

Research and Information Services

Monitoring Standards Report



HND Sports Coaching with Development of Sport (G81P)

Introduction

SQA has been carrying out an annual monitoring standards programme since 1998. The exercise plays a very important role in ensuring that we continue to offer qualifications of a consistently high standard. The process involves scrutinising candidate evidence, assessment material and marking guidelines for the current year and comparing these with archived evidence from a previous year's exercise where available, to judge if standards are being maintained over time. Centres with candidates taking the units in the current sample are asked to submit the work of two candidates who have been awarded a bare pass and whose evidence as far as possible exemplifies the standard for the qualification. HN unit specifications for both the current and comparator years are made available to the scrutiny teams. The panels are chaired by the Senior Verifier (mostly) and the other two members of each group are an experienced verifier and where possible an external specialist from Higher Education or an expert from industry or related sector. The Units scrutinised were:

- ◆ DD39 34 Sports Coaching Theory and Practice
- ◆ DD2X 34 Conduct and Ethics for Sports Coaches
- ◆ DT4V 34 Development of Sport
- ◆ DD2J 35 Coaching of Sports: Level 2

1 Source documents

It is important to be aware that, in recent years, the coaching industry in the UK has made considerable advances in qualifications development, and that SQA has been at the cutting edge of this work with sports' governing bodies and with the Sector Skills Council. In addition, there is now a set of National Occupational Standards for Sport Development which is new to the industry. With this in mind, and with this informing the coaching process, it was felt that there was insufficient difference between what were level 6 awards (NPA and Project Based National Courses), and the quality of assessment that was taking place at levels 7 and 8.

Arrangements documents were up-to-date and had been changed recently, but there was a need to revise the award and exemplar material in line with current coaching trends. Units were beginning to become dated in some cases and the situation with exemplar material was the same. After only a few years in use, some already needed to be brought up to date.

The volume of work required by the candidates for DD2J 35 was considerable and centres need to ensure constant support is given during the gathering of evidence; otherwise mistakes go uncorrected for many weeks.

Centres need to ensure that those who are assessing are fully up to date with current trends in the industry, the SCQF, and its demands at the different levels.

The award is under revision at this time, but the process is some way from completion. This report will further inform that process. There may be a need to add new Units to allow better progression from HNC to HND, although this lies outside the scope of this report.

2 Assessment instruments

It was considered that all the Units seen had merit in their inclusion in the core of the award. Each therefore was considered to be fit for purpose.

DD39 34 is showing its age and was worthy of revision to update it and its exemplar. The exemplar also needs to be clarified and strengthened as its demand level is on the low side as shown by submitted material.

DD2X 34 is, generally, still up to date. It mostly covers factual knowledge. SQA has produced online assessment material as an alternative to the exemplar (which will remain available). This has yet to 'go live' but is imminent. The conditions of assessment are particularly clear for this Unit. However, exemplar material may not allow 'headroom' to differentiate between a low and high level of achievement.

DT4V 34 is likewise up to date, but it too will be subject to minor revision to ensure it remains current. It will be mapped to the national occupation standards (NOS) (which are new to the area) to ensure SSC support for the revalidation, which will follow in due course. Feedback for this Unit was generally very limited.

DD2J 35 requires a high level of candidate work. Centres have a duty to ensure that feedback is given regularly. There was a feeling that in some cases centres confused quantity of work with quality of work and that the Unit needs some revision to ensure it and its exemplar are in line with SCQF level 8 and the needs of the sports industry. The marking scheme needs clarification. Integration is a routine matter for this Unit due to the practical nature of the work involved.

3 Evidence of candidate performance

Many candidates submitted work which was neat, tidy and organised — but others produced work that was poor quality. For some Units, some centres

submitted material which showed very good practice. However, one of these same centres also submitted material showing poor practice, so there seems to be no sharing of staff expertise and no recognition of what constitutes best practice.

A number of centres gave quality feedback and this supported the assessment decisions made. It also showed candidates how they could improve their knowledge and skills. However, many centres gave very poor feedback in terms of its quality and quantity. In some cases it was given after 15 or more weeks of candidate work and portfolio building. This poor practice led to mistakes being left uncorrected.

