



**National Qualifications and Higher National Qualifications  
(including Graded Units)**

**Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019  
Complementary Therapies**

Verification group: 430

## Introduction

The current GL7X 15 Higher National Certificate (HNC) and GM9E 16 Higher National Diploma (HND) awards in Complementary Therapies were updated to meet the needs of this expanding industry and to provide a platform for those wishing to progress their studies within higher education. The HNC was validated in August 2016; the HND in August 2017.

GD28 45 National Certificate in Wellness Therapies at SCQF level 6 was validated in July 2011. The main objectives of this qualification are to develop understanding and basic skills in the areas of Wellness Therapies, equipping learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding required for progression to further academic and/or professional qualifications and entry into the industry at a trainee level.

There were six external verification visits undertaken in academic session 2018–19; two for National Qualifications (NQ), one for a Higher National (HN) unit, and three for HG2X 34 Complementary Therapy: Graded Unit 1.

Confidence ratings of the six visits were:

- ◆ two NQs — both high confidence
- ◆ one HN unit — reasonable confidence
- ◆ three HG2X 34 Complementary Therapy: Graded Unit 1 — all high confidence

An action was identified for SQA quality criterion 2.4 in the centre where the overall outcome rating was 'reasonable confidence'. The identified action was completed within the agreed timescale and the required evidence submitted to SQA for scrutiny. Following review of this evidence the centre outcome rating was updated to 'high confidence'.

The following units were sampled during the external verification activity:

### **GD28 45 NC Wellness Therapies:**

FT92 12 Wellness Therapies: Body Structures and Benefits of Treatment  
FR0L 12 Wellness Therapies: Facial Massage

### **GL7X 15 HNC Complementary Therapies and GM9E 16 HND Complementary Therapies:**

F9T5 34 Human Anatomy and Physiology for Beauty and Complementary Therapy  
(being delivered in lapsing award G7WX 16 HND Beauty Therapy)  
HG2X 34 Complementary Therapy: Graded Unit 1

The evidence viewed against SQA quality criteria during visits, and confidence ratings achieved, indicate that standards are consistently being maintained in almost all centres for verification group 430 Complementary Therapies.

## **Category 2: Resources**

**Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.**

Not verified for these qualification types.

**Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.**

In almost all centres there was evidence of ongoing reviews of assessment environments, equipment, and reference, learning and assessment materials. This was in the form of course team, standardisation meeting and subject review meeting minutes, completed pre-delivery internal verification documentation, and ongoing sampling. Learner feedback was gathered in the form of student questionnaires and/or focus group meetings and was used to inform the review process.

In one centre, on the day of the external verification visit, there was no evidence available to verify ongoing reviews of assessment environments, equipment and reference, learning and assessment materials. There was also insufficient recorded evidence of standardisation/subject review between assessor and internal verifier for the unit being externally verified. This resulted in an action for this criterion (2.4). Evidence of the centre review process and standardisation/subject review between assessor and internal verifier was subsequently submitted to SQA for scrutiny, at which time a verification evidence report was completed and the outcome rating of the centre updated to 'high confidence'.

The development of a 'Standardisation Meeting Running Schedule of Minutes' document that can be accessed by staff on a shared drive was highlighted as good practice in one centre visited. This document had been designed to capture details of ongoing discussions and decisions agreed between assessor(s) and internal verifier(s) at standardisation meetings.

## **Category 3: Candidate support**

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

Learner development needs and prior achievement are identified during the selection/recruitment process in all centres. Learners in some centres had successfully completed either NC Wellness or NC Beauty SCQF level 6 programmes as a pre-cursor to studying HN Complementary Therapies.

In all centres learners who require additional support are referred to learning support teams who assess the support required and compile Personal Learning Development Plans. These are made available to all relevant staff, reviewed and updated as required.

An organised trip to Malta had been arranged for a group of learners in one centre. This group attended Maltese language classes before going and while in Malta were given the opportunity to observe practical classes in Wellness Therapies and to undertake work placement, participating in spa treatments under supervision. This was a good example of shared learning across different countries and enhanced the learning experience of the group.

