



**Higher National and Vocational Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2015  
Sport and Fitness**

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

# Higher National Units

Centres delivering Units within this cognate group have been involved in the delivery of Higher National Units and awards for a considerable period, and this experience is demonstrated in the quality of provision.

All centres are now delivering the revised HNC/D Fitness, Health and Exercise, with limited delivery of the SVQs in Instructing Exercise and Fitness/Personal Training. The majority of centres have a clear understanding of the national standard and maintain an effective and interactive working relationship with SQA and the Qualification Support Team for support where required.

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

Unit specifications for most Units were revised in the 2013 revalidation of the award, though some centres have yet to deliver year 2. There has been some general discussion and feedback with centres both formally and informally regarding the content and presentation of the Units, the vast majority of which has been positive. Minor changes have been made to some Units, generally where proofing or typo errors have been identified. Exemplification materials have been produced for core Units (with a couple of exceptions, where development is still in progress) and some of the optional Units.

Some centres have developed their own instruments of assessment, which in some instances have been prior verified by SQA. Centres should take note that it is required in some instances to produce alternative assessment materials for candidates' second attempts. Verifiers have on a number of occasions commented that centre staff are not familiar with the Arrangements documentations for the awards, and increased recognition of the importance of this material would greatly aid in effective assessment.

The SVQ awards are delivered by a minority of centres, and it should be noted that the National Occupational Standards were revised in February 2015 — this will result in changes to assessment strategies and delivery over the coming sessions.

## **Evidence Requirements**

Where two or more assessors are delivering a Unit, it has been noted by External Verifiers that assessments, expectations, and recording methodology for assessment are not always standardised — centres should be aware of the importance of understanding fully the Evidence Requirements (and interpreting those at the appropriate SCQF level).

## **Administration of assessments**

See also the comments above under 'Evidence Requirements'. Centres demonstrate good practice in their ongoing review of course materials and

resources, with documented dissemination of feedback from the previous external verification visits. Where staff have attended SQA update events for this Group Award, materials (for example those from the workshop on assessment writing) have been used effectively within centres. Verifiers have commented positively about centre policies for ensuring that all assessment environments, procedures, equipment, learning and assessment materials are continually reviewed and updated: for example, weekly minuted team meetings, course team meetings and self-evaluation/standardisation events.

### **General feedback**

External verification reports from the past session indicate that centres are striving to adopt a standardised approach to ensure that SQA requirements had been met. Centre internal verification procedures had been applied appropriately, with judgement of candidate evidence appropriate (though see also the comments above under 'Evidence Requirements') standardisation was not always carried out in an appropriate format, which, whilst ultimately at the appropriate SCQF level did not always show unanimity of approach.

Where centres had taken the time to consider carefully the delivery pattern, it was encouraging to note the effort ensuring that all aspects of Outcomes were covered against the Evidence Requirements for the different Units. Feedback from assessors and internal verifiers was variable: effective examples gave constructive and supportive feedback, though it was still possible to find examples of non-specific and subjective commentary.

The use of marking guidance as shown in the exemplar materials is becoming more widespread, and centres should bear in mind that an effective marking guide aids standardisation.

Centres were generally well prepared for visits, with a full range of candidate work available, centre internal verification policy being effectively implemented, and enthusiastic staff.

### **Areas of good practice**

As stated above, comments made on assessed work were mostly helpful and positive, clearly identifying what the learner had done well and where there was room for improvement. It should be noted that this also supports the verification process by demonstrating how and why an assessment decision has been reached.

In SVQ assessment, where appropriate work is done in a group context which allows not only assessor support but a significant element of peer assisted learning — this is fully compliant with the relevant assessment strategies.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

- ◆ Centres should be vigilant when marking assessments that Evidence Requirements are met at the appropriate SCQF level. This is particularly important when material is developed by centres.
- ◆ Internal verification should be carried out regularly and in line with any assessment strategy. Qualifications of assessors should be monitored by the centre and appropriate CPD carried out where required.
- ◆ It is not appropriate to mark in pencil.
- ◆ It is important that assessors familiarise themselves with the minimum competence statements relating to performance elements of the course.
- ◆ Clear guidelines for achieving minimum Evidence Requirements will enhance candidate understanding and achievement.

