks in written work and checklists supported the derived result. This is extremely important as it removes elements of ambiguity in marking and allows the verification process to progress smoothly. Candidates across centres were very enthusiastic about their courses. There was substantial evidence of positive feedback from candidates to their studies in terms of both course content and lecturers. VLEs, such as Moodle, are being 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 materials.
- There were many good examples of detailed feedback to candidates.
- Recorded video evidence was generally very good throughout and easily accessible for verification.
- Use of a VLE for learning and teaching. This enables the candidate to learn and apply new IT skills. It also aids with issues such as plagiarism and submission deadlines of assessments.
- Turnitin is being used in some centres to assist with issues of plagiarism.

Specific areas for improvement

- Clear identification and tracking of candidates is required where video evidence is used. This is particularly necessary where group practical activity is taking place.

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
F3NN 34 Technical Theatre: Graded Unit 1

General comments

In all centres there appears to be a clear and accurate understanding of the national standards for Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Acting and Performance and Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Musical Theatre. The standards across the centres appeared to be appropriate and consistent with HN level. One centre, externally verified for Technical Theatre, Graded Unit 1, had employed a centre-devised assessment rather than the SQA assessment exemplar. This resulted in issues of standardisation. Centres are reminded that it is strongly advisable to use the SQA assessment exemplar. If a centre wishes to use their own assessment this should be sent to SQA for prior verification. Furthermore, a development visit is available from SQA. This can be particularly helpful where a centre is delivering a Graded Unit in a particular subject area for the first time or assessors/internal verifiers are new to the process.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In all cases, centres used the SQA assessment exemplar material for Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Acting and Performance and Graded Unit 1 and 2 in Musical Theatre. The centres adopted their own house style of the material for delivery. Centres highlighted the need for updated SQA assessment exemplars to match the new, updated, mandatory Units being delivered.

The high level of familiarity with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials continues to aid the standardisation of marking and recording of assessment across centres.

Evidence Requirements

Overall, centres demonstrated a clear understanding of evidence requirements. Candidates' evidence was easily accessible and in most instances, easy to track. Occasionally, some issues arose over the difficulty in locating and identifying candidates on video files. It is recommended that each centre has a clear approach to identifying candidates on video for external verification purposes. This is particularly the case where practical group work takes place. There was substantial use of a VLE for submission, marking and storage of written evidence requirements. The use of a VLE was an aid to addressing issues relating to plagiarism and log book submission deadlines. Turnitin was also being employed

for plagiarism issues. Centres are reminded to employ the marking techniques given within the SQA Graded Unit exemplars. This assists in the verification process by clearly highlighting where marks have been awarded.

Administration of assessments

Standardisation was achieved through robust and well documented internal verification procedures. This was a dominant feature across the majority 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 remedied if necessary, rather than waiting until the end of the delivery and discovering a problem in Stage 1, for example.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates continues to be generally significant and detailed throughout with a significant amount of positive feedback given to candidates in relation to written work. There was a substantial amount of evidence that the use of comments in logbooks and checklists supported the derived mark. All centres offered fair access to assessment and learning support if required. Candidates who were interviewed, displayed enthusiasm for their course and lecturers.

Areas of good practice

♦ All centres offered very well laid out Unit folders and candidate assessment materials.

♦ Some centres used more than two assessors for the performances thereby creating a realistic scenario for the mock audition.

♦ Double marking was employed to assist with appropriate level and standardisation of marking.

♦ Internal verification was carried out throughout the delivery of Graded Units and reduced potential problems that otherwise might not be picked up soon enough.

Specific areas for improvement

♦ Clear identification and tracking of candidates is required where video evidence is used. This is particularly necessary where group practical activity is taking place.

♦ Use of SQA assessment exemplars eliminates issues related to standardisation.

♦ Where a centre-devised assessment is to be employed it is strongly recommended that SQA's prior verification process is used.