



**Higher National Qualifications (China)
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Accounting and Finance**

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

Higher National Units

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The current Unit specifications have been in place for a period of time which means that they should be well embedded into the practice in centres. However, there was some evidence from visiting external verification activity that previous versions of Unit specifications were being used for delivery. This has led to a number of sanctions being placed. The staff in centres were reminded by the External Verifiers (EVs) that the Unit specifications may be amended to reflect current practice in the profession.

Assessment support packs (ASPs) are provided for the Accounting Units in the China frameworks and these are updated periodically in line with professional practice and UK legislation.

It is vital that all centres in China use the revised Units and ASPs which have been introduced from August 2015. EVs will check this as part of their EV activity during the 2015–16 session.

Evidence Requirements

The evidence requirements of the Units in the China frameworks have remained unchanged for a period of time. They will be similar for the revised framework coming into operation from 1 August 2015; however, teams in centres are reminded that they must ensure that they are using the most up to date Unit specifications which will include new terminology.

The main issue arising from the visiting verification events has been that the Error Tolerance procedures have not been followed in an appropriate manner. There are guidance documents on SQA's China website and these should be essential reading for the teams within centres. There is guidance on how to make assessment decisions on the website and also supporting documentation from the annual conferences which have been prepared by the EV team.

Administration of assessments

The instance of inappropriate assessment conditions has been less widespread during this last session as teams are becoming familiar with the assessment conditions and requirements of each Outcome. The main issue in the past appears to have been that teams have assumed that the conditions of assessment are the same for each Outcome within a Unit, which is not the case. It is important that all centres review each Outcome within each Unit on a standalone basis to identify the assessment conditions and these must be adhered to in all cases.

General feedback

The EV team which carried out the visits during this session identified that there are often cases where candidates have been assessed and the assessor decisions have been inappropriate in that some teams are looking for candidates to submit perfect papers and even although they are within the error tolerance threshold they have not yet passed the Outcome. This was identified in a number of centres and again the teams are directed to the guidance on SQA's China website which includes an example of marking.

The SQA Professional Development Conference held in Beijing in September 2014 introduced the change to FRS102 for the preparation of financial information. Documentation was provided to those attending to enable teams to prepare in advance for the changes to the Units in the Accounting and Finance area. This is all available on SQA's China website. The visiting EV teams have recorded that some teams in centres are preparing well for the change.

Areas of good practice

Feedback to candidates has begun to improve following guidance from the EV team. The main area for concentration has been identifying the *types* of 'error' so that candidates can work on their skills for the 're-do' or re-assessment.

Specific areas for improvement

Teams in centres must adhere to the Error Tolerance thresholds which are current for the Outcomes in the Accounting and Finance Units. Each Outcome must be reviewed individually as periodically the thresholds are updated. The teams must use the updated Unit specifications and build into their internal verification procedures checking the Unit specifications and ASPs prior to delivery. The Units are updated and the information has been available on SQA's China website since March 2015, and it is hoped that the preparations for the changeover are well underway.