



**Higher National Graded Unit**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019**

**Administration and Information  
Technology Graded Units**

## Introduction

The units offered in Verification Group 389 form part of the HNC/D Administration and Information Technology qualifications. A total of 14 centres were externally verified by a mix of visits and remote verification for:

HH9M 34 Graded Unit 1 (GU1)  
HH9N 35 Graded Unit 2 (GU2)  
HH9R 35 Graded Unit 3 (GU3)

GU1 and GU2 are closed-book examinations and GU3 is a project based on a case study. These group awards were revised in 2016 and new versions validated in early 2017. Session 2017–18 saw the first delivery of the revised awards, with session 2018–19 seeing an expected increase in the number of centres delivering the new award.

In January 2019 SQA contacted all centres to request formal feedback on SOLAR provision for GU1. This feedback was addressed at a specific session at the well-attended annual Subject Network Event the following month. A representative from the SOLAR team attended to speak to technical queries. The information presented at the event was made available to all centres through the SQA website. Feedback regarding the event in general was very positive.

Prior to the network event, there were four SQA-devised assessments for GU1 — a dynamically generated assessment and three fixed content assessments available through SOLAR. Each assessment comprised two papers — Paper 1 (objective response questions), and Paper 2 (subjective response questions). Both within the feedback from consultation, and verbally at the event, centres continued to voice concerns — primarily regarding technical issues relating to the delivery and marking of Paper 2 which made SOLAR more onerous and problematic to use than established methods. As feedback received was overwhelming, SQA agreed that a hard copy version of the ASP would be made available for use in session 2018–19.

Centres used various combinations to assess GU1 — SOLAR for both Paper 1 and 2; SOLAR for Paper 1 and hard copy for Paper 2; or hard copy for Paper 1 and 2.

Some centres which submitted GU1 via SOLAR did not submit the required documentation for central verification. Centres should note that the same documentation should be submitted whether work is being assessed in hard copy or via SOLAR.

GU2 has two ASPs, as does GU3. All centres were told of the additional ASPs available at the network event and information was also posted on the subject page on the SQA website.

## **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.**

This criterion only applies to GU3. All centres visited had clear evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments and equipment, and of reference, learning and assessment materials.

Four centres were visited for verification for GU3, and all centres had robust systems in place to meet this criterion.

### **Category 3: Candidate support**

**Criterion 3.2: Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.**

This criterion only applies to GU3. All centres visited had procedures in place to identify candidates' development needs and prior achievements to ensure they were on the correct level of qualification. All candidates had access to additional support where necessary.

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

This criterion only applies to GU3. All centres ensure candidates have access to assessors on a regular basis throughout their project. All centres showed that candidates can contact their assessor by a variety of methods such as email, telephone or a scheduled time to meet to discuss progress.

## **Category 4: Internal assessment and verification**

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

All centres have internal verification procedures in place and there was evidence that these procedures were adhered to. Most centres hold standardisation meetings to ensure consistency in assessment decision making. Almost all centres use the internal verification procedure to support assessors delivering these units. Almost all centres recorded pre-delivery checklists, meetings, ongoing and end of unit verification.

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

All centres are using SQA approved assessment instruments which have been internally verified. In most cases the suggested solutions have been annotated to show additional acceptable solutions. Most centres have a clear audit trail to show where there has been remediation.

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

All centres had a plagiarism and malpractice policy and this was highlighted at candidate induction. It was also signposted where candidates could refer to this for future consideration. Many centres presented assessments electronically, through a variety of platforms. It should be noted that it was not always clear from standardisation paperwork how each centre ensured that candidates did not have access to toolbars, internet etc to ensure the work was their own. It is recommended that all centres record this in future standardisation paperwork.

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

There was evidence that all centres were using SQA-devised assessments and marking schemes for all graded units to ensure consistent assessment judgements. In almost all centres the work presented for external verification had gone through the centre's internal verification procedure prior to the work being verified. Almost all centres' marking schemes had been annotated to show where any changes had been made.

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

All centres retained candidate assessment evidence as defined in the SQA retention of candidate assessment records policy.

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

All centres share information from the visit reports with all relevant staff. In the case of any issues requiring follow-up actions, the external verifier discussed these as part of the visit and agreed target dates with the centres. If remote verification was used, realistic target dates were set by the external verifier to allow centres time to implement the actions and return relevant evidence to SQA for further verification.

## **Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers**

The following good practice was reported during session 2018–19:

- ◆ One centre maintained comprehensive records detailing discussion prior to delivery of GU3 and noting the ongoing discussion during the assessment of the unit. The internal verifier had carried out the role supportively and was commended for the detail and frequency of discussions, given the assessor and internal verifier were based at two different campuses. The same centre had developed a candidate feedback document that is based on minimum evidence requirements for each stage of the GU3 project. Against each requirement there was narrative that showed consideration of type and amount of feedback required at each of the project's stages to ensure candidates were able to effectively move on to the next stage. A summary of remediation, if appropriate, was included in this document.
- ◆ Another centre provided an excellent marking checklist for GU3 which encompassed all areas of the assessment criteria including a marking key detailing key areas, maximum number of marks which could be awarded, the number of marks which were awarded to each candidate as well as a comment column where the assessor or IV could write any notes clearly. The same centre had a good, detailed checklist for Paper 1 of GU2.
- ◆ Another centre had used electronic answer sheets for GU2 and the design of these allowed the candidate appropriate space to respond to the questions. The instructions on the answer sheet were clear, allowing the candidate to answer the questions in any order.
- ◆ Another centre provided extended annotated acceptable solutions which was helpful at central verification for GU1 Paper 2.
- ◆ Another centre provided a clear marking key with the sample which the assessor and IVs had used in the marking of Paper 2. It was therefore clear at central verification where marks had been awarded, and for what responses. There were also extended annotated solutions, and again this was helpful at central verification.

## **Specific areas for development**

The following areas for development were reported during session 2018–19:

- ◆ Centres should provide evidence from their internal verification policy to support their sampling decisions when submitting assessments for central verification, regardless of the method of assessing.
- ◆ Where assessments have been carried out electronically for GU1 and GU2 but not on SOLAR, centres should provide evidence of how they ensure candidate work is their own in their standardisation documentation.
- ◆ It is recommended that all centres show a clear audit trail to show where work has been remediated to assist with both internal and external verification.