



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Music**

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 report is based on 11 external verification visits carried out in 2015. There were five full qualifications visits, three Graded Unit 1 visits and three Graded Unit 2 visits. However, some of the Graded Unit visits were in the context of either the Music Business or Sound Production frameworks.

Across the sector all centres visited had significant strengths with action points recorded for only one centre for Graded Unit 1. Therefore this would suggest that from this external verification sample that centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the national standard for HN Music.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

From this external verification sample it appears that almost all centre assessors have full familiarity with Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials since all had significant strengths. However, in one centre, staff required support to ensure that they fully understood how to apply standards as identified in Unit specifications. Generally, centre staff maintained up-to-date master packs containing Unit specifications, instruments of assessment, model answers and checklists, candidate records and internal verification forms and materials.

From the sample, assessments were in the main valid, reliable, equitable and fair and were constructed in accordance with Unit specifications and SQA requirements. All evidence verified was deemed to be accurately and consistently marked in accordance with detailed and thorough marking schemes; however, some recommendations were identified.

Evidence Requirements

The sampled evidence would suggest that overall there is a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for Unit(s).

Generally, for the Units verified, there was evidence of pre-delivery checks and internal verification throughout the term, including sampling of student work. This complies with SQA guidelines and standards.

Administration of assessments

From the sample it was clear that assessment is at the appropriate level. In some centres delivering staff have used SQA exemplars where available and ensured that these, as well as their own instruments of assessment, match the knowledge and skills required for all Outcomes for each Unit.

There was in this sample a very good, robust internal verification system in place.

Curriculum planning, self-evaluation and reviews were also evident showing how learning, teaching and the assessment process would be implemented.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates was, in the main, very good, constructive and fair. Feedback from candidates in these centres was also extremely positive, where interviewed candidates stated that they were enjoying their course and study and in one case they stated that they felt their tutors really cared. Candidates generally felt that they were well supported in all aspects of their course and, in the main, had access to excellent resources and excellent teaching.

Access to assessment was thought to be fair for all. In each of the sampled centres, candidates were in one facility for their studies — therefore the process was easily managed.

It is clear that candidates across the sector are working conscientiously and very hard. They are generally supported throughout their studies by teaching teams that are committed and experienced and, in many cases, producing exceptional work.

Areas of good practice

In general, course teams are highly motivated and well informed about assessment and internal verification procedures. They are committed to producing high quality learning environments and learning and teaching materials, and to producing and managing rigorous and robust assessments. Teams are clearly giving serious consideration to the planning of integrated approaches to assessment at both Unit content level as well as integration across programmes, a factor that should be significant to the experience of every candidate.

Centres are generally very well equipped and up-to-date and this affords candidates an excellent learning experience. Tutors/assessors are generally active themselves in the music industry, this is especially true in the case of part-time staff. This factor, coupled with visiting lectures from industry professionals, brings the industry into the classroom and ensures access to the latest information as well as access to these professionals. Centres ensure candidates are actively involved in music making outwith the centre environment.

Many centres are using Turnitin software to detect plagiarism therefore ensuring candidate evidence is their own work.

A number of good practice areas were identified.

Specific areas for improvement

Delivering lecturers, assessors, internal verifiers and college management are striving to ensure that there is a culture of continuous improvement in their centres. It is hoped that any recommendations highlighted in the External Verifiers' (EV) reports will support this.

Higher National Graded Units

The following Graded Units were externally verified:

F508 34 Music Graded Unit 1

F506 34 Sound Production Graded Unit 1

F507 34 Music Business Graded Unit (three in total)

(Note that the above Units were allocated under Music (63).)

DR33 35 Music Graded Unit 2 (three in total)

General comments

Across the sector all centres visited had significant strengths with no action points recorded. Therefore this would suggest from this external verification sample that centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standard for HN Music Graded Unit 1 and 2.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials as well as the SQA online support material for these Graded Units. However, one centre had used the wrong version of Graded Unit 1, which had been updated in August 2014 and staff had not realised this, therefore action points were imposed and met.

From the sample, all assessments were valid, reliable, equitable and fair and were constructed in accordance with Unit specifications and SQA requirements. All evidence verified was deemed to be accurately and consistently marked in accordance with marking schemes.

Evidence Requirements

Due to the timing of the EV visits for Graded Units, the key requirement for verification is that the planning and developing stages are complete with at least an indicative mark allocated. This generally means that the evaluation stage is not complete and rarely verified.

There were some minor issues, eg in the planning stage candidates should include clear aims and objectives that are SMART and, in the case of Graded Unit 2, they should ensure that there is a clear focus or purpose to their presentation.

Candidates across the sector are clearly working conscientiously and very hard and, in many cases, producing exceptional work. Most has stated that they are supported well throughout their studies.

Administration of assessments

Assessments in centres are administered well, are at the appropriate level, and decisions are fair and consistent. There appears to be robust systematic internal verification procedures in place. In general, there is good recording of mentoring interviews.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates was, in the main, very good, clear and consistent. Feedback from candidates in the sampled centres was also very positive. Candidates generally felt that tutor support was very useful, timely and constructive. Candidates felt very supported and were usually very complimentary of the teaching teams and environments in which they were learning.

Access to assessment was thought to be fair for all. In the sampled centres, candidates were in one facility for their studies and the process was easily managed.

It is clear that candidates across the sector are working conscientiously and very hard. The Graded Unit is an opportunity to pull together skills and to pitch and sell oneself. Some candidates excelled and produced high quality work and delivered exceptional presentations. Candidates are supported throughout their studies by teaching teams that are committed and very experienced.

Areas of good practice

In general, course teams are highly motivated and well informed about assessment and internal verification procedures. They are committed to ensuring their candidates gain a high quality experience. Teams are clearly giving serious consideration to the planning and delivery of these Graded Units.

Centres are generally very well equipped and up-to-date and this affords candidates an excellent learning experience.

Marking schemes which break down the marks into the various evidence requirements helped with consistency and accuracy of grades allocated.

A number of good practice areas were identified.

Specific areas for improvement

Delivering lecturers, assessors, internal verifiers and college management are striving to ensure that there is a culture of continuous improvement in their centres. It is hoped that any recommendations highlighted in the EVs' reports will support this.