



**Higher National Qualifications: Graded Units**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018**

**Applied Sciences**

## **Introduction**

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

The units externally verified were as follows:

H91W 34      Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1

H91X 35      Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 2

## **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 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, and there was 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.**

Most centres visited had processes in place to ensure candidates' development needs and any prior achievements were taken into consideration. Most centres visited have a consistently high level of candidate achievement/satisfaction.

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

Most of the units that were externally verified were 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.

One centre visited had day-release candidates who were undertaking graded unit projects in their workplace. Candidates had weekly contact with their assessor in college during the planning stage. Thereafter their assessor visited the workplace and liaised closely with the candidate's manager.

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

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

All centres visited have developed robust, effective, and routinely-applied internal quality control procedures. In addition to routine internal verification, all 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 all centres verified. All 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. This is particularly the case for graded unit 2 where guidance on suitable practical projects is now provided.

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

Centres verified have adopted a variety of procedures to ensure the authenticity of candidate submissions. Most centres routinely applied anti-plagiarism software to authenticate candidate submissions.

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

Most centres visited had arrived at clear, consistent and accurate judgements of candidate performance. Grading decisions were based on the relevant Understanding Standards document.

### **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 college carried out 100% internal verification of assessments.
- ◆ An online internal verification toolkit was developed.
- ◆ Personal learning and support plans were noted on attendance registers.
- ◆ A comprehensive end-of-year course review report was produced.
- ◆ Candidates were required to sign-off formal documents to acknowledge feedback.

## **Specific areas for development**

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

- ◆ Candidates should be given guidance at the planning stage of graded unit 2 to ensure that their project titles are of suitable complexity, ie using a range of different techniques.
- ◆ Where candidates undertake projects for graded unit 2 involving analysis of foods/beverages, environmental samples etc, centres should provide guidance to candidates on suitable sampling protocols.
- ◆ Centres should use candidate interviews to ascertain authenticity of written evidence that has not been correctly referenced.