



**Higher National Qualifications**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018**

**Administration and Medical Secretarial**

## Introduction

The units offered in verification groups 363 and 389 form part of the HN Administration and Information Technology. The group award was recently reviewed and session 2017–18 saw the first delivery of the revised award. Four centres were externally verified by visiting verification for VG 363 and 20 centres were externally verified for VG 389 by a mix of visits, remote and central verification.

The HN Administration and Information Technology Network Support event in February 2018 was very well attended and this reflected a heightened level of interest in the delivery and assessment of Digital Technology for Administrators which is a new unit in the group award. The current assessment support pack is available on SOLAR for digital assessment. Two sessions were delivered at the event in relation to digital assessment and these addressed the concerns of those who attended. As part of the review process practitioner views on the generation of dynamically produced assessments for graded unit 1, paper 2 were sought and this resulted in the ambition of creating dynamically generated assessment questions. However, at the event assessors expressed concerns relating to this. These centred around the burden of marking more than one question for each topic area, over a cohort of candidates. In response to the concerns SQA agreed that fixed versions would be allowed for session 2017–18.

External verifiers undertook training in relation to the verification of scripts which had been submitted and marked via SOLAR. This was helpful and the central verification event was successful because of this. Nevertheless, there were a few issues related to SOLAR that have been highlighted to the SOLAR team and these are being addressed.

Some centres that submitted graded unit 1 via SOLAR did not submit the required documentation for central verification. It is important that centres note that the same documentation that is requested by SQA should be submitted whether the work is submitted via SOLAR or in hard copy.

Four centres were verified in verification group 363 by visiting verification and 20 centres were verified in verification group 389 by a mixture of visiting and central verification. In two instances there was remote verification by post.

The following units were looked at:

### Verification group 363

F84V 34	IT in Business: Spreadsheets
HH83 34	IT in Business: Spreadsheets
HH82 34	Digital Technologies for Administrators
HH87 35	ICT in Business
F84D 35	Office Management
F84C 34	ITB Word Processing and Presentation Applications
F84E 35	Presentation Skills
F7J9 34	Office Technologies
FG67 34	IT in Business: Desk Top Publishing

F7JA 34 Office Administration  
HH84 34 ITB: Word Processing and Presentation Applications

**Verification group: 389**

F8KW 34 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 1  
F8KX 35 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 2  
F8KY 35 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 3

HH9M 34 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 1  
HH9N 35 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 2  
HH9R 35 Administration and IT — Graded Unit 3

The units verified in verification group 363 are agreed at a meeting of external verifiers which takes place in the autumn.

## 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 visited for verification group 363 showed that there is a clear plan for ongoing reviews of assessment environments, procedures, equipment, learning resources and assessment materials at centres and that this is adhered to.

There was visiting verification for seven centres delivering graded unit 3 and all centres had robust systems to comply with criterion 2.4.

Good practice was identified as follows:

- ◆ Unit evaluation forms have been introduced for some units on the programme in one centre. There is a staff resource on the intranet giving alternative suggestions of how this evaluation could be carried out. This shows that assessors are reflecting on performance and maintaining a dialogue with candidates.
- ◆ Identification of new assessors on a pre-delivery checklist as 'high risk' or if delivering for the second time identified as 'medium risk' allows for more support through the internal verification process. A high-risk assessor's work is internally verified outcome by outcome. This gives assessors confidence in their decision making and also highlights at an early stage any assessor who is experiencing difficulties.

## **Category 3: Candidate support**

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

In verification group 389 all centres visited had procedures in place to identify candidate prior achievements and development needs to match them to the qualification. All candidates had access to appropriate additional support where necessary. All centres visited in verification group 363 also complied with criterion 3.2.

In one centre the application form contains an interview scorecard which is completed by staff and then discussed at weekly meetings. If applicants meet the conditions they are offered a place. If not, they can then be directed to a more appropriate course. In another centre each applicant's skills are tested prior to them being offered a place. This testing covers IT, business knowledge and communication skills.

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

In all centres, candidates have face-to-face access to assessors on a weekly basis during class time. All candidates can also have one-to-one correspondence/discussion by e-mail or face-to-face. Centres have both formal and informal systems in place to facilitate candidate access to assessment staff. Candidates who are undertaking the graded unit project have scheduled access to assessors throughout the course of the project. Three areas of good practice were identified as follows.

