



Higher National (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Administration

Verification group number: 363

Introduction

There were 10 external verification events in session 2017–2018. Four events were remote and six were by visiting verification. Categories 2 and 3 are not covered for remote events.

The external verifiers who carried out these events are experienced verifiers in both the UK and internationally. All verification events were successful, but more than a few resulted in centres being required to provide further evidence for this to be the case. This is an improvement on last year, and shows that centres are now more familiar with SQA standards and are continuously improving their quality procedures to meet these standards.

The centres visited were delivering a mix of old and new versions of unit specifications, and were using a mix of SQA-produced ASPs/CASPs and prior-verified assessments.

All centres delivering ICT in Business should note that they are required to update materials to show changes in data protection laws.

We highlight areas for development and instances of good practice throughout and at the end of the report.

The units verified were:

F84W 35	ICT in Business
HH87 35	ICT in Business
F84E 35	Presentation Skills
HH83 34	IT in Business: Spreadsheets
F84V 34	IT in Business: Spreadsheets

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.

Records made available to the external verifiers showed that all centres ensured that assessors and internal verifiers were competent to assess and internally verify. There was evidence that staff from most centres had attended the Professional Development Conference in 2017. At one centre, the visiting verifier recommended that structured continuous professional development (CPD) records be provided for all staff involved in the assessment and internal verification of SQA HND qualifications in the future.

Good practice was identified in one centre, where there was evidence of classroom observations for assessors, recording the topic, teaching methods, interactive activities with students, together with suggested improvements and feedback to assessors. This shows that assessors and internal verifiers are using the centre's quality procedures to reflect upon learning and teaching as well as assessing.

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

In all centres visited, there was evidence that appropriate resources and software was available to candidates to meet the needs of the units being taught. All centres provided teaching plans to cover all aspects of learning. In one centre, there was an annual review of facilities used in the delivery of SQA HN qualifications.

Almost all centres provided candidates with sufficient formative assessments to prepare them for summative assessment. It is recommended that all centres ensure that they have appropriate formative assessments to allow candidates to prepare for the summative assessments. This is especially important where candidates are being asked to explain the significance of graphical information in the ITB Spreadsheet and ICT in Business units, where candidates are asked to prepare a report.

In one centre, the external verifiers noted that, on the advice of the assessor, staff had supported students by purchasing project management software that can be downloaded onto candidates' IT devices. This allowed students to access the software outwith the timetabled class, which candidates found helpful in the learning activities for Outcomes 3 and 4 of ICT in Business.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Entry to the HNC programme requires candidates to have achieved IELTS 4.5. There was evidence that most centres interview candidates prior to entry and many centres also use oral testing. All centres provide candidates with additional support in English if this is necessary.

One centre provided minutes in Mandarin. Centres should note that all documentation is required to be provided in English.

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

The evidence provided shows that all candidates feel they have good access to assessors by a variety of methods. Most candidates felt they received clear and supportive feedback.

One centre was encouraged to provide assessment/support plans for candidates who do not complete a unit within the allotted time. This would allow candidates who have the potential to achieve the unit to do so at a later date.

Good practice was identified at one centre, which has launched an Elite Programme aimed at offering more opportunities of working and travelling overseas to highlight the benefits and also the difficulties of studying abroad and problems which may be encountered. The programme also includes academic writing skills, research methods, industry visits and lectures from students who have already studied abroad. A two-week study tour of the UK is planned for June 2018.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres provided evidence that demonstrated that they had procedures in place to ensure standardisation of assessment. Almost all centres showed that they use pre-delivery checklists. Almost all centres had robust internal verification procedures in place, which were being followed.

External verifiers recommend that centres check all assessment instruments annually — both SQA-produced ASPs/CASPs and locally devised assessments — to modify dates, apply any necessary updates, and ensure all assessment instruments are current.

One centre changed the CASP that it had been using, as it became apparent that answers were available on the Internet. It is good to see that centres are alert to such instances and are responding quickly to maintain the standard of the assessment.

Staff in one centre were completing Assessment Summary Records to review the assessment process, and to note points for future delivery and assessment. In Outcomes 1 and 2 of ICT in Business, the centre had picked up that it would be appropriate to introduce a course on Harvard referencing. This would also support candidates in graded unit preparation. The Assessment Summary Record also assists new members of staff who are delivering and assessing.

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

All centres are using SQA-produced ASPs/ CASPs. Almost all centres had alternative assessments that had been prior verified. Almost all centres were using pre-delivery checks to ensure that they are using the most up-to-date unit specifications and CASPs. Visiting verifiers also saw evidence of centres sharing alternative assessments, which had been prior verified.

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

All centres were using some form of authenticity statement, which candidates must sign when submitting assessments. In addition, all centres had a plagiarism policy in their student handbook. One centre was using Turnitin software. Some centres had picked up instances of plagiarism, which they had recorded and dealt with appropriately.

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

In almost all centres, visiting verifiers saw evidence that staff were giving clear feedback to candidates and that work was consistently marked. Very few centres had to offer additional support to assessors in how to annotate papers they were marking.

It was noted at one centre that, although candidates were being given clear and constructive feedback, they were not paying sufficient attention to it. Assessors should actively encourage candidates to make good use of all feedback.

It is recommended that where only a small part of a task is to be remediated, candidates should submit only this part of an assessment for review. This is not an issue if work is submitted electronically, but is a sustainability issue where hard copies are submitted.

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

All centres were retaining candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements. In all centres, it was being stored for longer than required.

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

In all centres visited, external verifiers saw evidence that feedback was being disseminated in a variety of ways. In some instances meetings were held, and in others there was a log which showed how information is passed on from reports.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following examples of good practice were reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ In one centre, there was evidence of classroom observations for assessors, recording the topic, teaching methods, interactive activities with students together with suggested improvements and feedback to assessors. This shows that assessors and internal verifiers were using the centre's quality procedures to reflect upon learning and teaching as well as assessing.
- ◆ The purchase of project management software that can be downloaded onto candidates' IT devices. Accessible outwith class times, this software helped candidates in the learning activities for Outcomes 3 and 4 of ICT in Business.
- ◆ The launch of an Elite Programme to prepare students for overseas work and travel, to highlight the benefits and the challenges, and to offer opportunities abroad.
- ◆ The use of Assessment Summary Records to review the assessment process, within which points are noted for future delivery and assessment. For example, a centre recommended the introduction of a course in Harvard referencing, to help students with Outcomes 1 and 2 of ICT in Business, as well graded units. The Assessment Summary Record also assists new members of staff who are delivering and assessing.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2017–18:

- ◆ Centres should ensure that structured CPD records are kept for all assessors and internal verifiers to ensure consistency
- ◆ One centre provided minutes in Mandarin. Centres should note that all documentation is required to be provided in English.
- ◆ Given some concern about candidate motivation levels, it would be helpful to encourage candidates to give extended feedback on their learning experience.
- ◆ Assessors should encourage candidates to make good use of all feedback.
- ◆ It is recommended that where only a small part of a task is to be remediated, candidates should submit only this part of an assessment for review. This is not an issue if work is submitted electronically but is a sustainability issue where hard copies are submitted.
- ◆ All centres delivering ICT in Business should update materials to show changes in data protection laws.