



Higher National Units

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019

Personal and Social Development

Introduction

HN Personal and Social Development verification activity revealed high confidence ratings across almost all centres with very few recording only reasonable confidence. HN assessment and verification systems and procedures are robust and fit for purpose. There was consistent evidence of the use of electronic portfolio evidence for HN unit delivery with well organised and efficient use of Moodle and Mahara software.

HN units are delivered across a wide spectrum of HNC/HND course frameworks and external verification sampling was completed across a range of subject areas, such as Equine Studies, Horticulture, Animal Care, Agriculture, Rural Business Management; Professional Golf; Sports Studies, Beauty, and Dental and Medical Reception Skills.

HN units externally sampled and verified:

D77H 34 Employment Experience 2
HJ4W 34 Work Placement
DV0M 34 Work Experience
F86Y 35 Developing the Individual within a Team
DF4D 33 Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness

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.

External verifiers consistently reported that almost all centres make use of pre-delivery, during delivery and post-delivery checks as part of initial and ongoing reviews of the assessment environments (covering equipment, reference, learning and assessment systems and procedures).

From verification visits it was clear that centre systems and procedures reflected the three-stage model and were effective in the reviewing cycle of assessment and internal verification systems and procedures. Pre-delivery checklists were made available for external sampling. Initial reviews are completed prior to each cohort of candidates starting, ensuring appropriate resources are in place.

The following comments made by external verifiers show the high level of confidence they had in the reviewing process they found in centres:

'Weekly team meetings and monthly staff meetings provide an informal opportunity to discuss and action the updating of resources.'

'Ongoing reviews take place at regular standardisation meetings. This was evident in the minutes available for review, dating back two years.'

'Formal end of programme reviews are conducted where tutors and assessors discuss whether resources are meeting the qualification's requirements. Actions are undertaken as required.'

'Work placements are vetted by centre staff, prior to the placement commencing, to ensure that health and safety regulations are adhered to.'

Verification activity also revealed an excellent example of a distance learning delivery approach where learners were well supported to 'complete their studies in their own workplace or at home'.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Almost all centres continue to provide well organised systems and procedures to support candidate development needs and prior achievements. External verification reports indicated that, in the centres visited:

'Candidate development needs and prior achievements are carefully reviewed during the selection process.'

'Accreditation of prior learning is used to establish previous qualifications, work experience, certificated training and non-certificated training, and this is matched against programme units and outcomes.'

'Extended learning support needs are also established during the induction phase and a support plan subsequently devised. Support is also arranged should any additional support needs become apparent after this initial phase.'

Centre policy and procedures are almost all well established and clear if a candidate discloses a support need. Admissions procedures support equality of access and are non-discriminatory. Some centres have identified equality and inclusion staff who are able to provide ongoing specialist support where required, and are able to access and make an input to the monitoring of an individual support plan which can be securely accessed on a central shared system.

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

Almost all centres operate an open access system where candidates have ongoing contact with assessors as well as scheduled contact, as verification reports confirmed:

'Candidates have contact with their assessor on an ongoing basis as required and also on three scheduled occasions in the academic year. Further individual contact can be arranged as necessary.'

Many assessment schedules were flexible and were revised according to individual need as well as providing remediation opportunities and re-assessment opportunities where appropriate.

HN programmes have well established support systems in place to review candidate progress on an ongoing basis. Verification sampling and reporting activities praised centres as follows:

- ◆ Candidates had daily contact with assessors during scheduled classes.
- ◆ In a few centres candidates had the option of joining a WhatsApp group where questions and concerns could be voiced.
- ◆ In some centres candidates were issued with a list of staff contact details and availability.
- ◆ In most centres learners had access to flexible learning sessions for targeted support as and when required.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres provided detailed records of assessment and internal verification procedures and almost all were fully effective. Systems and procedures were generally fit for purpose and were being adhered to, although some recommendations and actions were documented in external visiting reports:

- ◆ Almost all centres adopted the three-stage model and provided evidence of pre-delivery, during and end checks.
- ◆ All centres provided records of standardisation meetings and some provided decision log records.
- ◆ Almost all centres provided paper-based and electronic master packs, marking schemes, assessment schedules, and sample reference, learning and teaching materials.
- ◆ Almost all centres provided documentation to support the ongoing review of assessment materials and marking schemes, such as IV sampling, minutes of meetings, actions required, and quality assurance feedback.

