Higher National and Graded Unit

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018
Professional Cookery

Introduction

Five centres were selected for verification activity during 2017–18. It was found that all centres are delivering and assessing individual units and the graded unit within the HN Hospitality award to the appropriate SQA standards.

Verification activity 2017–18 included visiting verification for the following units:
DL47 34   Production Cookery — Hot Kitchen
DL46 34   Production Cookery — Cold Kitchen
DL3H 34   Food Classification and Purchase
DL4J 34   Professional Cookery: Graded Unit 1

Development discussions were carried out in three centres, during which, delivery and assessment strategies were discussed. These discussions included identifying integration opportunities in order to reduce the assessment burden for both learners and academic delivery staff.

With reference to the graded unit, there was discussion about the extent of preparation of ingredients allowed ahead of the timed element of producing a dish. Teams were encouraged to produce further graded unit briefs as required.

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 provided evidence of pre-delivery reviews in relation to assessment accommodation, equipment and learning, and teaching and delivery materials. In all instances, this was in the form of checklists signed by the assessor, internal verifier, and/or the departmental head. In almost all centres, this documentation is held electronically and updated by their quality departments.

One centre included a post verification review of all resources in order to ensure that they continue to meet the demands of the awards.

All centres use SQA-produced assessment support packs and guidance materials for the individual units to ensure standardisation across all groups and candidates.

Almost all centres have undergone significant refurbishment during the last two years. In all these instances, the specification and availability of equipment contained within the practical environments was of the highest standard. In all other centres, the facilities were well equipped for the delivery of the award.

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 during this academic year have robust policies and procedures in place relating to recruitment, enrolment, and academic support throughout the course. Almost all candidates interviewed had previously completed an SQA National Certificate (NC) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ). Learners who had followed NC group awards had an easier transition to HN level 7 as the format of delivery and assessment was similar. Learners who had progressed from an SVQ route identified that they required additional guidance in order to meet the academic requirement of a level 7 award.

In all centres, robust support mechanisms were provided for candidates. These included scheduled workshops, core support teams, and drop-in sessions to support learners. All centres provided student advisors/guidance sessions which were almost all regularly timetabled with individual and group face to face opportunities available.

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

All centres scheduled contact for learners with their assessors on a weekly basis, however, assessors could be contacted outside of these scheduled slots, predominantly through e-mail but also at the staff work base. This was supported by discussions with candidates.

For the practical units, almost all centres provided paper-based or electronic log books for candidates to record evidence of activity and to post questions for their assessors. This included the use of Moodle for graded units.

In one centre, additional 'up-skill' and academic support was provided as a scheduled activity, but candidate attendance numbers were low.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres provided internal policy and procedures. Evidence for this was provided by records of pre-delivery and internal verification (IV) activity which was signed off by both the assessor and the internal verifier, with any actions clearly identified and timescales for completion attached. Course team minutes identifying discussion in relation to IV protocols were supplied.

In almost all centres, two assessors are used to observe the practical assignment for the graded unit with a 3rd acting as an adjudicator.

External verifiers were confident that all centres had appropriate procedures in place and were implementing these effectively to ensure standardisation of assessment through their internal verification activity. Electronic versions of policy and procedures were available to view in all centres.

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

All centres selected for verification activity used SQA-devised unit specifications and exemplars appropriately.

Scheduling of both individual assessment and the graded unit was appropriate. In almost all centres, the graded unit was scheduled for the second semester or the third term. Assessors recognised that this can cause overloading of assessment tasks for candidates and timetabling concerns. Through discussion, some centres plan to timetable a 'GU Theory' slot earlier in the academic year to establish appropriate academic and presentation standards to support candidates throughout the process.

In almost all centres, observation checklists were detailed which facilitated comprehensive feedback to candidates. Practical product evidence is commonly uploaded to internal/intranet programmes by candidates to support assessment requirements.

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

All centres have malpractice and plagiarism statements included within student handbooks, and almost all require students to sign a declaration of understanding either at commencement of each course or when they are submitting their assessment materials. Many centres use 'Turnitin' or similar for both submission and checking candidate evidence.

Practical activity for both the individual assessment and the graded unit are confirmed by observation checklists completed by the assessors. External verifiers were confident that the veracity of candidates' work was sufficiently robust in all centres selected for verification activity.

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

Professional Cookery Units:
All units for verification activity have SQA exemplars available to the centres. External Verifiers found that, in all centres, this ensured a consistent approach to assessment. Candidate evidence was judged to be of an appropriate standard. Almost all centres use photographic evidence of product production for each candidate and this supports assessor judgements and internal and external verification activity.

Professional Cookery Graded Unit 1:
Almost all centres use two assessors for the practical activity with a third assessor (subject to availability) acting as an adjudicator. This approach confirms accurate and consistent marking for the developing stage.

Both the planning and evaluation stages in almost all centres were 'double marked' or subject to internal verification. This approach is recommended to ensure consistency as well as reducing the IV burden at the point of completing the graded unit.

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

All centres retain candidate evidence and assessment records in line with SQA requirements. Many centres retain additional evidence for longer periods. However, in all centres, the protocols for securely storing/archiving were being reviewed for electronic submissions and changes to data protection laws.

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

External verification reports received by the centres follow an internal dissemination policy, disseminated to the academic teams.

In most centres, discussion of external verification reports was noted in programme team meetings. Any recommended actions and changes to future delivery or assessment strategies were recorded, and timescales for implementation were noted. Minutes and action plans of regular team meetings were provided as evidence to external verifiers.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ The academic team are encouraged to collaborate with other centres, SQA, and industry partners in order to ensure the currency with modern trends, techniques, and demands.
♦ Double marking for all written submissions and the use of a third marker as an adjudicator for the developing stage is exemplary.
♦ There was evidence of comprehensive feedback provided to the learner at each stage of the graded unit.
♦ One centre had embedded 'allergens' within the student portfolio and although it is not assessable at this time, it is a key and important area for hospitality to be aware of and to implement. It also ensures that due diligence is being followed and that staff are adequately trained in this area.

Specific areas for development

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

♦ Centres should consider scheduling the assessments for Production Cookery — Hot and Cold Kitchen earlier in the session in order to allow effective delivery of the graded unit.

Overall, the centres selected for verification activity are experienced at delivering the award. The external verifiers were able to inform centres of the development work being carried out in order to review and update these awards.