Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2014
Surveying

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 is the eighth year of delivery of the suite of HN awards. As a result, it is abundantly clear from the comments in the External Verifiers' reports that the staff in all centres have a very clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. These standards are observed and actively promoted throughout the delivery and assessment of the HN Units.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Many of the tutors/assessors are thoroughly familiar with the full suite of Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and SQA-derived exemplar materials. Each centre has identified a range of practical assessment sites that are thoroughly appropriate to assessment demands, but reflect local site locations and conditions.

Evidence Requirements

Throughout the external verification process this session, the External Verifiers have observed confirmation of clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements as stated in the Unit specifications. There have been no instances of misunderstanding or misrepresentation identified during the verification audit.

Administration of assessments

As 'regionalisation' progresses through the sector, many centres are still co-ordinating the variety of quality systems that existed in their constituent campuses. However, despite this challenge, all centres that were audited demonstrated robust structural systems that ably supported the range of quality issues — including assessment planning, delivery and curriculum review, assessment and internal verification.

In many centres, the harmonising of the standardisation of assessment and internal verification processes across constituent campuses is not yet fully implemented.

Many External Verifiers reported that a majority of centres have developed highly sophisticated and effective electronic systems to manage, record and store all documentation that supports delivery, learning, tutorial, assessment and verification activities. This improves accessibility for the learner and enhances and reinforces the learner/tutor relationship.

Most centres actively contribute to and support the Built Environment Qualifications Support Team, and recently the Qualifications Development Team, as the NC and HN Awards have been reviewed. Through these forums, there is considerable exploration and sharing of good practice that enhances the delivery of all awards in the Built Environment suite.

General feedback

In all cases, feedback to learners was good and in some cases, exemplary. There was considerable evidence in learners' scripts and portfolios of comprehensive feedback that was valid, relevant and informative.

Without exception, feedback from candidates commended the support and guidance offered by tutors and support staff in all aspects of learning. Candidates spoke highly of the professionalism and dedication of the tutors and their accessibility not only through the new virtual learning portals, but also outwith programmed delivery classes. Candidates also spoke of their 'enjoyment' of the course of study. They highlighted the value of the course and its relevance to employment and higher educational opportunities.

There was some minor criticism of assessment burden, but most centres countered this by forward planning of assessment events and integration of Unit Outcomes.

There were no apparent barriers to assessment. Most centres demonstrated a flexible approach to timing and co-ordination of assessment events.

Areas of good practice

In most centres, staff had taken the necessary steps to try to ensure that the candidates' learning experience was insulated from most of the exigencies of radical change in the sector.

Several centres have developed/ adopted sophisticated electronic learning portals which offer easy and constant access for candidates to lecture notes, assessment feedback and advice and guidance notes.

Documentation in master folders generally, was commended as being of very high standard and very comprehensive.

Specific areas for improvement

No specific deficiencies in delivery or management were identified during the external verification audits.