



**Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Sound Production**

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 12 external verification visits. There were six full qualifications visits and six Graded Unit 2 visits. There were no Graded Unit 1 visits.

Across the sector all centres had significant strengths with no action points recorded. Therefore, this would suggest that, from this external verification sample, centres have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards for HN Sound Production.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

From this external verification sample it appears that assessors are familiar with Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials, since all had significant strengths. Centre staff maintained up-to-date master packs containing Unit specifications, instruments of assessment, model answers and checklists, candidate achievement and internal verification forms and materials.

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

Team meetings were undertaken to ensure standardisation of Unit delivery and assessment — showing evidence of pre-delivery planning. Meeting minutes were also available.

Evidence Requirements

The sampled evidence would suggest that overall there is a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for Unit(s). Generally, for Units verified there was evidence of pre-delivery checks and internal verification throughout the term, including sampling of student work.

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, matched all knowledge and skills for all Outcomes for each Unit.

There was, in this sample, a very good, robust internal verification systems in place and staff were adhering to them — albeit at times some were considered slightly cumbersome.

Curriculum planning, self-evaluation and review were also generally evident, showing how learning, teaching and the assessment process would be implemented with dates set for targets to be met throughout the year.

General feedback

Feedback to candidates, was in the main, very good, constructive and fair.

Feedback from candidates in these centres was also very positive, and interviewed candidates stated that they were enjoying their course and study. 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 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, producing exceptional work in some cases. They 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 the assessment and internal verification procedures. They are committed to producing high quality learning environments, learning and teaching materials, and 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 (see previous comments). Tutors/assessors are generally active themselves in the audio/sound production industry and 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.

Many centres appear to be using 'Turnitin' to ensure that evidence from candidates is their own work.

Comments from External Verifiers (EVs) included:

- ◆ *The addition of a PA cabinet building workshop added value to learning and teaching.*
- ◆ *Industry involvement permeating the entire Group Award is a great strength of the centre.*
- ◆ *Cross-curricular working — sound engineers with other performance courses.*

- ◆ *Mentoring of students who have individual support needs was well organised and transparent.*
- ◆ *Very thorough internal verification system with detailed pre-delivery checks.*
- ◆ *Peer group learning between students on different levels provides excellent support for students on the HNC.*
- ◆ *Very clear marking guidelines.*
- ◆ *The Quality Manager provided all IV staff training at the start of every academic year to allow discussion of any changes in the QA process from SQA.*
- ◆ *An 'Action Plan for Learners' has been created and will be used to help candidates monitor progress for the entire year.*
- ◆ *Using Blackboard submissions for student assessment and feedback.*

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 therefore anticipated that any recommendations highlighted in an EV report will be implemented to ensure that there is continuous improvement.

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DR2R 35 Sound Production: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

Graded Unit 1 was verified but is allocated to Music (63), therefore see Music IAR for comments.

General comments

This report is based on six Graded Unit 2 visits. There were no Graded Unit 1 visits.

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

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

Team meetings were undertaken to ensure standardisation of Unit delivery and assessment — showing evidence of pre-delivery planning. Where appropriate, meeting minutes were also available.

Evidence Requirements

Because of the timing of 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.

In this Graded Unit the candidates prepare a presentation to be delivered in a job interview situation along with answers to possible interview questions.

The evidence verified indicates that there is reasonably clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit. However, the focus of the presentation could generally be more about a 'pitch' as opposed to demonstrating knowledge

from the mandatory Units. This is the point of this Unit because by pitching for, eg a funding opportunity, knowledge and skill would have to be shown without saying 'I did this in this Unit' or 'I used a ... piece of equipment'. Also, candidates should use sufficient audio to exemplify skills. The reason for using particular recordings would be highlighted by the candidate therefore demonstrating their skills. How they did it and what they used becomes secondary. During presentations candidates should face and present directly to their audience and recording of the presentation should be clear.

The evidence presented in centres was generally comprehensive and included portfolios and candidate PowerPoint slides as well as video evidence on both hard drives and videotape with playback equipment.

Logbook entries were not always as intended, ie as a mechanism to help candidates develop through reflection as well as helping them to build a routine where they track progress and achievement.

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 verification procedures in place. There is also 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 about 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, therefore 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 high quality experiences. Teams are clearly giving serious consideration to the planning and delivery of this Graded Unit.

Centres are generally very well equipped and up-to-date and this affords candidates an excellent learning experience (see previous comments).

In one centre, learner support plans were considered to be excellent with feedback given to students during the one-to-one meetings.

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 therefore anticipated that any recommendations highlighted in an EV report will be implemented to ensure that there is continuous improvement.

Discussion took place in some centres regarding assessment guidance for the developing stage and the requirements for this stage.