Some recommendations were made regarding the following:

‘Strongly recommend that standardisation meetings are held for specific verification groups and in particular for staff who are all teaching the same unit. This could be achieved utilising the online facility, eg Moodle and Mahara.’

Further recommendations included the following:

‘An overall evidence checklist should be held on the e-portfolio platform. This would be beneficial to both the assessors and the verifiers.’

‘To download and use the SQA toolkit meeting template, allowing agendas to be better structured and action points recorded.’

‘To provide separate assessor feedback on internal verification documentation.’

In a small number of centres there was an identified need to update internal verification documentation to ensure coverage of the three stages of internal verification activity.

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

Almost all centres made use of SQA assessment support materials. Assessment instruments and master teaching packs were ‘clearly presented and well organised. The materials provided to candidates were of a high standard’.

External verifiers reported that there was a 'structured approach to delivery and support through blended learning opportunities' and this allowed learners to fully engage in the learning process. The external verifiers also reported that 'feedback to candidates was detailed and constructive, reflecting the high standard of organisational commitment to the learner experience'.

One centre had developed their own assessment instruments for the HN work placement unit HJ4W 34. These assessment instruments had not been prior-verified by SQA, but were discussed within the centre when completing pre-delivery documentation and during standardisation meetings. The centre was completely unaware that an SQA assessment support pack was available for the unit. The verification visit highlighted that in this case the assessment instrument used was not fit for purpose and as a result all candidates had to be re-assessed.

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

All centres had effective processes and procedures for ensuring that evidence was generated under SQA required conditions and was the candidate's own work. This was summed up in one verification report thus:

'Candidates sign the standard SQA disclaimer document to this effect. The level of thorough recorded extended learning support, assessment, internal verification and review procedures, effectively underpin this requirement.'

External verifiers routinely commented on the effective centre procedures in place covering the induction stage through to the assessment environment, conditions for assessment, internal verification, and centre records.

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

Almost all centres provided accurate and consistently judged candidate work and this was particularly noteworthy in verification reports:

'The high standard of presentation of candidate evidence was acknowledged, as was the presentation of supporting material. All unit teaching packs contained a wealth of teaching material and, in addition, all assessment and internal verification records were clear and precise.'

There were however several recommendations made by external verifiers, for example:

- ◆ Some assessors provided in-depth positive and supportive feedback whilst others only provided it briefly. External verifiers highlighted the need for more consistency across the centre.

- ◆ A further recommendation was made in relation to online portfolio feedback. A benchmark of what constitutes detailed feedback to a candidate could be agreed at a standardisation meeting and then stored on the online e-portfolio.

Verification activity further highlighted that, where centre-devised assessment instruments are used, centres should:

- ◆ be encouraged to submit centre-devised assessment instruments to SQA for prior verification
- ◆ use the SQA assessment exemplar if one is available until a centre-devised assessment instrument is approved

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

All centres retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements, and longer if necessary. Candidate evidence is retained for longer periods by some centres in accordance with other awarding bodies and/or funding requirements. This can vary from the minimum requirement of three weeks to as much as three to five years.

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

All centres were fully compliant with the dissemination of feedback to staff from qualification verifiers. There was clear evidence of the dissemination of feedback noted within assessment and internal verification records; information held in secure quality assurance folders and shared files. Standardisation meetings were readily available and highlighted agenda items for discussion and action points.

All centres continue to upload verification reports to a central shared system to allow staff to read external verifier reports and to share information. Visiting verification activity revealed feedback from previous external sampling had been discussed and implemented.

Centres routinely disseminate reports to all staff to inform best practice and where necessary to take appropriate steps to remain compliant.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

- ◆ The use of a beauty salon facility as a social enterprise providing a High Street-based real work environment. The external verifier noted that 'This resource allows HND Beauty candidates to develop technical and interpersonal workplace skills whilst generating income, with all profits going to the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice'.
- ◆ Primary school placements for Sports Coaching students, which was key in providing a high quality candidate learning experience.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Feedback provided by assessors should be discussed at standardisation meetings to ensure consistency within HN units and across subjects within a verification group.
- ◆ Centre-devised assessment instruments should be submitted to SQA for prior verification approval.
- ◆ Some centres need to update internal verification documentation to include the three-stage model.
- ◆ Some centres should download and make use of the SQA toolkit meeting template, to prepare agendas and record actions.
- ◆ Consider providing separate assessor feedback on internal verification documentation.