- ◆ In one centre it was deemed good practice to allow candidate the opportunity to respond to assessor feedback. There was some good evidence of this in one unit. It was felt that this allowed the candidate to focus on reviewing their progress.
- ◆ In another centre candidates are required to type a note of each support session attended whilst working on graded unit 3. This provided valuable information for the last stage of the project and also information they could add to their reflective log. This is good practice as some candidates find the reflective log challenging.
- ◆ One assessor uses 'speed dating' to ensure that all candidates have equal access. This has worked well and has made sure that candidates come with their questions ready and are more focused in what they want to gain from the meeting. Feedback from candidates was positive as the system did not allow any one candidate to monopolise the assessor's time. It allowed the assessor to manage a large group of candidates during class time as each student was allocated a 4 minute slot each week.

## **Category 4: Internal assessment and verification**

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

All centres have internal verification procedures in place and there was evidence that these procedures are adhered to at all times. Standardisation meetings are held in most centres and this approach ensures a consistency in assessment decision making. Most centres use the internal verification procedures to support assessors. Almost all centres recorded pre-delivery checklists and meetings, ongoing delivery checks and end of unit checks. Very few centres did not record an update on any action points raised at any of the meetings. It is recommended that all centres introduce a system of standardisation meetings in addition to internal verification procedures.

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

All centres that presented for the revised graded unit 1 used SOLAR. Paper 1 was dynamically generated, and paper 2 was a fixed version. As indicated earlier in this report, it was agreed that a fixed version of questions would be available for this session. Subsequent discussions with some centres suggests that there is a level of concern regarding paper 2 being dynamically generated and this is a topic which requires further consideration.

All centres are using SQA assessment support packs which have been internally verified. In most cases the suggested solutions have been annotated to show additional acceptable solutions. Most centres have clear audit trails to show where work has been remediated. It is recommended that all centres adopt a policy of clear audit trails to show where work has been remediated to assist with internal and external verification.

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

All centres have some form of plagiarism and malpractice policy and all centres highlight this at Induction. In some instances centres are using Turnitin software to ensure authenticity. All centres give candidates clear guidance regarding producing their own work. The majority of centres ask candidates to sign a document stating that the work is their own.

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

There was evidence that all centres are using SQA ASPs and marking schemes to ensure consistent assessment judgements. In almost all centres the work presented for external verification had gone through the centre's internal verification procedure prior to the verification visit and marking schemes had been annotated to show where changes had been made. Almost all centres used clear annotation on scripts and the external verifier could see where marks had been allocated. In one centre the marking was not clear. As such, it was difficult for the external verifier to identify why marks had been given.

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

All centres abide by SQA policy in relation to the retention of evidence. In all instances evidence is held for longer than the minimum requirements. All evidence is securely stored.

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

All centres disseminate information from the visit report. In all centres this is discussed at the first opportunity and any necessary action implemented. Most centres feedback informally to assessors prior to receipt of the verification report.

## Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ Unit evaluation forms have been introduced for some units on the programme in one centre. There is a staff resource on the intranet giving alternative suggestions of how this evaluation could be carried out. This shows that assessors are reflecting on performance and maintaining a dialogue with learners.
- ◆ Identification of new assessors on a pre-delivery checklist as 'high risk', or if delivering for the second time identified as 'medium risk', allows for more support through the internal verification process. A high-risk assessor's work is internally verified outcome by outcome. This gives assessors confidence in their decision making and highlights at an early stage any assessor who is experiencing difficulties.
- ◆ In one centre it was deemed good practice to allow candidates the opportunity to respond to assessor feedback. There was some good evidence of this in one unit. It was felt that this allowed the candidate to focus on reviewing their progress.
- ◆ In another centre candidates are required to type a note of each support session attended whilst working on graded unit 3. This provided valuable information for the last stage of the project and also information they could add to their reflective log. This is good practice as some candidates find the reflective log challenging.
- ◆ One assessor uses 'speed dating' to ensure that all candidates have equal access. This has worked well and has made sure that candidates come with their questions ready and are more focused in what they want to gain from the meeting. Feedback from candidates was positive as the system did not allow any one candidate to monopolise the assessor's time. It allowed the assessor to manage a large group of candidates during class time as each student was allocated a 4 minute slot each week.

## Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ All centres should develop a system of standardisation meetings across campuses to ensure that everyone is aware of what is being taught and the materials used. This in turn will help consistency and standardisation in assessment. This should be incorporated into internal verification procedures. It will also support new assessors.
- ◆ It is recommended that all centres adopt a policy of clear audit trails to show where work has been remediated to assist with internal and external verification.
- ◆ All centres should be aware that whether they submit via SOLAR, or in hard copy to the central verification event, all documentation relating to verification must accompany the submissions.