



**Higher National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2015  
English and Communication**

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

# Higher National Units

## General comments

During 2015 in the delivery of Unit DE3N Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication (English and Communication), strengths were identified in all China centres selected for qualification verification events. The majority of centres achieved a high level of confidence rating for the maintenance of SQA standards in all quality assurance categories. Most centres demonstrated well-developed and reliable management systems and procedures. A range of supporting quality assurance documentation provided evidence that, in general, processes are understood and implemented by all appropriate staff.

Assessors are well-qualified and experienced teachers. They support learners' achievements and work together towards continuous quality improvement. All assessors who were interviewed responded well to advice from Qualification Verifiers and were keen to discuss and implement any suggested improvements for future delivery.

In a few instances the work of learners was not being assessed accurately or consistently. At times there were gaps in evidence, or documentation required was not available. The centres concerned were able to address issues promptly and comply with required actions.

Learners interviewed by Qualification Verifiers were positive about the quality of the course programme and the value of the Unit content to their future progression in education or employment.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Unit DE3N 34 Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication is being delivered according to the Unit specification. Assessors are very familiar with the Unit.

Instruments of assessment routinely in use are from the most recent (2012) assessment support packs available on SQA's China website.

A small number of centres were using alternative assessment tasks that had not been prior verified by SQA. Qualification Verifiers have advised on any changes required. Centres wishing to use centre-designed assessment instruments should be aware of the prior verification service and procedures.

## Evidence Requirements

In general, assessors followed the guidance in the assessment support packs and held standardisation meetings as part of internal verification. Several sought advice from

SQA. There were a small number of instances where assessors had misinterpreted or were inconsistent in applying the standard. Some re-assessment was needed to correct over-leniency in marking.

There is a need to ensure that work submitted is the original work of learners. In some cases the Qualification Verifier recommended that a signed copy of a statement of authenticity be attached to assessment evidence.

### **Administration of assessments**

The majority of centres have been commended by Qualification Verifiers for their management systems, rigorous internal verification procedures and attention to detail in documentation.

In a minority of centres there was insufficient formal written evidence of discussion of standardisation in internal verification documentation or in minutes of team meetings. Subsequently, there were gaps in records of actions required to improve the process and assure the accuracy of assessment decisions. As a result of this, actions had to be agreed and materials had to be forwarded to SQA.

### **General feedback**

Tutorial records suggest that learners are being well prepared and well supported in their studies. Qualification Verifiers interviewed several learners; all spoke highly of the award content, the quality of teaching and the general support received. They felt that the HN course programme prepared them well for future progression in business and higher education.

### **Areas of good practice**

The following examples were noted during centre events:

- ◆ The use of course entry interviews that included an assessment of language skills using a system such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) — this process tends to result in enhanced achievement rates
- ◆ Personal Development Planning to identify at an early stage of the course any learners who may require additional advice, support or more formative work — an individual student log or tutorial sheets to document feedback can be linked to required knowledge and skills for the Unit
- ◆ Authenticity sheets that learners sign to confirm that they are the originator of the work — plagiarism is an ongoing issue
- ◆ Internal verification records that evidenced discussion and where matters were recorded, decisions made and actions noted
- ◆ Tutor guides and internal verification guides for staff detailing SQA procedures
- ◆ Reading and resources lists for learners.
- ◆ Recording evidence for Outcome 3 oral assessments

## Specific areas for improvement

The following specific areas for improvement were noted:

- ◆ The English language skills of some learners require to be developed to the recommended entry level for the Unit. There was a need for more focus on language in course entry tests. Learning plans should identify any need for additional language support at an early stage in the course programme. Supplementary language classes to underpin work could be considered in centres not offering them already.
- ◆ Formative work to provide feedback and skills development for learners is essential. Learners should have had the opportunity to practise similar communication tasks in order to become competent before undertaking assessment tasks.
- ◆ In a few instances the work of learners is not being assessed accurately or consistently. Most problems were seen in evidence for Outcome 2, where — in a few centres — some leniency in marking of written reports was noted. Learners may benefit from being asked to produce a portfolio of written business documents rather than one 1500 word report.
- ◆ More recording of oral communication evidence in meetings and presentations (Outcome 3) is strongly recommended. Recording at least some samples of oral communication will develop learner skills and support internal/external verification of standards.
- ◆ More detailed guidance has been provided by SQA Qualification Verifiers on the specific requirements, Evidence Requirements and supporting information needed.