Higher National Qualifications and Professional Development Awards

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2022

Learning and Development

Verification group number: 242

Introduction

A total of eight centres delivering HN/single unit PDA group awards were visited this session:

Conduct the Assessment Process (GF8P 48)/H290 35)
Conduct the Internal Verification Process (GF8R 48)/(H291 35)
Conduct the External Verification Process (GK0K 49)/(H7VG 36)
Planning and Delivering Training Sessions to Groups (HE0T33)

All visits were carried out virtually, with evidence being reviewed by the external verifier (EV) via electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) or SQA's Evidence Hub.

General comments

It is a requirement of the assessment strategy that all assessors have a sound working knowledge of the content of the standards they are assessing and their assessment requirements. All assessors must also have a relevant qualification to assess the units. Assessors of assessor–candidates are required to have achieved their relevant assessor qualification before they can start to assess assessor–candidates.

All internal verifiers will have sufficient experience of having conducted assessments of assessor or verifier type qualifications (depending on what they are proposing to verify). Assessors of internal verifier–candidates must have achieved their assessor and verifier qualifications before they can start to assess verifier–candidates.

All assessors and verifiers should maintain continuous professional development (CPD) records showing how their practice is in line with current national standards and how they keep up to date with new information and practices associated with assessment and internal verification.

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.

In all centres, assessors and internal verifiers were competent to assess and internally verify in line with the assessment strategy and undertook the appropriate CPD to maintain current professional and occupational competence.

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

All centres visited have a process to review centre policy, procedures and learning materials provided to learners, recording all updates using a clear version control system. Systems verification audits have supported this being implemented effectively within centres.

Site selection checklists were being completed as required, successfully monitoring risk and the assessment environments.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

In all centres, candidates go through a careful selection process to ensure that they have the relevant skills and experience and that the award they are undertaking is the relevant award and is suited to their role. All candidates receive induction to the awards and all are given the opportunity to discuss any prior achievements that they may have which, if appropriate, could be matched to the award that they are undertaking. All centres have developed an 'Induction checklist', clearly documenting that various key centre policies and procedures have been discussed and received. Initial assessment/planning agreements are completed with candidates, providing an opportunity to identify any specific development or additional needs. Assessment planning records are reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of the award/unit, enabling any change in circumstances to be considered.

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

In all centres there was evidence of clear and frequent candidate–assessor contact recorded, with clearly documented assessment planning, action plans, progress reviews, updated action planning and clear and constructive feedback provided to candidates. In all centres, this was evidenced in an e-portfolio via assessment planning documentation and/or contact diary or recorded via record of contact, hard copy or email exchange.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres had a clear, three-stage internal verification procedure and clearly documented procedures for assessment and internal verification. Within these centres, there was evidence of procedures being implemented through completed assessment reports, internal verification (monitoring and sampling) planning, internal verification reports and evidence of relevant standardisation activities being carried out.

Standardisation activities evidenced consistency of the standards being implemented across centres.

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

Evidence sampled for the awards met SQA's principles of assessment, ie that it was valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair. It met all the evidence requirements detailed within the unit specification(s) and the corresponding group award assessment strategies. Assessment methods used included observation of performance, examination of product evidence, answers to questions and candidate statements. These assessment methods are in line with unit assessment guidance and fully covered performance, knowledge and evidence requirements.

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

All centres visited have a documented malpractice policy which includes plagiarism. Centres cover this policy and the relevant responsibilities with learners at the point of induction and this is recorded in the 'Induction checklist'. All centres ensure that the evidence (on which an assessment decision is made) solely belongs to the candidate. This is done by means of a candidate disclaimer being completed within paper portfolios and electronic signatures where e-portfolios are being used. Assessor observation is also used by centres to ensure authentication of candidate evidence.

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

All centres demonstrated accurate and consistent assessment judgements and internal verification activity confirmed the accuracy of the assessors' judgements.

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

All centres had guidance on the retention of candidate evidence within their centre policies and procedures, reflecting the current guidance issued by SQA. All centres complied with the SQA requirements to retain all evidence in line with SQA guidance. All centres also complied with the requirement to retain all candidate evidence from the point of initial contact by the EV until the date of the visit.

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

All centres provided appropriate evidence to demonstrate having disseminated feedback from the qualification verification report to relevant assessors and internal verifiers. Methods implemented by centres were via standardisation meetings, CPD events, team development days, learning portals and corporate manage systems. All actions and recommendations were actioned and recorded in standardisation meetings and decision logs.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2021–22:

♦ Excellent resources provided to candidates

♦ Mentoring/buddy system introduced as a support to new assessors

♦ Discussion forum minuted to record all formal and informal standardisation discussions

Specific areas for development

The following area for development was reported during session 2021–22:

♦ Centres should ensure assessment records meet evidence equirements for each task as outlined in the unit support notes section