



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2014 Psychology

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

FK8E 34 Psychology B: Explanation and Research of Psychological Topics
FK8F 35 Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics
FK8C 35 Psychology D: The Research Process in Psychology

Centres demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards.

All paperwork required for the verification process was produced by centres appropriately.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The correct Unit specifications were being used in almost all centres. The national exemplars were used as models for assessment.

Evidence Requirements

There was clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Units.

Administration of assessments

Assessments were administered appropriately. Candidates confirmed their understanding of the requirements and actual assessment practice was appropriate. References are required for the open-book assessment. This is an evidence requirement and was consistently applied in all centres.

The use of alternative assessments for the Psychology Units, including academic posters and use of a portfolio was discussed. These may be used in future assessments.

General feedback

Centres are working towards a common approach in their merged college campuses. Using expertise at another campus to support standardisation of assessment decisions was discussed.

Internal verification was discussed as was additional support offered at colleges and issues such as plagiarism and remediation/re-sit policies. Most centres were clear what the arrangements should be, although a few did ask further questions during the visits.

Candidates' work was of a good standard with distinct improvement seen in Unit FK8F 35 Psychology C: Analysis and Evaluation of Psychological Topics.

Different styles of recording feedback were used in centres. Some assessors used a standardised feedback sheet which clearly recorded what was required in remediation and what the assessment decisions were. Some wrote detailed feedback on the actual script which was both encouraging and constructive. Both methods are useful but perhaps an adaptation of a standardised feedback sheet to allow more detailed feedback to be recorded would be best.

Areas of good practice

There was evidence of good practice in the use of the verbal remediation checklist. Good written feedback was given also to students.

Good practice was evident where the assessment process involved a sample being second-marked and there were informal discussions between a small experienced team on any issues encountered during marking.

Good practice was demonstrated in holding a meeting that specifically discussed the ethical issues with topic choices in Psychology B and Psychology D research.

Centres had planned input on SPSS with candidates to support transition to university, which fitted well with the Psychology D research Unit.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres should ensure that the most up-to-date Unit specifications are used by all assessors — perhaps by downloading from SQA's website each session prior to delivery.

For the closed-book assessment in Psychology B, centres should make sure that candidates give more detailed descriptions of specific research.