



**Higher National Qualifications (China)  
Internal Assessment Report 2013  
Business Graded Unit**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Higher National Qualifications in this subject.

# Higher National Graded Units

DL1K 35 Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 2 at SCQF level 8  
DL1N 35 Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 3 at SCQF level 8  
DN83 35 Business: Graded Unit 2 at SCQF level 8  
DN84 35 Business: Graded Unit 3 at SCQF level 8  
DL27 35 Business with Human resource Management Graded Unit 2 at SCQF level 8  
DL28 35 Business with Human resource Management Graded Unit 3 at SCQF level 8  
DM1H 35 Global Trade and Business Graded Unit 2 at SCQF level 8  
DL1P 35 Business with Marketing: Graded Unit 2 at SCQF level 8

## General comments

Centres have faced significant changes this academic session with the introduction of new frameworks and Units. Many of the Graded Units are unchanged because of the final running of the third year, where in many cases two Graded Units exist. On the whole, centres have a good understanding of the requirements of these Units, but will need to work to familiarise themselves with the new Units as they feed through next academic session. An additional change has been the introduction of the SQA's new approach to quality assurance (QA), and centres have adapted well to the changes that this has brought. There has been a relatively smooth transition to the new awards and it is expected that this will continue as the third year Graded Units are introduced.

There was a good rate of success at the qualification verification central event, although there were some cases where some problems were identified relating to the judgement of the required standard. In the main, centres and staff have a good understanding of the national standards and adapted well to evidencing the criteria in the new approach to QA.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The success at verification events indicates that assessors and centres have made significant progress and have attained a degree of confidence that can only come with experience. In a small number of cases there were some issues in judging standards and understanding the principles involved in the design of the project-based Graded Units.

The centres have used the SQA-produced assessment exemplars. Although it is not possible to interview staff at a central verification event, those staff involved in the delivery of the Graded Units were in the main well versed in their requirements. It is expected that where problems were identified, experience will lead to a reduction of such problems in the future. Centres will have to continue to ensure that all staff, and in particular those new to SQA qualifications, are given suitable information, guidance and support.

## **Evidence Requirements**

The majority of centres and staff have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements in each of the Units. Where staff or centres are new it can be difficult to judge the standard required and in some instances candidate evidence was incorrectly marked, and was returned to be re-marked. There were many positive comments about the level of candidate support and guidance that centres and staff provide. There were also positive comments regarding discussions that took place in internal verification meetings which are very important and are to be encouraged.

## **Administration of assessments**

Most centres are reported as organising and assessing candidates in accordance with the requirements set out in the Unit specifications. Centres need to continue to maintain discussions that will reinforce the standards and requirements associated with each of the Graded Units. Centres need to maintain a check to ensure the authenticity of project work and oral checks may help in this area. The continuing security of assessments, and in particular the examinations, are crucial in safeguarding the integrity of the awards.

## **General feedback**

In the project Graded Units, feedback to candidates from assessors is very valuable in helping candidates identify and understand their strengths and weaknesses. Some centres were cited for the level of feedback and guidance that they provided candidates.

The new approach to quality assurance covers a broader range of criteria than the old system, and there is evidence that External Verifiers are able to provide greater guidance through the new approach. The use of the new approach to quality assurance at the central qualification verification event worked well.

## **Areas of good practice**

The SQA awards are now at a stage where centres and staff are largely familiar with their requirements and standards, and this was often recorded in the good practice section of the verification reports. As the new Units and awards become further established, good practice is now becoming in effect standard practice. In the future it is likely that more innovative ideas and exceptional examples will be highlighted as good practice. This year some staff were cited as giving excellent feedback, which is very important for candidates. The provision of good feedback can be time consuming, but is very valuable and centres are encouraged to work towards greater emphasis on this important means of communication with their learners. There were also examples where staff provided individual tutorials to students undertaking a project.

It was noted that some centres have used the internal verification process as a vehicle to hold meetings where discussion took place about marks and grades, and this is to be encouraged.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

The verification of the Graded Units identified some areas that require either improvement or continued effort. One danger in the project-based Units involve the topic selected. It is easy to allow candidates to undertake very general business projects that link poorly into specific parts of the course. The degree of the use of appropriate referencing and the use of citations is an area where encouragement needs to be maintained.

Many of the areas for improvement are more about maintaining current efforts. For example, continuing to make checks on plagiarism in projects is an area that is in effect a task which requires to be undertaken each year. The security of assessments and in particular the examination Graded Units continues to be of prime importance and continued vigilance and effort is essential from all centres and staff.