



Higher National Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Personal Social Development

Introduction

The HN Personal and Social Development units externally verified last year included:

D77H 34	Employment Experience 2
HJ4W 34	Work Placement
DV0M 34	Work Experience
D7HJ 34	Employment Experience 1
F3HT 34	Personal Enterprise Skills
DE3R 34	Personal Development Planning
F86Y 35	Developing the Individual within a Team
F870 34	Developing the Individual within a Team

HN verification activity was highly successful with 'high confidence' ratings across all centres. PSD units were delivered across a wide range of HN programmes: Fashion; Coaching and Developing Sport; Sport and Fitness; Care and Administration; Travel and Tourism; Administration and IT; Accounts; Hospitality; Beauty; and Business. External visiting verification activity highlighted a range of high quality learning programmes and staff who were totally committed to the success of the courses and the learners.

External verifiers included the following comments in their reports:

All staff involved in the delivery of HN Units are enthusiastic and highly motivated to support candidates to achieve SQA qualifications to progress into employment and/or university!

I was left in no doubt about the passion and enthusiasm of staff to support HN candidates.

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 have well established risk assessment strategies, which form the basis of the estates management process within some centres. Initial and ongoing reviews of the assessment environments and equipment are completed routinely and areas of risk identified and monitored with regular checks, which form a risk assessment schedule of programmed activity within a centre.

Staff in almost all centres are aware of their own individual responsibility to report any issues that present a risk. Assessment environments and the equipment are checked for fitness for purpose and any faults are repaired as and when necessary. This extends to external sites where there may be a joint partnership responsibility for initial and ongoing reviews.

Centres continue to make use of SQA assessment support materials. Learning and teaching materials are well resourced, current, and appropriate to the needs of learners. Learning and reference materials are updated regularly within many centres and continue to exemplify currency and validity. Many centres have an internal schedule that indicates the timeline for initial and ongoing reviews. Initial and ongoing reviews of assessment, learning and teaching materials are carried out systematically within many centres. In most cases, programme structures and delivery provide a high quality learning experience.

Centres make good use of SQA assessment support materials and have confidence in their delivery. Almost all centres create master teaching packs, which contain a bank of resources that include reference, learning, and assessment materials. There was good evidence of initial and ongoing assessment checks being carried out and recorded using internal audit documentation, eg current unit specification, current assessment instruments, checking for any SQA updates and changes to the qualification.

Almost all centres continue to provide learners with access to the latest technology and equipment that is more than suitable for the delivery of HN qualifications, eg intranet/internet access with secure username and passwords, social media, mobile apps, tablets, iPads, laptops and computers. Many centres provide access to ICT facilities through flexible learning hubs. Classroom environments have bespoke equipment like smartboard technology.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Almost all centres run a check through SQA Connect to ascertain each candidate's current achievements. Candidate development needs and prior achievements are identified in almost all centres at the point of entry to the programme and almost always in advance at the interview/induction stage. Many centres have established systems in place to match candidate development needs and prior achievements to award requirements.

As one external verifier observed, 'If a candidate presents with a development need then this would be discussed. A training plan would be drawn up and the required support would be put in place'.

Almost all centres establish candidate development needs at the interview/enrolment stage through informal discussion using the candidate application and any other relevant background information. Many centres have procedures in place to support specific development needs and information is recorded in an individual learning plan and/or a PLSP (personal learning support plan). Examples of support needs can be wide ranging including dyslexia; mental/social health issues; personal or academic issues; gender and equality issues; eyesight issues eg colour blindness; and deafness. Increasingly, centres are finding they have learners with multiple and complex individual development needs, which can be extremely challenging. Centres are required to adapt things for specific learner needs, both in academic terms and in adaptations or special arrangements related to the physical environment.

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 provide candidates with scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to review their assessment plans accordingly. This is embedded into the course design of HN programmes and is highly supportive to individual learners. Many HN programmes provide at least an hour a week of class guidance contact.

Almost all centres provide an individual learning plan (ILP) for all HN learners that tracks progress across the various stages of the learning programme, eg teaching blocks. The individual learning plan provides a focus to address individual learning needs and to instigate any required actions.

Many centres have robust internal systems and procedures to review candidate progress and to revise assessment plans accordingly.