# Higher National Graded Units

Fitness, Health and Exercise Graded Unit1

Fitness, Health and Exercise Graded Unit2

## General comments

For many centres, academic session 2 of 2014–15 was their first delivery of the revised Graded Unit 1, and the coming session will mark their first delivery of Graded Unit 2. Centres should note the revisions to the marking guidance and mark allocation for the Graded Units in the revised award. This is particularly important in Graded Unit 2, where the delivery and assessment timeframe is demanding.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

There have been some fundamental changes to the structure and brief of the Graded Units. Graded Unit 1 now gives candidates the opportunity to look at issues which may affect personal trainers (reflecting developments and current trends in the industry) and Graded Unit 2 requires a 12 week intervention. Centres should note that this is a practical intervention and not simply a case study or literature review which some centres have allowed in the past. Centres are also encouraged to study carefully the marking guidance and allocation both in the Unit specification and that shown in exemplar materials.

## Evidence Requirements

For the reasons outlined above it is difficult to comment regarding Graded Unit 2, however it is encouraging to note that many centres have developed considerable expertise in the delivery and assessment of Graded Units in general. In terms of Evidence Requirements, the main comment made by External Verifiers is that centres are on occasion over generous with the awarding of additional marks. Centres are reminded that a 'C' pass (50–60%) means that the requirements of the brief have been fulfilled. Any marks awarded over and above this need to have a clear rationale for inclusion.

## Administration of assessments

The majority of centres provided clear guidance for candidates on the administration of assessments, and this was reflected in centre paperwork. Colleges are generally very familiar with internal verification needs, however in some instances (see above comment regarding the award of additional marks) internal verification appeared to be less robust than is preferred. Similarly, candidate feedback and marking guidance should clearly identify a rationale for the award of additional marks.

## **General feedback**

See above regarding candidate feedback. It was observed by the external verification team that (in some centres) whilst candidates who were interviewed were enthusiastic about their results and the Unit delivery, the paperwork, feedback and internal verification did not offer clarity as to why such results had been achieved.

It is also important that centres develop a clear picture of what is regarded as 'reasonable assistance' as there is considerable variation across the country (see also 'Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher National Certificates and Diplomas').

## **Areas of good practice**

The following provides a summary of good practice noted by External Verifiers over the past academic session:

- ◆ Regular standardisation meetings where centres have multiple offerings of the Graded Unit
- ◆ Effective feedback given which gave a clear picture of where and how candidates had achieved the required evidence

## **Specific areas for improvement**

The following provides a summary of potential problem issues noted by External Verifiers over the past academic session:

- ◆ Additional Marks criteria incorrectly applied (possibly due to changes in marking guidance from previous Unit) — only 30 marks available instead of 32 for the Developing stage
- ◆ Some candidate evidence did not meet minimum Evidence Requirements and had not been picked up by either assessor or internal verifier
- ◆ Lack of consistency and rationale in the awarding of additional marks
- ◆ Minimal feedback given to candidates

It is strongly recommended that where additional marks are awarded clear justification is given with regards to the minimum Evidence Requirements. Consistent application of the minimum Evidence Requirement is required for all sections.

# SVQ awards

## General comments

GD2N 22 SVQ2 in Instruction Exercise and Fitness  
GA6T 23 SVQ 3 Personal Training

There was a limited programme of SVQ visits over the past academic session, but in general terms the standard of candidate work and assessment practice was of high quality.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Unit specifications mirror the National Occupational Standards (available from the Sector Skills Council SkillsActive). Centres have developed effective assessment methodologies based on and compliant with the appropriate assessment strategies. No exemplar materials have been developed.

## Evidence Requirements

All candidate work seen showed clear cognisance had been given to the Evidence Requirements, and assessors were familiar with the requirements of the assessment strategy.

## Administration of assessments

Assessment was conducted effectively for all awards seen. See also comments above with regard to assessment strategies. Assessment administration was effective and clearly communicated to candidates. Paperwork was clear and easy to understand for both internal verification and external verification.

## General feedback

Candidate feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with centres in terms of both delivery and assessment.

## Areas of good practice

Candidates have personal development and learning plans which are reviewed on a regular basis. Regular meetings for assessors/verifiers are particularly important when working with SVQ candidates, and centres demonstrated a high level of awareness of this requirement.

## Specific areas for improvement

None were specifically identified in external verification reports for the last session — this is highly encouraging.