Higher National and/or Graded Unit

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019
Music Technology

Verification group: 380

Introduction

The following units were selected for qualification verification in session 2018–19:

National units:
H7F9 46   Sound: Understanding the Signal Path
F5DY 12   Sound Design
F58H 12   Sound Engineering and Production

Higher National units:
DJ36 34   Sound Production Practice 1
H1M1 34   Sound Production Theory 1
H1M4 34   Digital Audio Workstations 1
H1M2 35   Sound Production Theory 2
H1M1 35   Digital Audio Theory
J01A 34   Sound Production: Recording and Mixing (SCQF Level 7)
J01B 34   Sound Production: Skills for Business

Graded units:
J0J0 34   Sound Production: Graded Unit 1
J0HN 35   Stringed Instruments Making and Repair
F506 34   Sound Production: Graded Unit 1
DR2R 35   Sound Production: Graded Unit 2

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 selected for qualification verification provided sufficient valid evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments, equipment, learning resources and assessment materials.

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 identified candidate prior achievements and development needs for awards. These are identified during the application or induction process, and during delivery, and relevant plans and/or procedures are implemented. Evidence was available to confirm that candidates can self-refer, or be referred by tutors or assessors, for additional support. Where required, arrangements for assessment of candidates with additional support requirements are communicated to relevant staff.

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

All centres provided scheduled contact with assessors for candidates undertaking awards. In addition, candidates maintain contact with staff by email and/or via virtual learning environments. Feedback from assessors on performance ensures that candidates can review their progress and plan for assessment. For graded units, all centres held mentoring meetings with learners to review and support their progress. For all centres, candidates interviewed commented positively on the support they receive from tutors and/or assessors.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Almost all centres selected for qualification verification applied internal assessment and verification procedures appropriately for the awards. The centres provided documented evidence of this in unit master folders and meeting notes.

For Graded Unit 2, in one centre the internal verification of the assessment instrument stated that audio/video evidence could be used as supporting evidence for the candidate interview. The centre was required to amend the verification of internal assessment form to state that video evidence should be used as supporting evidence for the candidate interview, as is stated in the conditions of assessment in the unit specification.

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

All centres demonstrated that they make effective selection and use of assessment instruments and methods for the units verified. Pre-delivery checklists confirmed that assessments are valid, equitable and fair. All centres were making effective use of the SQA assessment support packs (ASPs) that are available for:

H1M4 34   Digital Audio Workstations 1
H1M1 35   Digital Audio Theory
J01A 34   Sound Production: Recording and Mixing (SCQF Level 7)
J01B 34   Sound Production: Skills for Business (SCQF Level 7)

All centres are effectively using ASPs for:

J0J0 34   Sound Production: Graded Unit 1
J0HN 35   Stringed Instruments Making and Repair
F506 34   Sound Production: Graded Unit 1
DR2R 35   Sound Production: Graded Unit 2

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

All centres have policies and procedures in place to ensure candidates' work is their own, and candidates have access to centre academic malpractice policies. Evidence presented confirmed that the policies and procedures were implemented appropriately. Evidence in master folders included procedures for dealing with academic malpractice, and staff confirmed they are aware of the procedures. Assessment instruments included statements of assessment conditions, which ensured that candidates are aware of the conditions. Candidates sign disclaimers to confirm that the assessments they have submitted are their own work. Practical work is directly observed by assessors, further assuring that the assessment evidence is the work of the candidate. Most centres were using plagiarism detection software for the submission of written candidate evidence.

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

All of the centres selected for qualification verification accurately and consistently judged candidate evidence against SQA requirements for the units verified. Marking checklists and feedback to candidates confirmed that the judgements were accurate and consistent. Most centres used marking schemes from SQA ASPs where available. For graded units, all centres were using the marking schemes provided in the SQA ASPs.

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

All centres retained candidate assessment evidence in line with SQA requirements. Centre policies and procedures included retention dates, and ensured that candidate evidence was available for internal and external qualification verification purposes.

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

All centres have procedures whereby qualification verification reports are circulated to relevant staff. Where good practice, recommendations and/or action points are identified, these are discussed at team/centre meetings. Documented meeting notes included any actions taken, with dates for completion.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ Use of candidate peer review and formative candidate practice presentations to accelerate learner confidence in Graded Unit 2. This also allows tutors and assessors to observe candidate work during development and assists in verifying authenticity of candidate evidence.

♦ For both graded units, in some centres, candidates were creating basic websites for presenting their portfolios, therefore providing an additional skillset. Centres adopting this approach must be able to guarantee security of candidate evidence.

♦ For H7F9 46 Sound: Understanding the Signal Path, one centre made excellent use of candidate produced videos to demonstrate the setup and operation of PA and recording systems.

♦ In one centre, an effective approach was being taken to learning, teaching and assessment with units across the HN Sound Production award being integrated into project-based assessments. This integration was comprehensively documented in the centre's internal quality assurance documentation, with evidence requirements for units clearly linked to elements of projects.

Specific areas for development

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

♦ H1M2 35 Sound Production Theory 2 and H1M1 34 Sound Production Theory 1: It is recommended that the use of online assessment methods should offer candidates the opportunity to expand descriptions and explanations as required.

♦ Where not already in use, centres could use a disclaimer signed by the candidate to state that the candidate evidence is authentic.

♦ For graded units, although all centres were awarding final marks holistically as whole numbers, half marks should not be used for marking of individual stages.

♦ For graded units, it is recommended that centres adopt a standardised approach to candidate portfolio submissions across sites and between cohorts.

♦ For Graded Unit 2, it is recommended that candidates are allocated 25 minutes for the presentation and interview, as stated in the ASP.

♦ For Graded Unit 2, it is recommended that centres create banks of questions to use during the candidate interview to facilitate standardisation of this component of the assessment.

♦ For H7F9 46 Sound: Understanding the Signal Path, centres should ensure marking schemes and criteria for achieving the unit are based on the current unit specification, particularly when adopting a sample-based approach to assessment. Centres should note that the conditions of assessment in the unit specification differ from those stated in the F58G 12 ASP for the previous version of this unit. This ASP is no longer current and has been removed from SQA Secure. Centres are advised to develop their own checklist that enables tracking for the five broad areas of evidence required for outcome 1.