



August 2021

Subject guidance for internally assessed qualifications in 2021–22

Please read this document in conjunction with guidance for the assessment of internally assessed qualifications issued to centres in August 2021.

Group award titles:	HNC Visual Communication HND Visual Communication
Group award codes:	GG3E 15 GG3F 16

Introduction

This subject-specific supplementary guidance has been produced to assist centres to deliver the HNC and HND Visual Communication and to find ways to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. It focuses on supporting achievement of the HNC and HND Visual Communication while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

Adaptations to evidence requirements to help manage assessment

Higher National units

Centres can use the flexibilities that were introduced by SQA in August 2021, including integrating assessment and changing closed-book assessments to open-book assessments.

Please refer to the document *Supporting the delivery, assessment and verification of SQA units, session 2021–22: Information and guidance for centres* published in August 2021.

Graded units

The need to complete the assessment of graded units (exam-based and project-based) in HNC, HND and SQA Advanced Qualifications for session 2021–22 was removed.

Please refer to the document *Guidance on gathering key evidence for Higher National Graded Units in session 2021–22*.

These adaptations will help maximise time available for learning and teaching, ensure that the validity and integrity of the HNC and HND Visual Communication is maintained and will help to ensure the safety of lecturers and learners.

Summary

This document provides information on the following:

- ◆ delivery and assessment
- ◆ planning for assessment
- ◆ broad, general and specific aims of the group award
- ◆ course planning and timetabling
- ◆ general advice

Delivery and assessment

We are very grateful for the contributions and cooperation of our college colleagues in the production of this guidance. From the discussions, it was clear that all centres delivering contemporary art practice shared similar issues on how and what can be delivered to new and existing students:

- ◆ timetabling
- ◆ access to colleges and specialist equipment
- ◆ logistics involved in managing student numbers in classroom/studio settings
- ◆ compliance with government guidelines
- ◆ health and safety requirements — both general (ie college-wide) and specific to these qualifications
- ◆ course planning and assessment

Planning for assessment

The QST members are aware that, in accordance with the general guidance issued by SQA in August 2021, it is necessary for learners to generate evidence that demonstrates that all outcomes of all units have been met. The emphasis is on planning and taking a whole course team approach to implement a combined approach to the collection of evidence generated by the learner. This should result in reducing assessment requirements by addressing duplication or overlapping assessment. The QST listed the following advice:

- ◆ make use of combined instruments of assessment
- ◆ adaptations to current instruments of assessment

In addition to this the option of free Prior Verification is available. This was to ensure any combined assessments created or adaptations made by centres would meet the SQA core principles of assessment:

- ◆ valid
- ◆ reliable
- ◆ practicable
- ◆ equitable and fair

This guarantees that the national standards will be upheld during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

If a centre has not made use of the free Prior Verification service then the centre should clearly record all the adaptations made or combined assessments created to any instruments of assessment.

If the above options have not been employed, then the following actions should be taken.

1. Mandatory units:
 - ◆ review unit evidence requirements closely
 - ◆ review and adapt instrument of assessment
 - ◆ remember that guidance on delivery is based on an assumption of studio and/or college-based delivery and access to resources. Assessors should consider carefully if delivery and assessment can be adapted in the current circumstances to provide opportunity for the learner to meet the mandatory Evidence Requirements
2. Optional units:
 - ◆ review unit evidence requirements closely
 - ◆ review and adapt instrument of assessment where possible
 - ◆ where possible, swap unit for alternative that is less reliant on access to specialist resources.
3. Remove graded unit to allow for the additional time required to be utilised across all other units within the award.
4. Grade holistically based on all group award course aims: Broad, General and Specific listed below.

Broad aims of the group awards

All HNC and HNDs have a range of broad aims that are generally applicable to all equivalent higher education qualifications:

- ◆ developing knowledge and skills — planning, analysis and synthesising
- ◆ developing skills for employment and enhancing employment prospects
- ◆ enabling progression in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
- ◆ developing study and research skills
- ◆ developing options to permit an element of vocational specialisation
- ◆ preparing learners for progression to further studies in specific subjects or related disciplines

General aims of the group awards

The HNC and HND Visual Communication share the following list of general aims:

- ◆ to develop communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ to develop learners' skills as graphic designers, illustrators, new media designers or creative personnel
- ◆ to develop self-presentation skills

- ◆ to develop self-evaluative skills, enabling professional development
- ◆ to develop analytical skills
- ◆ to develop the ability to work independently and as part of a team
- ◆ to develop self-assurance and the confidence to perform to potential
- ◆ to develop professional attitudes
- ◆ to enhance employment prospects and/or facilitate progression to higher education
- ◆ to enable progress within the Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF)

Specific aims of the group awards

The subject-specific related aims of both the HNC and HND are:

- ◆ an ability to analyse and synthesise knowledge and skills acquired through study
- ◆ an ability to develop study, organisational and research skills
- ◆ an ability to develop innovation, originality and creativity
- ◆ to build proficiency in time management and professional practice and promote accuracy in the presentation of design work
- ◆ an ability to develop critical analysis; to reflect on own work and continually strive for best practice
- ◆ an ability to integrate these skills in practical or business application
- ◆ an ability to develop competencies in a range of specialised areas in line with preferred career aims
- ◆ to enable progression to further study in a visual communication related discipline
- ◆ to enable the adoption of innovative practices and creativity in work and ability to respond quickly to the challenges posed by changes in the visual communication industry
- ◆ an ability to develop personal skills and follow creative industry protocol

All holistic approaches to assessment being taken should be recorded in a matrix-style format, which clearly maps each unit to its corresponding group award course aim.

Course planning and timetabling

The general guidance provides detailed information on this. However, consideration should be given to the potential impact of delivering individual units over two years. This may affect learners who may be unable or choose not to continue after Year 1. It is, therefore, important that all learners have the opportunity to meet the conditions of award for the HNC. Ensuring that all mandatory units for the HNC are delivered is essential when planning for Year 1 of the HND.

General advice

- ◆ Where reference has been made to specific commercial software, by the centre, alternatives should be sought that are available to all.
- ◆ Where references have been made to live models, by the centre, previous guidance made available to centres by EV Team Cognate Group 65 in September 2020 should be utilised.
- ◆ Where reference has been made to supervised assessment in terms of authentication of the learners' work, by the centre, it is strongly suggested that regular 1 to 1 engagement with all learners will support assessors in determining authentication of the work being presented for assessment.
- ◆ Where reference has been made to the range of sources available for specific unit Art & Design: Context, under the current COVID-19 pandemic situation online sources would suffice. However, sources used should be varied within that online sphere: television, film, documentaries, lectures, talks, websites, online reference books. All sources should be effectively referenced.

This guidance is subject to change and will be updated as required on an ongoing basis.

If you have any questions, please contact qualification.development@sqa.org.uk.