



Higher National and National Units

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Applied Science

Introduction

The team carried out nine external verification visits this session. Centres had a clear understanding of the standards required and the visits were successful.

The units externally verified were as follows:

National Units

F823 11	Forensic Science: Applications
F3TD 11	Laboratory Safety
F3TA 10	Science and Technology in Society
F3TB 11	Science Investigation Skills
F3TC 10	Science Practical Skills

Higher National Units

H91T 34	Applied Biochemical Techniques
F21H 35	Biomass: Technologies for Energy and Bioproducts
H91V 34	Laboratory Skills for Science Industries
F21L 34	Microorganisms: Growth, Activity and Significance

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.

Almost all centres visited had established internal quality control procedures. These were robust, effective, and routinely applied. Centre staff demonstrated a good understanding of the resources required for each of the units verified. Almost all centres had documented evidence of effective and ongoing reviews.

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 visited had processes in place to ensure that candidates' development needs and any prior achievements were taken into consideration. All centres regularly reviewed teaching materials to ensure that they were appropriate to the needs of candidates.

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

All of the units that were externally verified are delivered in-house, through regular formal class contact. Candidates had scheduled contact with assessors to review their progress and, where appropriate, to revise assessment plans. All centres provided feedback to candidates on their completed assessments.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Almost all centres visited have developed robust, effective, and routinely-applied internal quality control procedures. In addition to routine internal verification, most centres held course team standardisation meetings.

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

Internal verification of assessment instruments was universally applied by most centres visited. SQA assessment support packs, where available, are used by all centres visited. Most centres were effectively using the comprehensive Understanding Standards documentation. These materials provide a high degree of assurance to centre staff that they are meeting the required standards and allocating marks fairly and consistently in line with national standards.

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

Centres visited have adopted a variety of procedures to ensure the authenticity of candidate submissions, including routinely applied anti-plagiarism software, candidate disclaimers and verbal questioning.

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

Almost all centres visited had arrived at clear, consistent and accurate judgements of candidate performance.

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

All centres visited complied with SQA policies and procedures regarding the retention of candidate evidence.

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

All centres visited had policies and procedures to ensure that feedback from qualification verifiers was disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following examples of good practice were recorded during session 2017–18:

- ◆ A very thorough review of the material, and delivery and assessment of the unit, with decisions meticulously logged and clear decision processes in place.
- ◆ Internal verification feedback was extensive and contained a high level of detail.
- ◆ Schools within the region met to standardise delivery of the unit across the region.
- ◆ Personal learning and support plans were noted on attendance registers.
- ◆ An experienced member of staff met with a new member of staff on a weekly basis to help develop their understanding of the requirements and standards of the units.
- ◆ Candidates were given extensive feedback from their assessor.
- ◆ Colleges used the Understanding Standards documents.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Centres should develop re-assessment instruments, ensuring that they are not too similar to the original assessment.
- ◆ Centres should submit re-assessment instruments to SQA for prior verification.
- ◆ Centres should develop written instructions for all assessed practical activities.
- ◆ Centres should use checklists to track practical competence.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that pre-delivery internal verification takes place.