Higher National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Engineering Systems

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

In 2014–15, verification activity included visits to five centres for Engineering Systems. The centres visited were rated as having significant strengths for these awards.

Regionalised centres continue to formulate quality assurance policies and to generate supporting documentation.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Instruments of assessments were considered valid in every case.

Evidence Requirements

The evidence requirements were being met for all the Units reviewed.

Administration of assessments

At all visits, it was recognised that assessments were being administered appropriately; however, it should be noted that not every instrument of assessment had supporting documentation indicating that it had been reviewed.

General feedback

There were some excellent examples of feedback issued to students, including comments and corrections for spelling and grammatical errors in written submissions.

In some centres, candidates are required to sign the feedback pro forma, acknowledging its receipt.

Areas of good practice

The inclusion of a table in the course handbook for candidates to track their outcome-by-outcome progress through their award is of substantial benefit to them, as is the publication of the schedule for formal guidance interviews.

Specific areas for improvement

♦ To widen the knowledge base associated with engineering systems by incorporating aspects of software for engineering and business applications, where possible

Higher National Graded Units

Titles/levels of HN Graded Units verified:

DW92 34 HNC Engineering Practice: Graded Unit 1
DW11 34 HNC Engineering Systems: Graded Unit 1
F1E8 35   HND Engineering Systems: Graded Unit 2

General comments

In 2014–15, verification activity included central verification of Graded Unit 1 submissions from six centres for HNC Engineering Systems and Engineering Practice. All judgements were accepted as valid and there appeared to be a typical spread of grades allocated to candidates. Delivering centres and the Qualification Support Team may consider comparing performance since the removal of the case-study accompanying notes.

Three centres received visits for Graded Unit 2. It was noted that there are significant benefits to candidates, and centres, when projects are related to active industrial practice. It is recognised, however, that adopting this approach may not be feasible for every centre.

For all these events, the External Verifier judgement was that centres were rated as having significant strengths for these awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The Graded Unit 1 examination papers were rated as fit for purpose, although there were instances of repetition within those produced for the Engineering Practice award.

Graded Unit 1 papers used by the sampled centres had been subject to prior verification. Each of these were valid, but some elements of year-on-year repetition were evident in some papers.

Evidence Requirements

All assessment judgements were considered valid.

Administration of assessments

Assessments were administered correctly.

General feedback

Centres generally endeavour to provide formative support for candidates. Although feedback is not always formal, it is good practice to encourage

candidates to acknowledge the feedback given, such as through a short note in a log book.

Areas of good practice

For Engineering Systems Graded Unit 2, one centre had students consider aspects of software applications in their project topic. In the absence of any formal study of engineering software, this can, at least, provide an indication of the significance of software in engineering systems.

Also for this Unit, a number of current industrial project topics provided useful knowledge and experience for both candidates and centre staff.

Elements of good practice were observed in Graded Unit 2 feedback, specifically at centres where candidates made comprehensive use of log books to record the work they had undertaken.

Where appropriate, centres should consider including software for project systems.

Specific areas for improvement
♦ Encourage Graded Unit 2 candidates to record, and act on, formative feedback
♦ Limit the use of replica questions when producing Graded Unit 1 papers