



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2015 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

Throughout the sector, it is very clear that all centres have a thorough, clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of national standards relating to the current Built Environment suite of HN qualifications.

The entire suite of HN qualifications has been subjected to a major review and these updated qualifications became 'live' in August 2014. A very small number of centres initiated delivery of these new programmes in the 2014–15 academic session. Again, the staff in this small cohort of centres demonstrated a clear and accurate understanding of national standards and their implications for these awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The legacy of the past nine years of delivery of the Built Environment HN awards is that all staff are thoroughly familiar with the complete suite of Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and SQA-derived exemplar materials. Over this term, most centres have produced a comprehensive catalogue of alternate instruments of assessment which more than adequately meet the requirements of the Unit specifications.

The wealth of knowledge among the assessors and internal verifiers in the centres has informed the recent review and introduction of the updated HN qualifications and all associated Unit specifications and assessment support packs (ASPs). External verification activity in the minority of centres delivering the new awards has confirmed that the staff are completely familiar with the structure, content and principles of the Unit specifications and ASPs.

Evidence Requirements

It is apparent from the external verification activities this session, that there is a clear and comprehensive understanding of the Evidence Requirements as laid out in the Unit specifications.

Administration of assessments

'Regionalisation' is still impacting on a few centres as they cope with the integration of a variety of quality systems that were present in their constituent campuses. However, all centres have presented, at external verification, robust systems that ably support the delivery of all aspects of the Built Environment HN programmes.

Many centres are continuing development of 'learner/ information portals' to aid and enhance the delivery of all qualifications. These give access to all elements and documentation that support delivery, learning, tutorial, guidance, assessment

and verification activities. Accessibility for candidates is controlled through enrolment, but the facilities reinforce the learner–tutor relationship.

Most centres continue to support and attend the Built Environment Qualifications Support Team (QST). Through this forum, all centres benefit from the sharing of good practice and the critical review of the updated HN programmes as they are introduced and embedded across the sector.

The majority of centres, using SQA exemplar materials as their basis, have developed a wide array of alternate instruments of assessment. In all cases these have been found to be extremely robust, valid and appropriate.

General feedback

Almost without exception, feedback to candidates has been excellent. Much of the evidence produced by candidates is developed in a team-working environment. Assessors ensure that each candidate has sufficient exposure to the intricacies of the surveying discipline while also contributing to the overall team effort.

Tutor guidance has invariably been relevant, informative and supportive and has given candidates scope for interpretation to suit their individual submissions.

More centres/tutors are using e-mail or recently-developed information portals to issue and record feedback on assessment submissions. These forms of communication are also used to enhance accessibility to tutors and candidates and the management of the assessment process.

Generally, feedback from candidates once again has commended the sheer professionalism, support and guidance offered by tutors and support staff throughout their educational endeavours. Many spoke of the accessibility of tutors, even outwith programmed class and tutorial activities. There was considerable praise for the electronic forms of communication, especially the new learning portals that have been introduced.

No barriers to assessment were observed, but some comments on assessment burden were received. Wherever possible, most centres had clearly planned assessment activity to avoid conflict and offered some flexibility of assessment activity. In addition, integration of assessment was observed in some centres.

Areas of good practice

The most significant example of good practice recorded this session was the introduction and onward development in many centres of learning/information portals through which the many aspects of programme delivery are managed.

Several other examples of good practice were also recorded as follows:

- ◆ Regular programme meetings with staff and class representatives producing Quality Improvement Discussion Notes

- ◆ EV reports held on information portal, accessible to all staff
- ◆ Feedback to learners — relevant, informative and supportive
- ◆ Structure and content of master folders were exemplary
- ◆ Design of alternate instruments of assessment were innovative, topical and related to known development proposals
- ◆ Candidate support has been commended almost without exception across the sector
- ◆ Accessibility of tutors/assessors outwith programmed class and tutorial sessions

Specific areas for improvement

A few issues were identified in a very small minority of centres as follows:

- ◆ Standardisation activities not fully recorded
- ◆ Checklists for group working require development