Feedback was often very subjective with a simple statement eg 'good' or 'well done' with no indication of why the work was good or why it was well done. The lack of internal verification was an on-going issue. Many centres had little or no evidence of this having been done.

The Arrangements and the Units show clearly what is required, but centres do not always act upon them or convey information to candidates.

Centres have been supported to try to ensure that they all assess to the agreed national standard. Even so, this aim remains to be achieved. The quality of evidence shows variation between, and within, centres and this concern needs to be addressed.

It is considered that the standard of marking and grading has slipped in many cases. However, some centres continued to produce work which was well marked and showed quality procedures in place. Other centres seemed to be out of touch with what is required by the governing body of a sport at this level and this is a matter of concern.

4 Comparing standards over time

The Units reviewed in 2008 were not the same as those scrutinised during a previous exercise as they had been dropped from the catalogue. There were many similarities but it was considered that assessment standards had been less rigorously applied than previously. Also, there is a need for centres to ensure that where exemplar material is used, it does in fact meet the needs of the centre.

5 Conclusions

There is evidence to suggest that the Unit standards have not changed. However, there is evidence to show that centres have relaxed their vigilance and that the marking standard is lower than it previously had been. The task now is to ensure that centres are supported in reversing this trend.

6 Recommendations for centres

- ◆ It is recommended that centres continue to work to improve standards of assessment, including:
 - ◆ Providing appropriate feedback for candidates
 - ◆ Ensuring that internal verification procedures are in place.

7 Recommendations for SQA

It is recommended that SQA carries through its plan to consider revision of this award as soon as reasonably possible to bring it up to date with huge changes in the sports development industry.

Initial response

SQA is aware of the need to consider revision of this award to bring it up to date in line with the huge changes that continue to take place in the coaching and sports development industry. SQA has begun this process.

- ◆ It is recommended that SQA ensures that the revision, be supported to its conclusion and that this should include the revision of Exemplars where necessary.

Initial response

The varied quality of some of the exemplar material is a known issue and is under active consideration at this time.

- ◆ It is recommended that SQA ensures that there is more external verification activity for HN Units in this award as soon as possible to support staff and to ensure that assessment standards are upheld.

Initial response

SQA will continue to look at issues relating to external verification of HN Units in this award to ensure that centres are supported in the assessment process.

- ◆ It is recommended that SQA provides, or works with other agencies to provide, CPD for staff on the issue of feedback and assessment.

Initial response

SQA notes this recommendation and will work with the Qualification Support Team and other agencies to consider ways in which further support can be given within available resources.

Appendix: Unit report

1 The Units

Unit	Main Purpose	Candidate Profile	Uptake
DD39: Sports Coaching Theory and Practice	The main purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the basic principles of sports coaching at an introductory level and to supply candidates with the relevant underpinning knowledge required in order to allow coaching to take place in a real, practical environment.	Candidates will undertake this Unit in their first year of the award as this is a core Unit for the award. Candidates may have very limited experience at this stage of their course.	This is a popular award and has a large uptake of centres with a high uptake of candidates.
DD2X: Conduct and Ethics for Sports Coaches	The Unit will introduce candidates to current legislative requirements relevant for sports personnel and will allow the candidate to explore ethical considerations and the code of professional conduct required by those working in the coaching and development industries.	Candidates will undertake this Unit in their first year of the award as this is a core Unit for the award. Candidates may have very limited experience at this stage of their course.	
DT4V: Development of Sport	The main purpose of this Unit is to allow candidates to gain an understanding of the principles behind sports development from beginner to elite. The Unit will enable candidates to gain experience in the delivery of a sports development programme.	Candidates will undertake this Unit in their first year of the award as this is a core Unit for the award. Candidates may have very limited experience at this stage of their course.	
DD2J: Coaching of Sports: Level 2	The main purpose of this Unit is to allow progression from year 1 skills in coaching and to improve technical knowledge to enable the coaching of more advanced groups.	Candidates will undertake this Unit in their second year of the award as this is a core Unit for the award. Candidates should by this stage have gained some experience in coaching	

