Higher National and Graded Units

# Qualification Verification Summary Report 2019
# Social Sciences

**Verification group: 366**

# Introduction

The following units in VG 366 were externally verified during the course of session 2018–19.

FM66 34     Research and Methodology
F1BS 34     Research and Methodology
FM67 34     Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (Examination)
J11X 34     Social Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (Examination)
FM68 35     Social Sciences: Graded Unit 2 (Project)
FM6A 35     Social Sciences: Graded Unit 3 (Examination)

# 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.**

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
Almost all centres held a course team meeting at the end of the session to make plans for the delivery and assessment of the relevant units during the following session, which is better than leaving it to the start of session when times are rather hectic.

Thereafter meetings were held at appropriate intervals to monitor the progress of the delivery of the units and to make the necessary arrangements for the assessment of the units. By and large, this included the decision to have the assessments prior-verified by SQA.

Following the assessments, internal verification (IV) meetings were held to standardise the results across all classes and all campuses.

FM68 35
This followed broadly the arrangements for the Research and Methodology units described above.

The timing of the delivery of the unit varied between at the start of the second year and at a later point in that year. Serious thought needs to be given in the former case as to whether the candidates should be introduced to the project at the end of the previous session to give them time to select a topic and be ready to start work on it at the beginning of the new session.

# Category 3: Candidate support

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
A thorough selection process normally ensures that appropriate candidates are attempting these units. Support is available for those who need it.

FM68 35
The majority of students are progressing HNC students. Guidance had been given to ensure that the candidates were put on the appropriate course and decisions were taken to ensure progression on to the second year was achievable.

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
There are ample opportunities for the candidates to maintain contact with their assessor, not only during class time but in one case there are also tutorial sessions held weekly within the schools. Candidates were very well supported and every effort was made to advance their progress on the course.

FM68 35
Candidates are given guidance notes at the start of the unit, and can book one-to-one sessions with their tutors. There are many other opportunities for them to discuss matters with their tutors, either face-to-face or by email. This is an integral part of this unit and there were good records of individual tutorials and interviews. Timelines were also kept by students and they were encouraged to self-reflect through the evaluation section of the project. The candidates confirmed that they felt themselves well supported throughout.

# Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
These processes were properly followed and the assessments used were prior verified. IV reports detail this as 'routine' procedure. Assessors across both groups are internally verified. Feedback to assessors is helpful.

FM67 34 and J11X 34
In the case of three of the four centres verified, complete set of records for the centres and/or the campuses demonstrated the assessments were properly standardised. There is evidence of double marking and internal verifiers' comments.

The other centre didn't have time to carry out double marking and internal verification before the submission for central verification. They did not include an explanation for this in their submission, and thus failed to achieve a 'green'.

FM68 35
There were clear systems of standardisation/moderation and an IV cycle. College procedures were implemented and the whole process was entirely satisfactory.

FM6A 35
In the case of one of the two centres externally verified there was clear evidence through written documentation detailing the verification and standardisation process.

The second centre submitted very limited evidence of internal assessment and verification procedures for central verification. There was no evidence of cross-marking or sampling, with just one comment on a very brief report. It must have been very difficult for the samplers and verifiers to do their job, as one assessor in particular gave no indication on student scripts where marks had been allocated.

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
Prior-verified papers are used. IV activity maintains standardisation across class groups.

FM67 34 and J11X 34
Three of the four centres had had their assessments prior-verified, although one failed to include the SQA certificate as proof of this. The fourth centre's assessment met SQA standards but it would still have been sensible to submit it for prior verification.

FM68 35
Assessment instruments were discussed and agreed in their internal systems and then sent to SQA for prior verification so they met all SQA standards and requirements.

FM6A 35
Assessments were approved through prior verification so all were deemed to be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
Candidates had produced a variety of responses to the standardised questions, indicating individual understanding. Closed-book conditions were used, in line with the specification.

FM67 34 and J11X 34
Assessments were undertaken under exam conditions. Different choices of questions and different answers would support this requirement being met.

FM68 35
Materials produced by the candidates in one centre were submitted through 'iLearn Turnitin' — the other centre didn't use this system due to technical issues this session. Individual interviews also helped to ensure that the work was the candidate's alone.

FM6A 35
This assessment would have been taken under exam conditions, and the variety of topics chosen and style of response show personalisation and choice for candidates. They are producing individual pieces of work.

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

FM66 34 and F1BS 34
QVs were satisfied that the scripts were properly assessed, that the comments of assessor and internal verifier were appropriate, and SQA's requirements were being met.

FM67 34 and J11X 34
In the case of two centres, candidates' scripts had been properly marked, cross-marked and internally verified. It was possible to track this on the scripts and in accompanying IV records. The results were consistent with SQA standards.

The other two centres were problematic, however. In one centre the marks for the Research and Methodology question were significantly lower than for the optional questions; the marks given for the optional questions in some instances appeared to be slightly overgenerous. In the other centre the Research and Methodology question had been over-marked and required to be re-marked. This should have been picked up during IV.

FM68 35
Checklists were used which corresponded to SQA requirements. Minutes of meetings were also available to show assessor/internal verifier discussions.

FM6A 35
Checklists were used to make judgements. There were some minor differences in marks allocated on scripts and marks allocated on checklist in one centre. Marks awarded have been assessed, internally verified and centrally verified. Most scripts have clearly annotated margins showing exactly where each mark is being awarded against the marking guidelines. This allows straightforward standardisation discussions and verification activity.

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

In all cases, centre retention policies exceed those required by SQA.

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

FM66 34, F1BS 34 and FM68 35
In all cases reports were sent to the Quality Department who sent them to the staff concerned, either directly or via the curriculum manager or equivalent. These reports can then be included as an item for discussion at staff and course meetings.

# Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

♦ Full sets of typed notes used for feedback to candidates after assessments and to assessors after IV.

♦ Clear identification on candidates' scripts showing when marks were being awarded and for what.

♦ Course team meetings held at the end of the session to make plans for the delivery and assessment of the relevant units during the following session. This is better than at the start of the next session when things are rather hectic.

# Specific areas for development

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

♦ Centres may choose not to make available everything they are asked for before QV visits or central verification.

♦ Centres don't always submit the SQA certificates to show that the assessments have been prior verified.

♦ Non-existent or poor documentation of cross-marking and IV.

♦ It is useful to have the marks/grades for all the candidates so that it can be seen how representative the sample submitted is.