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 have robust verification systems in place that operate on a three-yearly cycle. Quality policies and procedures clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of both the assessor and the verifier and indicate the three stages of verification. There was consistent evidence of scheduled standardisation meetings and internal verification records supporting the standardisation of assessment judgements.

External verifiers had access to minutes of meetings, agenda items, decision logs, internal verification sampling decisions and reports. Almost all centres have advanced electronic systems where documentation is held securely on the intranet.

Almost all centres provide a comprehensive robust internal verification system. Procedures are clearly understood and staff adhere to internal systems and processes. More than a few centres provide induction to the unit standards and provide mentoring support for new assessors during their first delivery of a unit.

Almost all centres are aware of the SQA three-stage model of verification whereby assessors and internal verifiers have a pre-planned schedule of assessment and internal verification sampling at HN level.

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

SQA assessment exemplars were routinely in use in almost all centres. More than a few centres are beginning to make use of centre-devised assessment instruments. One good practice example identified by one of the external verifiers involved the integration of the PDP (Personal Development Planning) Unit DE3R 34 with the Graded Unit 3 in Legal Services:

The PDP unit was mapped to the Graded Unit 3 in Legal Services. The assessment checklists clearly showed the mapping between both units and the evidence requirements for PDP. The integration of the assessment instruments enabled candidates to adopt the PDP 3 stage model of planning; developing and evaluating and apply this to the assessment context of the graded unit.

More than a few centres are making steady progress towards standardising assessment instruments and unit delivery across different sites. This will be a specific focus of external verification activity in 2018–19 where the sample will be extracted from the SQA/centre-led intelligence of activity across all sites.

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

Almost all centres make use of the SQA signed disclaimer, which requires candidates to sign and date the declaration to confirm any evidence submitted is their own work. The disclaimer

further evidences that candidates have understood and abide by the centre assessment arrangements, policies and procedures relating to malpractice and plagiarism.

Almost all centres had candidate disclaimers completed and it was clear that candidates had understood assessment requirements and conditions. Many centres require HN Unit evidence to be scrutinised using Turnitin, which checks for plagiarism.

External verification reports clearly acknowledged that:

- ◆ Candidates are required to complete and sign a disclaimer form during induction.
- ◆ Many centres operate a malpractice and plagiarism policy, which candidates are also made aware of at induction.

A few centres require candidates to complete a further form stating it is their own work before submitting any assignments or assessments.

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

External visiting verification activity consistently acknowledged a high confidence rating with the assessment judgements for HN Units. The verification sampling activities revealed a consistently high standard of work by HN candidates. Assessors are judging consistently across units and continue to provide supportive and informed feedback to candidates.

Almost all centres consistently and accurately judged candidate performance to SQA's requirements. The standard of candidate work at HN level was consistently high and revealed well organised folios and detailed reflection on learning experiences:

As one external verifier observed, 'All work was completed to a high standard by all candidates. Assessors are judging consistently across the whole centre'.

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

Almost all centres retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements, and longer if necessary. Candidate evidence is retained for longer periods by some centres in accordance with other awarding bodies and/or funding requirements. This can vary from the minimum requirement of three weeks to as long as five years.

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

External verification feedback is routinely disseminated to all staff using universal shared access systems like SharePoint. More than a few centres upload verification reports to the central system to allow staff to read them and to share information. Visiting verification activity revealed feedback from previous external sampling had been discussed and implemented.

All centres complied with this criterion. Centres continue to disseminate reports to all staff to inform best practice and, where necessary, to take appropriate steps to remain compliant.

Standardisation meetings and decision logs were comprehensive and robust and highlighted agenda items for discussion and action points. Good practice tends to be highlighted by external verifiers and centres should try to share best practice and 'celebrate' the success of specific achievements. More than a few centres need to recognise the importance of the annual SQA Star Awards and to prepare worthy nominations for this.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ The PDP (Personal Development Planning) DE3R 34 Unit was mapped to the Graded Unit 3 in Legal Services. The assessment checklists clearly showed the mapping between both units and the evidence requirements for PDP.
- ◆ A few centres provide scheduled support, mentoring and induction training for new assessors.

Specific areas for development

The following area for development was reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ Areas of good practice need to be shared more with staff, within centres and across different sites. Centres should consider nominations for SQA Star Awards, especially where external verification reports indicate good practice related to the submission.