



Higher National and Graded Units

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Health Care

Introduction

The external team for this group of qualifications was beset with sickness during the past year, and unfortunately several of the arranged external verification visits were therefore cancelled. The remaining external verifiers visited eight centres to carry out verification visits. These were all successful, with the team submitting very positive verification reports and identifying good practice within the centres.

The units verified were:

HG1J 34 HNC Care and Administrative Practice: Graded Unit 1
HE3K 34 Sexual Health Training: an Introduction
HE3L 34 Sexual Health Training; Experiential Learning
HG3N 34 HIV: an Introduction
HG3P 34 HIV: treatment and Lifestyle Management
FN2A 34 Physiology for Care Professionals
HF24 34 Essential Skills for Care Practice
HF25 34 Safe Working Practice for Care
HF26 34 Individual Pathways in Health and Social Care
HF27 34 Principles of Professional Practice
HF29 34 Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding behaviour
HF28 34 Sociology for Care Practice

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.

It is not necessary to assess the assessors' competence to carry out assessment and internal verification during verification visits for HNC Care and Administrative Practice. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that all centres have assessors who are currently registered practitioners with the Nursing and Midwifery Council or with the Health and Care Professions Council. This represents good practice and ensures that the teaching on this programme is relevant, contextualised and up to date. It also adds validity and a robustness to the qualification and allows staff to reinforce professional standards, regulation and effective care practice throughout the period of study and clinical placement.

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

For each centre, the visit reports described the process of reviewing assessment environments, equipment, reference, learning and teaching materials. All centres demonstrated a robust process for reviewing these both before and during delivery of the programmes being verified. In addition, the verifiers were able to review standardisation meeting minutes for pre, mid and post-delivery reviews that reflected this process. It was also noted most centres demonstrated a collaborative approach to this process, with teams working well together to improve the student experience.

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 set entry criteria to the programmes. All centres operated a robust interview process, which involved discussion of prior achievements. In situations where candidates did not hold prior qualifications, they were invited to undertake an entry test. This ensured that opportunities are offered to those who have not managed to achieve educational qualifications in the past but who have relevant industry experience. In this way, the centres are widening access to the HNC Care and Administrative Practice programme in particular. Candidates with additional learning or support needs could also be sure that these were identified during the interview stage, and that all successful candidates in all centres were offered the necessary support through Support for Learning or additional support departments.

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

All centres had in place, through the Understanding Personal and Professional Development unit in the HNC Care and Administrative Practice, a system of student/assessor meetings. These were used to support and monitor a candidate's progress through their learning using discussion and reflective practice. In general, candidate feedback following assessments was given on a one-to-one basis, which meant that candidates were able to discuss their progress with the appropriate assessor. In addition, the centres all supported an open-door policy when it came to candidate access to tutors and assessors.

In centres where the class groups were smaller, tutor/candidate support was facilitated in similar ways, with the assessors often having the opportunity to offer more ongoing guidance and support.

In all centres, the interviews and discussions with candidates indicated that they all believed that the tutor/assessor support throughout their programmes was invaluable and contributed to their success and progression to their desired courses. In addition, all candidates felt that having tutors/assessors who were able to draw on their own professional experience and contextualise the learning was an added bonus that enhanced their learning experience and professional knowledge and understanding.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

The visit reports indicated that all centres had implemented the three-stage process of internal verification required by SQA. The external verifiers all reported having access to standardisation meeting minutes that supported this process. In addition, they were able to review assessor and internal verifier comments on feedback sheets for all candidates. In general, there was agreement between assessors and internal verifiers on student achievement or non-achievement, and on the actions necessary for candidates to have a second opportunity to achieve these assessments.

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

Many of the assessments for HNC Care and Administrative Practice programme have been through the SQA prior verification process and are therefore valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. In addition, all centres running this qualification work collaboratively to ensure that assessment processes and approaches are consistent and standardised. The assessments and assessment approaches reviewed therefore were all reported as meeting SQA standards. The prior verification process also applies to other qualifications that were verified, ensuring that the assessment instruments and processes are appropriate in terms of SQA requirements.

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

All centres verified have two main approaches for ensuring submitted work is the candidate's own. Many centres now utilise anti-plagiarism software packages such as Turnitin, to ensure that candidates have not copied another author's work. Others use verification sheets, where the candidate signs a sheet when submitting works stating that the effort is all their own.

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

Due to the robust standardisation processes observed in the centres, the external verifiers were able to report that assessor decisions were in keeping with SQA standards, requirements and unit evidence requirements. In addition, these decisions were supported through the internal verification process and reflected in comments made by internal verifiers.

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

All centres reviewed have in place policies for the retention of evidence that meet with the SQA standards.

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

External verifiers were able to verify that all centres have in place a process to disseminate the feedback from verification visits. This was evident from standardisation meeting minutes, emails, team meeting minutes or from discussion with the assessors and verifiers in each centre.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ As stated in the report, the fact that most colleges employ individuals with current registration on relevant professional registers and who are also currently practicing as health care professionals adds a level of robustness, validity and professional relevance to the HNC Care and Administrative Practice programme and related healthcare qualifications. This is invaluable to the student experience, both in terms of professional knowledge, practice and clinical skills competence. For such vocationally focussed programmes, it is essential that lecturers have up-to-date professional knowledge, understanding and competence.

Specific areas for development

- ◆ There were no areas identified for development in 2017–18.