



**Higher National Qualifications (China)
Internal Assessment Report 2014
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

H0J2 35: Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

H0J0 35: Business: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

H0J8 35: Business with Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

H3P5 35: Global Trade and Business: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

H0J4 35: Business with Marketing: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

General comments

The new frameworks and Units are now settling into place and centres are familiar with the new approach to quality assurance, with the system of red, amber and green resulting in a range of degrees of confidence. Whilst the Graded Units are different from those in the previous award, the changes are relatively modest. The change that is new for centres this year is the increase in credits for the project from 1 credit to 2 credits. The project now includes the addition of a reflective diary log and the balance of marks has altered from the old project Units. On the whole, centres have adapted relatively well to the updated requirements of these Units. Some centres do need to ensure that all of the requirements are met, without which candidates cannot be judged to have achieved the Unit.

There were a variety of outcomes resulting from this year's qualification verification activity. Some cases were identified where the judgement of the required standard was not at the correct level, whilst in other cases candidates had missed out some of the requirements of the project. The reflective diary log was not always understood and sometimes contained a very basic description, or a task in the plan had simply been completed. On the whole, many centres did adapt well to the new Units and interpreted the standard expected. It is likely that in the second year the Units are offered the overall outcome of qualification verification will show even more 'High level of confidence' results.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The new approach to quality assurance means that a variety of outcomes are possible. Whilst a number of centres did not make the 'High level of confidence' outcomes, in general the errors recorded appear to be related to the changes in the Units. Many assessors and centres have successfully made the transition to the new Units, and have a degree of confidence that comes with experience.

The centres have used the new Unit specifications and the associated SQA assessment exemplars (AEs) / assessment support packs (ASPs). The majority of staff involved in the delivery of the Graded Units appear to be familiar with their requirements and another year will help to embed the Units further. 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. However, in some instances centres were recording candidates as achieving stages of the project when some of the Evidence Requirements had not been completed. In other instances, it was not possible to see how the additional marks had been gained and some of the marks were high for the standard of evidence. It can take time to judge the standard required, therefore it is worthwhile referring to the A and C grade guidance contained in both the Unit specification and the AE/ASP. As with last year, there were many positive comments about the level of candidate support and guidance that centres and staff provide. The recording of discussion that takes place at internal verification meetings continues to be very important and is 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. In April this year a training event was held in Shanghai and many staff involved in the delivery of the Graded Units attended. Practical exercises were provided relating to the marking of both the examination and project Units. Materials have also been placed on the secure section of the China website. As with previous reports, it is worth stressing that the continued security of assessments, and in particular the examinations, is crucial in safeguarding the integrity of the awards.

General feedback

In the project Graded Unit, feedback to candidates from assessors is very valuable in helping candidates identify and understand their strengths and weaknesses. Again this year, some centres were cited for the level of feedback and guidance that they provided candidates. In many instances, centres used a tutorial sheet to record contact discussions between the candidate and tutor together with actions to be undertaken.

Areas of good practice

Centres and staff are on the whole familiar with the Unit requirements and standards and continue to utilise existing good practice and to devise new examples. Good feedback continues to be an important tool for helping candidates identify their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to improve. This can be time consuming and it was very pleasing to see the use of recording sheets showing the discussions between tutors and the candidates. This was useful as it provided a record of candidate strengths and weaknesses and provided a written record for candidates of how they could improve. The provision

of good feedback is very valuable, and centres are encouraged to continue the good work already achieved in this area.

In addition to feedback, centres are encouraging candidates to use a recognised method of referencing. Whilst this is not a strict requirement of the project, it is a skill that should be encouraged.

Specific areas for improvement

The qualification verification of the Graded Units identified some areas that require either improvement or continued effort. Centres need to ensure that candidates select an appropriate project topic as, on occasion, they can be too general. Assessors need to ensure all requirements are met and that the overall three stages of a project reflect the overall grade given. Candidates need to be guided away from some websites and encouraged to use more reputable sources.

The personal skills audit needs to be developed so that candidates are aware that the purpose of the exercise is to allow them to assess improvements in areas that could be strengthened through the completion of their project. The reflective diary log is not being understood fully by some candidates. More emphasis needs to be placed on its purpose, which is to allow candidates to reflect upon their activities and make assessments about what has worked well and how they might tackle aspects of their project differently in future.

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.