



Higher National Qualifications Internal Assessment Report 2015 Sheet Plate and Welding

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National Qualifications in this subject.

Higher National Units

General comments

Based on the reports of the centres verified in 2014–15, there was strong evidence that the centres placed a high priority around national standards. This was fully reflected in the standard of the assessments presented for external verification.

The centres delivered a broad range of Units from all aspects of Fabrication, Welding and Inspection and the materials presented were of a high standard, fully reflecting HN level.

The Units being undertaken across the centres were:

- ◆ Fabrication and Welding Materials
- ◆ Welding Principles and Applications 1 and 2
- ◆ Fabrication and Forming Processes
- ◆ Fabrication: Preparation Joining and Assembly
- ◆ Containers Design and Manufacture
- ◆ Inspection Systems
- ◆ Welding Procedures: Specification Qualification and Testing
- ◆ Pipework 1: Construction and Site Installation

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Based on External Verifier feedback, assessors are familiar with all assessment materials associated with the Units that were verified.

All centres visited were verified under SQA's new approach to quality assurance and this proved to be a thorough examination of the centres' quality assurance processes and procedures against national standards. Across all centres, good use was being made of approved assessment support packs where appropriate and as a result all assessment instruments fully met the Outcome criteria. In addition, it was encouraging to note the excellent contribution made by assessors that ensured high standards were met.

Evidence Requirements

There was clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the Units verified. Candidates produced good quality assessment materials within all Units which reflected well on the centres' understanding of evidence requirements.

Administration of assessments

Administration arrangements were good in the visited centres with supporting procedures and documentation readily available. Robust internal verification

procedures ensured assessments were carried out appropriately and standards were being fully met.

As in previous years, it was encouraging to see that staff had appeared to take ownership of the internal verification process and were making an excellent contribution to the delivery and development of assessment materials.

In general, organisation and layout of candidates' evidence ensured a straightforward review of assessment materials. In addition, in a number of centres, good workshop facilities and industry standard resources ensured that a high quality of work was being produced.

General feedback

All centres were given very positive feedback in areas of good practice and a few centres were given some minor recommendations. In general, all centres produced excellent assessment materials along with evidence of good robust marking schemes and useful candidate feedback for each Unit.

In the visited centres, the internal verification processes were robust and well documented. In general, centres' internal verification processes ensured that high standards of quality assurance were well embedded and easily understood and managed.

Areas of good practice

Good practice was highlighted across all centres.

In some centres, clear, concise and well laid out quality assurance master folders contained details of policies and procedures which supported SQA's quality criteria for internal verification.

It was clear in all centres that staff undertook appropriate staff development and assessors and verifiers were given the opportunity to update their qualifications.

Good use was made of candidate feedback in all centres and good use was made of alternative assessment materials.

There was good evidence of initial and on-going reviews of assessment environment(s), assessment procedures, equipment, learning and assessment materials. In a number of centres the design and layout of the documentation made it easy to confirm evidence of ongoing review of assessment and learning materials.

In all centres, candidates' development needs and prior achievements were matched against the requirements of the award. In one centre the candidates' development needs had been met through good liaison with the candidates and with industry. The fact that industry requirements were being met was a great strength.

In all centres the assessment and verification procedures were well documented and implemented to meet qualification and SQA requirements. In one centre, completed internal verification comments sheets ensured that all staff were made aware of any changes to assessment materials or other issues arising. This shows good evidence that the internal verification process is dynamic and active and in this case good feedback was available for staff and candidates through this process.

All centres provided documented evidence to ensure that assessments were valid. A good balance of theoretical and practical work was in evidence. This ensured that assessment instruments were fair, valid and reliable. In general, candidates were given ample opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Specific areas for improvement

The importance of relating assessment questions to Outcomes where case studies were used to assess more than one Outcome was reinforced. This also applied where more than one Outcome was being assessed using the same instrument of assessment. The use of a matrix for ease of identification was recommended in one centre.

Higher National Graded Units

DR 37 34 Fabrication Welding and Inspection

General comments

One centre was selected for central verification. The centre selected was an established centre with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the delivery and assessment of this Graded Unit.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As in previous years, the instruments of assessment were in the form of an examination question paper. The question paper is set by a consortium of presenting centres and fully met requirements. The centres attend regular OST meetings which include standardisation activities and so they are fully aware of the standards required. They are well informed and are regularly updated on SQA requirements. As a result, the question paper was well prepared and covered a wide range of specific subject areas within the fabrication and welding industry. In addition, the question paper is subject to prior moderation and any amendments identified are fed-back to the consortium.

Evidence Requirements

There was sufficient evidence presented to the marker and internal verifiers. The evidence demonstrated a good understanding of the need for robust evidence to ensure standards and performance criteria are being fully met by candidates. This was confirmed through the marking schedules and results presented for central verification.

Administration of assessments

During central verification of the Graded Unit examination, the External Verifier commented on a few anomalies in candidates' responses compared to the centre marking scheme, which had not been picked up during the second round of marking. These anomalies did not alter the overall candidate grades but may have affected other candidates not included in the sample presented.

General feedback

The External Verifier accepted the assessment decisions made by both the assessor and internal verifier. Where there were minor adjustments required this did not affect the candidates' results. The External Verifier commented on the fact that good practice was for centres to submit the work of candidates whose marks better reflected the grade boundary marks.

As in previous years there was a good standard of work presented by candidates and this was encouraging.

Areas of good practice

The centre provided clear instructions to candidates on the question paper front sheet. The instructions to candidates reinforced that they should not communicate with each other and instructed them on how to address any issues they may have regarding the assessment process with the invigilator.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres taking part in the marking of Graded Unit examinations should ensure the accuracy of the double-marking of candidate scripts. These should be rigorous and conform to approved marking schemes.