

## **Report on Monitoring Standards 2004**

### **HND Communication (G2A9 16)**

An \*experienced member of SQA's moderating team judged assessment material and candidate evidence against the standards of the Units:

- A6TO 04 *Freelance Working Skills*
- A6S1 04 *Law and the Communication Industries*
- A6S2 04 *Interpersonal and Group Skills*
- A6RS 04 *Business Communication: Writing Skills*

The volume of evidence was manageable for a reduced team and the scrutiny exercise went ahead as planned.

Centres were asked to provide evidence for two candidates: one who had barely achieved and one who had barely underachieved the standard. There were a total number of 40 judgements for assessment instruments and decisions in 2004. Detailed comments for each Unit are summarised in the appendix.

#### **Quality of collected material**

As can be seen from the detailed comments in the appendix, the quality of presentation ranged from satisfactory to commendable.

#### **Assessment instruments**

The new Unit specifications are much more precise as to conditions of assessment and evidence format and amount, and SQA assessment packs have been developed to exemplify appropriate responses. Improved presentation and clarity of assessment instructions to candidates is evident, with detail and checklists representing good practice in both versions of the Units. The removal of merit for individual Units will also support more universal standards of achievement, and further application of skills in the Graded Unit. The precision of the upgraded Higher National (HN) Unit specification and its allocated Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level, and the provision of SQA exemplar support materials would seem to have clarified evidence requirements in general

#### **Evidence of candidate performance**

There has been increased integration across assessment Outcomes of the Units of the award and there is much less discrete assessment. A more standardised approach to supervision, time allocation and format for performance evidence is apparent and many centres have developed excellent internal quality assurance support and tracking systems. Some particularly satisfactory application of knowledge and skills integrated in the new practical project for the Graded Unit was noted

## **Assessment decisions**

Broadly the standards being required and achieved by centres for these Units in 2004 are very encouraging. Centres seem generally to be working to a more standardised approach possibly influenced by new Unit specifications and exemplar materials. Although there are still some weaknesses in delivery of the Unit, they appear to be related to individual assessor judgement, and in some cases, involved over demand on candidates

## **Comparing standards over time**

There was evidence from 1999 for the following two Units:

### *A6S2 04 Interpersonal and group skills*

A more standard relevant and practical approach is evident in 2004, and some centres have developed quality assured best practice. Exemplar material is current and related to the media aspects of the course, which was not universally the case in 1999. However, there are still some weaknesses in delivery of the Unit. The precision of the upgraded HN Unit specification, which is at SCQF level 8, and the provision of SQA exemplar support materials have clarified the requirements for this Unit. The removal of merit for individual Units will also support more universal standards of achievement.

Further advice — and exemplification—on approaches and standards for the Unit would be useful to all centres, as the Unit is a likely option in the new HNC award. Discussion of this Unit at a moderator meeting is recommended.

### *A6RS 04 Business Communication: Writing Skills*

The precision of the upgraded HN Unit specification and the provision of SQA exemplar support materials have clarified the requirements for this Unit, and even centres still offering the older Unit seem to have benefited from this and from general consortium discussions on best practice. The removal of individual merit grades and the integration and application of knowledge and skills in the Graded Unit have been particularly valuable. Dissemination of report information to all centres and to HN Communication moderators would be useful.

## **General comments on the Units**

The latter three of the Units scrutinised are also available in upgraded versions as part of the implementation of the new HN design rules.

**The Scrutiny Panel recommends that SQA should:**

- ◆ continue to develop contextualised assessment exemplar packs and marking keys
- ◆ disseminate information on good practice, possibly by using examples of materials with commentary
- ◆ remind centres of the value of the SQA prior moderation facility and other support available
- ◆ offer a central moderation event/training session using this or similar material which would be invaluable for Communication moderators