



Higher National Qualifications

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Management Skills

Introduction

This verification group covers the following awards:

- ◆ HNC in Management and Leadership at SCQF level 7
- ◆ Diploma in Management and Leadership at SCQF level 8
- ◆ a range of Professional Development Awards

Take up of these awards has been low over the last few years for a variety of reasons. As part of the regular review process and in response to the decline in uptake, the HNC and HND awards are currently under review and new arrangements are being developed for 2019–20.

A number of units developed under this verification group are delivered as part of other HN frameworks, including awards delivered in China, indicating that the awards and the units within them still have relevancy. This report focuses on the 10 qualification verification reports based on visits conducted in the UK.

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 have processes in place for the ongoing review of assessment environments, procedures, equipment, resources, and assessment materials. These processes generally include team meetings, programme/course committees, staff/student committees, and often include a tiered structure where matters can be referred, when required. Overall, these appear to work well and this has been confirmed in visit reports.

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 have arrangements in place to ensure that candidates' needs and achievements are appropriately matched. Interview and selection procedures followed by clear and robust induction arrangements ensure that needs and achievements are identified and appropriate arrangements are put in place when required. Larger centres have facilities to provide a range of additional support mechanisms and these arrangements work well. Meanwhile, although smaller centres may not have access to such resources, they are well aware of their responsibilities in this regard and have arrangements in place to support candidates as far as can be reasonably expected.

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

All centres have regular contact arrangements in place and these vary from face to face traditional contact supported by an appropriate VLE to online models and supported learning. Visit reports indicate that these work well and candidates confirm support during the visits.

Almost all centres have strong tracking records for 'open' or online delivery that indicate candidate contact, progress, and achievement, but there are occasions where this could be better. Overall, it is good to confirm that all candidates report a positive learning experience.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All reports confirm that centres have strong and robust assessment and verification procedures in place that have been fully implemented and this is confirmed via standardisation minutes, notes, and decision logs. It is important that all assessors are involved in standardisation, especially when delivery and assessment are carried out at a distance. There are a few occasions when not all internal assessment and verification paperwork is completed thoroughly, eg there are missing signatures, so it is important to ensure that centre staff complete their own documentation in full. Nonetheless, the overall position is one of strength and it is good to see that centres are conducting pre-, mid-, and post-verification, and are recording these appropriately, allowing qualification verifiers to confirm compliance with this criterion.

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

Exemplar assessment instruments are used where available. Centres are encouraged to submit centre-devised assessments for prior verification. Overall, all assessments work well and it is good to see centres conducting pre-delivery verification to confirm the fit of the assessment. In one case, the centre has further evolved the marking criteria beyond that in the exemplar to ensure greater consistency and accuracy in assessment decisions. Such an approach strengthens the assessment process and helps the delivery team to ensure that the approach taken is valid, reliable, practicable, equitable, and fair.

Unit F84L 35: *Behavioural Skills for Business* may be assessed on its own or assessed in conjunction with the unit DE3X 35: *Business Culture and Strategy* (which is outside verification group 243: Management Skills) through an integrated assessment exemplar under the HN enhancement pilot. When the pilot is used, the assessment process works well and is well understood by delivery staff. Overall, the evidence points to strong compliance with this criterion.

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

All centres have good robust procedures in place and these are communicated to staff and to candidates. The procedures include a variety of mechanisms including candidate checks (examination setting), candidate induction, candidate sign-off, and software such as Turnitin. No evidence of malpractice was identified during visits and there was solid evidence to indicate that staff and candidates are well aware of the requirements and standards here.

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

Candidates' work was accurately and consistently marked by assessors across all centres. The use of centrally-devised exemplars is of great assistance here, as is the experience of the delivery and assessment staff in delivering such qualifications. As indicated previously, one

centre has evolved the exemplar to create in-house marking guidelines which was a very positive development.

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

All centres have appropriate retention policies in place and the evidence from the visits confirms that these are followed appropriately in all centres.

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

The centres visited this year are all experienced and all have appropriate arrangements in place for the management and dissemination of qualification feedback. These arrangements are confirmed in their assessment and verification procedures and are often managed via their SQA co-ordinator and the standardisation meetings.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ The development of in-house marking guidelines in order to enhance the SQA assessment exemplar.
- ◆ Individual learning plans and dedicated learning support to assist candidates to achieve.

Specific areas for development

There were no areas identified for development, however, as indicated at the beginning of this report, the awards and units are currently under review.