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

Learners in many centres are provided with subject assessment plans and, in some, with an academic session assessment plan. Post-assessment feedback within normal teaching time takes place in all centres. Centres visited adopted different approaches to giving post-assessment feedback — verbal, online and written. Where feedback was not formally recorded it was recommended that it would be beneficial to do so, facilitating learner reflection to support future assessment.

In one centre visited the feedback to learners is recorded on the centre-devised feedback/feed-forward document and on the centre's VLE. It was noted that the level of feedback given in this instance enables learners to evaluate their performance and progress confidently. The document is used to prompt discussion points in verbal one-to-one post-assessment meetings. This enables learners to benefit from the assessor's targeted, individualised evaluation of their work.

Learners undertaking non-advanced programmes have a weekly guidance session. Learners on both advanced and non-advanced programmes have formal reviews which are carried out either twice per academic session (semester) or three times per academic session (block), depending on the centre academic calendar.

In all centres, as learners progress through their graded unit, they receive one-to-one meetings following submission and marking of each stage — planning, developing and evaluating.

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

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

Internal verification documentation that was viewed confirmed that centre procedures and processes were being implemented; evidenced by pre-delivery internal verification, standardisation meeting minutes, and completed internal verification sampling documentation.

In all centres, internal verification sampling is risk-based. In almost all, sampling is carried out over a three-year period. Mid and post-internal verification sampling documentation viewed confirmed that where actions arise a plan is put in place which is time-bound and reviewed.

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

SQA-devised instruments of assessment were being used where these were available by almost all centres.

F9T5 34 Human Anatomy and Physiology for Beauty and Complementary Therapies was being delivered within the lapsing HN Beauty Framework. The centre delivering this unit had devised three alternative papers for each assessment. All alternative papers were comparable in terms of depth of questioning, expected learner input and weighting.

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

Assessment evidence was gathered as specified in the evidence requirements section of each unit specification — open-book, closed-book and direct observation by all centres. Centres visited delivering advanced programmes use Turnitin (plagiarism detection service) for open-book assessment submissions. Plagiarism is discussed with learners during induction and at various points throughout their course; in almost all centres, learners sign a declaration confirming that open-book submissions are their own work.

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

It was confirmed that accurate and consistent assessment decisions against SQA requirements had been made in most centres visited. Internal verification sampling had been undertaken to support/confirm the assessment decisions made in all centres; identifying in Centre A, the lack of standard approach to oral remediation, and in Centre B, an inaccurate/inconsistent application of marks for Graded Unit 1 planning stage. In both of these centres time-bound internal actions had been put in place to ensure the integrity of the applicable SQA qualification(s). In Centre A, learner remediation will be clarified and evidenced successfully then reviewed by the internal verifier; in Centre B, the planning stage had been cross-marked, re-evaluated and the allocation of marks amended. Internal verification sampling had been effective; accurately identifying the required action in both centres therefore no further action was required by SQA.

An instance of good practice was highlighted during the graded unit visit to one centre delivering the Complementary Therapy award for the first time. Additional time had been allocated to allow for further assessor and internal verifier standardisation meetings to take place. Selected evidence was double-marked by the assessor and one other member of the delivery team; both experienced in marking graded unit research investigations. The assessor and one other member of the delivery team will also be present at the evaluation presentations to separately assess learners and provide additional feedback which will be compared and discussed after the event. The internal verifier will also be present at the stage 3 evaluation presentations. These measures promote and facilitate a standardised approach across the delivery team as well as support the accurate and consistent application of marks.

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

SQA requirements were discussed with centre staff; in all centres visited evidence is retained beyond SQA requirements.

Where centres had been notified that they had been selected for external verification, evidence had been retained as required. Evidence identified in visit plans was either available or made available during external verification visits.

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

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

- ◆ Standardisation Meeting Running Schedule of Minutes document that can be accessed by all staff via share drive (2.4).
- ◆ Shared learning across different countries enhancing the learning experience (3.2).
- ◆ In-depth feedback and feed-forward on assessment progress (3.3).
- ◆ Allocation of additional resources in respect of standardisation meeting time and staff availability (4.6).

## **Specific areas for development**

The following area for development was reported during session 2018–19:

- ◆ Record assessment feedback to facilitate reflection and feed-forward (3.3).