



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2016  
Professional Development Award:  
Childhood Practice**

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

Six centres were verified in this academic session for the PDA in Childhood Practice at SCQF level 9. The external verifiers found a dedicated and committed assessment team in each centre working hard to ensure the quality and excellence of the qualification delivery.

The assessment teams were all qualified to the appropriate SCQF level and showed through their candidates' work that they have a current and up-to-date knowledge of policy and practice in the sector.

The courses run for two years in the centres and care has been taken to ensure the candidates have the required SCQF level credits in order to access the course.

The external verifiers have stated that all the centres are operating well and complying with SQA's quality assurance policy and procedures. All the centres verified in this session were deemed to have significant strengths in all areas.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The centres were seen to be working well with the units in relation to context and currency. There were assessment instruments with possibilities for integrating assessment of FD7236 [Childhood Practice: Leadership and Management \(Workplace Practice\)](#) with units from the optional section depending on placement opportunities. Some centres also integrated other units appropriately by ensuring validity and fairness with the assessment.

Most centres were found to be using the SQA ASPs for the assessment guidance. This session also saw the use of SQA TAPS which centres have been using and giving to candidates as further support.

## Evidence requirements

The evidence required for academic writing at SCQF level 9 came up in most of the report discussions between the external verifiers and the assessment teams. The centres acknowledged that significant support was provided to candidates to improve their academic writing and critical analysis skills to a level 9 standard. The external verifiers accepted that the evidence that was sampled was at an appropriate standard for SCQF level 9.

The evidence requirements for the units in the PDA Childhood Practice at SCQF level 9 state that all the work must link to the Childhood Practice Standards. These standards were updated in 2015, and many of the centres were reported to have mapped the candidates' evidence and assessments to the new standards.

The centres have ensured a good quality level of evidence at SCQF level 9 for the mandatory and optional units. All evidence was reported to be relevant to current policy and practice as required in the arrangements document.

### **Administration of assessments**

The external verifiers reported that the centres were assessing the candidates using the appropriate assessment tools and integration guidance. All centres used the SQA assessment support packs (ASPs) and training and assessment packs (TAPs) which are relevant to the unit requirements. All the centres also ensured that the candidates' assessments were linked to the SSSC Code of Practice and the Childhood Practice Benchmark standards as required in the evidence guidelines for the units.

The centres offering the qualification were found to have the appropriate policies and procedures in line with SQA quality assurance criteria for assessment practice. Assessors and verifiers accurately judged the candidates' evidence and the standard of feedback to the candidates was supportive and detailed.

The use of integration across the units has improved this session as most of the centres have offered the qualification previously and are on their second cohort of candidates.

Some of the centres are still operating a 100% internal verification of learners' evidence; however, it would be acceptable to move to a smaller percentage after the first and successful complete course. The standardisation meetings with the assessment teams have been recorded and the external verifiers reported that there have been detailed discussions across centres in relation to the evidence requirements for the qualification.

Centres that are working within partnerships to deliver the course ensured that their internal verification systems and procedures support partnership working and that quality assurance was not compromised.

### **General feedback**

The centres are working very hard to ensure good quality evidence is presented by the candidates for this qualification. The centres were reported to be enjoying the course and keen to ensure that it is viewed by the sector as a good quality alternative to the BA Childhood Practice. Prior to accessing the course, centres were clear with candidates about the credit and qualification requirements; gap filling has been part of this support.

The external verifiers talked to candidates about their experiences as learners on the course. The feedback from candidates across the centres was very similar. Candidates discussed the amount of work required to do the course and the huge step up to write from an academic perspective. However, the candidates also stated how much the course has challenged their practice, given them a wider knowledge base, and resulted in them implementing many changes in their

practice. Candidates in their second year felt that the course had been beneficial to them and their workplace.

Some centres have requested support on how to integrate assessment of some units and this is being considered.

### **Areas of good practice**

- ◆ The external verifiers have noted that there is good practice in the centres in relation to the assessors and verifiers ensuring they are up to date with current policy and practice in the sector. This is coming through in their CPD records but also in the teaching and marking of the learners' evidence.
- ◆ The centres' support for candidates in this qualification was mentioned by the external verifiers several times in the reports, particularly in relation to induction workshops for academic writing. Many of the centres have included an extensive induction programme for candidates to assist them with the skills required for researching and writing at SCQF level 9.
- ◆ Several of the centres have developed a mapping of the old Childhood Practice standards to the revised Childhood Practice standards and have integrated this with their assessments.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

- ◆ It would be helpful for all centres to map the revised Childhood Practice standards to the candidate evidence and assessments.