2 Assessment instruments

DD39: Sports Coaching Theory and Practice	
Fitness for purpose/ integration	<p>Exemplar material has been produced and almost all centres use this pre-verified material. This is a combination of restricted response and practical assessments.</p> <p>The Unit is considered to be fit for purpose, but as the rate of change in the industry is considerable, it already requires some updating. Any revision should ensure that future developments in the industry can be taken on board and that exemplars are, as far as possible, 'future-proofed'.</p> <p>There was integration within each Outcome and the exemplar allows this to take place.</p>
Quality of presentation	<p>Centres had varying levels of quality of presentation. Many candidates produced word processed and well presented work, but a number submitted poorly presented material with work written in pencil or in a very untidy manner. There was a lack of clarity with many submitted responses and a wide variation in pass grade.</p>
Level of demand	<p>The level of demand of the Unit was appropriate, but many centres accepted work which could be placed at a level of demand below that required by the Unit. The exemplar material needs to be updated to ensure that it reflects the SCQF level.</p>
Conditions of assessment	<p>These are stated in the Unit specification and in the Arrangements document. However, centres did not often make it clear what conditions had been applied for the assessments submitted for scrutiny.</p>
Guidance on criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/summary	<p>Exemplar material in use clarifies the requirements for a pass. There was often no way to be certain that candidates were informed of the pass criteria.</p>

DD2X: Conduct and Ethics for Sports Coaches

Fitness for purpose/ integration	Exemplar material has been produced and almost all centres use this pre-verified material. The material examines the candidates' knowledge of legal and ethical issues and uses scenarios to assess candidates. The assessment used was closed book. The Unit is considered to be fit for purpose. Any revision should ensure that future developments in the industry can be taken on board and that exemplars are, as far as possible, 'future-proofed'. There was integration across all Outcomes and the exemplar allows this to take place.
Quality of presentation	With the assessment being a closed-book exam assessment, most were inevitably hand written.
Level of demand	The level of demand of the Unit was appropriate. The case studies were appropriate. There was little opportunity for the material to allow 'headroom' however.
Conditions of assessment	These are stated in the Unit Specification and in the Arrangements document. The Unit is assessed at the end of delivery. All centres had adopted closed-book assessment.
Guidance on criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/summary	Exemplar material in use clarifies the requirements for a pass. There was often no way to be certain that candidates were informed of the pass criteria.

DT4V: Development of Sport	
Fitness for Purpose/ Integration	<p>Exemplar material has been produced and almost all centres use this pre-verified material. This is a combination of short answer, project, practical assessment, and evaluation.</p> <p>The Unit is considered to be fit for purpose, but as the rate of change in the industry is considerable, it already requires some minor updates. Any revision should ensure that recent and future developments in the industry can be taken on board and that exemplars are, as far as possible, 'future-proofed'.</p> <p>There was integration within each Outcome and the exemplar allows this to take place.</p>
Quality of Presentation	<p>Centres showed considerable and varied levels of quality of presentation. Many candidates produced word processed and well presented work, but a number submitted poorly presented material with work being written in pencil or in a very untidy manner. There was a lack of clarity with many submitted responses and a wide variation in pass grade.</p>
Level of demand	<p>The level of demand of the Unit was appropriate but many centres accepted work which could be placed at a level of demand below that required by the Unit. The exemplar material needs to be updated to ensure that it reflects the SCQF level.</p>
Conditions of Assessment	<p>These are stated in the Unit specification and in the Arrangements document. However, centres did not often make it clear what conditions had been applied for the assessments submitted for scrutiny.</p>
Guidance on Criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/Summary	<p>Exemplar material in use clarifies the requirements for a pass. There was often no way to be certain that candidates were informed of the pass criteria.</p>

