



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2016  
Industrial and Behavioural Studies**

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

Overall, the visits conducted within this verification group reported a very high level of success reflecting the experience of most centre staff in delivering and presenting Higher National awards in this area. Feedback from visits shows that centre staff, in the main, have a strong understanding of the units and the assessment approaches within this group. It is also good to note that centres are using prior verification for additional materials or where no assessment materials have been centrally developed. The impact of regionalisation in the FE sector is beginning to settle and generally centres have well-established systems and procedures for assessment and internal verification which ensure that the units and the execution of the units are well supported.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

As indicated above, centres appear to be thoroughly familiar with the relevant unit specifications. Centres conduct pre-delivery internal verification which works well and ensures that the current unit specifications are in use and assessment instruments checked.

Assessment exemplars are in place for a number of units which work well for candidates and staff alike. Where these are not available centres generally have robust systems in place to ensure that assessment instruments developed are in line with the unit purpose and the evidence requirements. Prior verification is used to ensure the assessments being used are appropriate, which is a clear example of good practice and centres are reminded that this facility is available to them.

The development of master files or packs which contain relevant material for a unit such as the unit specification, assessment instruments, notes of internal verification meetings, and any items arising, are common place and more often than not are now held electronically. These packs work well and make assessment, internal verification and external verification a much easier task and, where held electronically, lend themselves well to remote qualification verification.

## Evidence requirements

Centres generally have a clear understanding of the evidence requirements in each of the units externally verified. This understanding is supported by the SQA exemplar assessment packs which provide instruments of assessment, assessment checklists and assessment guidelines, all of which help to ensure that the unit evidence requirements are understood and met.

Centres continue to develop their approaches to assessment and delivery. One centre merged units H1XK 34 Recruitment Selection and Induction with H1XM 34

Interviewing. This appears to have worked well, reducing duplication and allowing learning to flow more naturally. Feedback from centre staff and candidates was positive regarding this arrangement.

### **Administration of assessments**

The development and use of assessment exemplars for most of the units verified helps to ensure that assessments are administered in line with the unit specifications. This also helps to ensure that the instruments of assessment are appropriate thus enabling candidates to generate sufficient evidence of an appropriate standard. The guidance and/or checklists provided in these exemplar packs help to support the assessment decision. Where no exemplars have been developed, a number of centres, as indicated earlier, have used the prior verification process. As a result nearly all centres organised and assessed candidates in accordance with the requirements set out in the unit specifications.

Pre-delivery verification/standardisation meetings are now held in the majority of centres. These meetings, as described earlier, help to ensure that the unit specification and the assessment instrument being used are current, valid and fair. Centre assessment and verification procedures are generally strong ensuring that assessment decisions are checked and appropriately sampled. Feedback is provided from assessors to candidates and from verifiers to assessors, and where corrective action is identified it is appropriately actioned.

Discussions with candidates consistently confirm that planning and support for assessments are of a high standard and that any requirements as outlined in specific units are complied with. It is good to see in centres that assessment planning is managed well avoiding overload and helping candidates to be well prepared for all assessments.

All centres visited had in place policies and procedures relating to malpractice, plagiarism and cheating. Candidates were fully aware of these policies and the associated penalties through induction procedures and student handbooks. In most cases candidates are generally required to sign a declaration that the work submitted is their own. There is an increase in the use of packages such as Turnitin to help staff identify plagiarism, but the judgement of staff in their knowledge of the subject and, in particular, of their candidates plays a key part.

### **General feedback**

Once again, it is important to comment on the commitment and enthusiasm of staff involved in assessment and internal verification. Visit reports confirm that staff put a lot of effort in, and give a lot of support to, candidates in preparing them for assessments and in ensuring that all aspects of the assessment process are fully covered. It is encouraging to see very good examples of assessor feedback where the assessor had taken time to provide a high level of supportive and developmental feedback, which provided clear direction and advice to candidates.

Discussions with candidates highlight very positive learning experiences and confirm the usefulness of the HR units to their career development. Almost all candidates were very complimentary about the teaching and support that they had received, which is testimony to the hard work and commitment of centre staff. All candidates interviewed indicated that centres had clear procedures and processes in place for resubmissions, authenticity, appeals and complaints. All of which helps to clarify expectations.

Centres work very hard to ensure equality of access to assessment for candidates and have excellent support systems in place. These support systems include, in all cases, subject support provided by delivery staff (quite often outwith class) to central support for learners where access to equipment and other specialist resources is available. Discussions with candidates confirm their awareness of the support available and there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that these support arrangements do work.

## **Areas of good practice**

With some repetition of earlier points and previous reports, the following list summarises a collection of areas of good practice identified during external verification visits:

- ◆ Strong centre processes with clear, transparent evidence (eg completed forms, minutes of meetings) that standardisation and internal verification procedures were in place and working
- ◆ Master folders/files containing all requisite information for assessment and internal verification
- ◆ Strong support systems for candidates
- ◆ Merging units to remove duplication and enhance the learning experience

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Overall, external verification confirmed that centres generally deliver units in this verification group well. Where there were specific issues raised these are covered in the action points given for that particular visit. As a result, centres should be aware of things they can do which might address their particular situation. Areas for improvement run along the lines of more of the same. Centres continue to review: their general provision, the support provided to candidates, and the use of technology (eg Moodle) in delivery and in the management of plagiarism and malpractice (eg Turnitin).

Finally, the level of work produced by candidates is generally of a very high level which reflects the good work of everyone concerned. Ensuring that the awards continue to meet the needs of candidates relies on good robust partnerships. The EV team feels that this has been strong over the years and looks forward to this continuing in future.