Higher National Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017
Professional Cookery

Introduction

All centres selected for verification activity are delivering and assessing individual units, and the graded unit within the HN Professional Cookery award, to the appropriate SQA standards.

Verification activity in 2016–17 included visiting verification for the following units:

DL47 34   Production Cookery — Hot Kitchen
DL3H 34   Food Classification and Purchase
DL45 34   Patisserie
H197 34   Management of Food and Beverage Operations
DL4J 34   Professional Cookery: Graded Unit 1

Development visits were carried out with a small number of centres. During these visits delivery and assessment strategies were discussed, including integration opportunities to reduce assessment burden for both learners and academic delivery staff. Clarification relating to appropriate level 7 and level 8 standards for practical skills and products was sought and discussed. Through these discussions the delivery teams were more confident with the assessment strategies deployed.

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.

All centres provided evidence of ongoing reviews by delivery teams of unit delivery and assessment requirements, including changes to unit specifications and assessment exemplars.

All centres have appropriate environments for the delivery of these awards; some centres are undertaking refurbishment of production kitchens and restaurants.

One centre includes hyperlinks to SQA unit specifications within their controlled electronic folder for academic staff, to ensure all are current for delivery.

Category 3: Candidate support

Criterion 3.2: Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.

All centres have policies and procedures relating to: student recruitment and admissions, and student recruitment and selection. These provide the basis for accepting candidates on to the award and units contained within it. Almost all candidates interviewed had previously completed SQA NC or SVQ awards. Each centre had different support mechanisms in place for candidates, especially with regard to academic standards expected for level 7 research portfolios and assessments.

Criterion 3.3: Candidates must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly.

Almost all centres schedule contact for candidates with their assessors on a weekly basis. In all centres, candidates indicated they were encouraged to contact their assessors outwith class time, usually by e-mail, and the response time for receiving feedback was excellent. Only one centre did not have scheduled contact time, as they operated an 'open door' policy for candidates to have access to their assessors.

In some centres out of hours contact with the assessors through e-mail was encouraged, with responses received very quickly.

All academic staff recognised the need for providing comprehensive feedback to candidates for all units. Almost all provided this through written means, supported by one-to-one meetings between the candidates and the assessors.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

Criterion 4.2: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.

Qualification verifiers have confidence that all centres have appropriate procedures in place and that almost all implemented these effectively to ensure standardisation of assessment through their internal verification activity. Policy and procedures were available for review electronically in all centres.

A three-year cyclical approach to internal verification activity was implemented in all centres. However, due to this policy one centre had not carried out any internal verification for the units selected for external verification activity. It was recommended to this centre that, had internal verification been carried out, issues identified could have been resolved prior to the qualification verifier's visit.

Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

All centres selected for verification activity were using SQA unit specifications and assessment support material in an effective manner. In all centres both individual units and the graded units were scheduled appropriately over the full academic year, allowing all candidates opportunities to complete practical assessments and re-assessments if appropriate.

Observation checklists in almost all centres were comprehensively completed and provided detailed feedback to candidates. Candidates commonly upload evidence of their practical work to internal/intranet programmes to fulfil assessment requirements.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

Centre approaches vary. Almost all have malpractice and plagiarism statements included within student handbooks, and almost all require students to sign a declaration of understanding at the commencement of their course relating to malpractice and plagiarism. One centre requires candidates to sign a declaration form for each piece of assessment evidence submitted. Three centres use Turnitin or Mahara for submission and checking of candidate evidence.

Criterion 4.6: Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

SQA assessment support material is available for all the units selected for verification activity. It was found during external verification activity that all assessors had judged candidate evidence to an appropriate standard.

Electronic storage of photographic evidence of items produced is recommended for professional cookery units to support assessor judgements and both internal and external verification activity.

In almost all centres each stage of the graded unit was double marked or subjected to internal verification. This approach is recommended to ensure consistency as well as to reduce the internal verification burden at the completion of the graded unit.

A few centres were advised to improve or extend the feedback they provided to the candidates, especially where the standard of the product produced is questioned, or, in the case of graded units, where the grade awarded may be changed.

Criterion 4.7: Candidate evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.

All centres were compliant with SQA requirements for the retention of candidate evidence.

As electronic submission of candidate evidence becomes more common, most centres are implementing policies and procedures to ensure secure storage of evidence and candidate information.

Criterion 4.9: Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

Qualification verification reports received by the centres are disseminated to the academic teams. In most centres discussion of these reports was noted in programme team meetings, and any changes for future delivery or assessment strategies were recorded, with timescales for implementation noted.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2016–17:

♦ Learning and Teaching Summary forms are excellent and will be useful for reviewing resources as well as delivery and assessment strategies.

♦ Group chat on Facebook is used to good effect, although not all candidates access the group chat on a regular basis.

♦ The use of the MyPotential system to store CPD records electronically. These records are comprehensive, and show ongoing activity through the detailed summaries of activities undertaken by each lecturer.

♦ Electronic systems to hold policies and procedures for delivery, assessment and verification of units and graded units.

♦ Using multiple sources of evidence to support assessment judgements is good practice as it provides clarity on the assessors' decision-making process for both internal and external verification activity.

♦ Seeking out and maintaining partnership arrangements with industry providers helps to ensure that work placements selected for the candidates are of a high standard, and are appropriate and supportive of candidate achievement.

♦ Use of Moodle as a means for delivery, support, assessment and verification is sector leading.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2016–17:

♦ Feedback to candidates is critical for success in both the individual units and the graded unit. In all instances detailed feedback provides reassurance to the candidate that they are attaining both the academic and the practical standards required by the award.

♦ Providing information about the award and its academic rigor to potential candidates would assist with selection and recruitment to the award.

♦ Interpretation of unit specifications and assessment strategies deployed within centres must be compliant with SQA requirements.

♦ Integration of assessment is encouraged, but caution should be applied to prevent 'end-loading' of assessment tasks, for the sake of both academic staff and candidates.