DD2J: Coaching of Sports: Level 2

Fitness for purpose/ integration	<p>Exemplar material has been produced and almost all centres use this pre-verified material. This is a combination of practical performance, presentation of material, planning, delivering, and evaluating.</p> <p>The Unit is considered to be fit for purpose, but as the rate of change in the industry is considerable, it already requires updating to reinforce level 8 standard. Any revision should ensure that future developments in the industry can be taken on board and that exemplars are, as far as possible, ‘future-proofed’ and to match the same level 8 standard.</p> <p>There was integration within each Outcome and the exemplar allows this to take place.</p>
Quality of presentation	<p>Centres had varying levels of quality of presentation. Many candidates produced word processed and well presented work, but a number submitted poorly presented material with work being written in pencil or in a very untidy manner. There was a lack of clarity with many submitted responses and a wide variation in pass grade.</p>
Level of demand	<p>The level of demand of the Unit was appropriate but many centres accepted work which could be placed at a level of demand well below that required by the Unit. The exemplar material needs to be updated to ensure that it reflects the SCQF level.</p>
Conditions of assessment	<p>These are stated in the Unit specification and in the arrangements document. However, centres did not often make it clear what conditions had been applied for the assessments submitted for scrutiny.</p>
Guidance on criteria for pass and validity to PCs and range/summary	<p>Exemplar material in use clarifies the requirements for a pass. There was often no way to be certain that candidates were informed of the pass criteria.</p>

3 Evidence of candidate performance

Overall	
Examples of good assessment practice summary	<p>There were some good examples of centres supplying clear pro-forma material and giving candidates clear and valid guidance. There were centres which had given meaningful feedback that encouraged the candidate to learn.</p> <p>This had been where centres had shown early assessor intervention and where centres had use expanded marking criteria and put this to good effect.</p> <p>Centres made effective use of material available for DD2X Conduct and Ethics of Sports Coaches.</p>
Comparison over time	<p>There are links between the Sports Coaching Theory and Practice Unit and the previously scrutinised Unit 'Principles of Sports Coaching'. However, the credit values are not the same although the predecessor Unit did form the basis for some of this Unit development. There is evidence to suggest that the Unit is of a comparable standard but assessment standards have slipped. The use of exemplar material may have limited centres to one idea and one method only. Centres may need to consider developing their own assessments or expanding the exemplars.</p> <p>There were clear links between Sports Coaching level 2 and the predecessor Unit Planning and Coaching of Sports. However, the Unit values are not the same so direct comparison was not possible. Even so, there was sufficient similarity to show that Unit standards are constant but assessment standards have slipped. Centre dependence on exemplar material (which shows the minimum standard) may have contributed to this. Centres should consider developing exemplar material to suit their own centre's needs.</p> <p>Direct comparison could not be made between DD2X Conduct and Ethics for Sports Coaches and DT4V Development of Sport — the Units scrutinised in a previous monitoring standards exercise.</p>
DD39: Sports Coaching Theory and Practice	
Accuracy of assessment decisions	<p>Practical performance evidence is often hard to judge when the performance has not been observed and there is a reliance on assessor judgements which do not always make clear what criteria has been used.</p> <p>There was considerable variation across centres despite exemplar material being used. Centre interpretation varied and in some cases this was a significant issue.</p>

Consistency of application of standards	The issues were similar to those above and there was a lack of consistency in interpretation.
DD2X: Conduct and Ethics for Sports Coaches	
Accuracy of assessment decisions	Performance evidence was often considered to be all right, or all wrong, and candidates often received little feedback. Candidates had not been encouraged to discuss the wider issues or explain why they had made the responses that they had made. There was little variation across centres, with exemplar material being used. Centre interpretation varied very little.
Consistency of application of standards	The application showed good consistency.
DT4V: Development of Sport	
Accuracy of assessment decisions	Practical performance evidence is often hard to judge when the performance has not been observed and there is a reliance on assessor judgements which do not always make clear what criteria were used. There was a wide variation in activities being used for assessment purposes. There was considerable variation across centres despite exemplar material being used. Centre interpretation varied and in some cases this was a significant issue.
Consistency of application of standards	The issues were similar to those above and there was a lack of consistency in interpretation.
DD2J: Coaching of Sports: Level 2	
Accuracy of assessment decisions	Practical performance evidence is often hard to judge when the performance has not been observed and there is a reliance on assessor judgements which do not always make clear what criteria were applied. This refers to Outcome 1 and Outcome 2. With regard to Outcome 3, candidates had often produced a considerable volume of work but the evidence suggested that much had been assessed at the end of the Unit rather than being continuous. Candidates therefore lacked support, which had led to some poor assessment decisions being made. There was considerable variation across centres despite exemplar material being used. Centre interpretation varied and in some case this was a significant issue. The comments made above are relevant for this section.
Consistency of application of standards	The issues were similar to those above and there was a lack of consistency in interpretation.