



**Higher National Qualifications (China)
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Marketing, Sales and Advertising**

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

This session there were 19 centres verified in the Marketing cognate group — 17 visiting and two postal verifications.

Overall, centres have a good understanding of the national standards. This is evidenced by the fact that 17 of the 19 centres were awarded a High Level of Confidence and the remaining two were given a Reasonable Level of Confidence in maintaining the national standards.

It is also encouraging that overall there were 24 examples of good practice identified. These were spread over a range of the criteria but were particularly evident in 3.2 (Candidate Support) where there were 10 examples.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres were familiar with the Unit specifications and assessment instruments. Most were using SQA exemplars in the first instance, but had developed their own assessments for the re-assessment of candidates. These had been prior verified which would indicate familiarity with the Unit specifications.

Evidence Requirements

The centre results indicate a clear understanding of the evidence requirements of the Marketing Units. The instruments of assessment are designed to allow students to provide evidence of knowledge and skills and therefore tutors tend to focus more on the assessment exemplar than on the Unit specification. During verification visits, verifiers have emphasised to tutors and centres the importance of knowledge and familiarity with the Unit specifications as well as the exemplars.

Administration of assessments

All centres were following the Conditions of Assessment in the Unit specifications. Students were given an assessment schedule. Most centres had schedules which allowed time for 'redos' in the same semester. However, during the January visits a few centres had run out of time and the redos were scheduled for the following semester. This was disappointing as it meant that verifiers were unable to see final candidate work.

The SQA Marketing exemplars integrate Outcomes 1 and 2 into a single assessment task (all Units have two Outcomes). This makes it difficult for students to pass the assessment on the first attempt, and more so for students where English is not their first language. Integration of assessment is not specified by the Unit specifications, so it is perfectly acceptable to split the assessment questions/tasks into smaller bites. Both verifiers have given this

advice to centres during their visits. Some centres were already doing this themselves, which shows a clear understanding of the Unit specification.

General feedback

All centres provided satisfactory assessment feedback to students, indeed as stated previously, support in general, was an area of good practice for many centres.

Discussion with students confirmed correct conditions of assessment, opportunities for redo/re-assessment, and that tutors were providing satisfactory levels of feedback.

Areas of good practice

The main area that stood out was in Criteria 3.2 Candidate Support.

There were a number of examples of good support by tutors:

- ◆ Where tutors used student questionnaires which allowed the individual students to identify topics where they felt their understanding was weak
- ◆ Discussion groups at the end of classes

Also centres providing:

- ◆ Personal Development Plans for students
- ◆ use of diagnostic tests
- ◆ additional English language support in the second year

Other areas for good practice were:

- ◆ use of locally devised assessment instruments with Chinese case studies
- ◆ well-designed procedures for recording staff CPD
- ◆ methods for ensuring a candidate's own work

Specific areas for improvement

For the two centres requiring Action Plans, the issues were:

- ◆ plagiarism not picked up by assessor or internal verifier (4.1, 4.3, 4.5)
- ◆ sample scripts supplied for verification not representative of student cohort (4.6)
- ◆ no information of procedures for dissemination of EV reports (4.8)
- ◆ lack of evidence of communication with SQA (5.6)

The centres have taken action to address these issues and are now in compliance with the national standards.

There were 18 individual recommendations made, ranging across most criteria.

The most common recommendation was that the assessments could be split into a number of tasks rather than the single integrated assessment as suggested in the exemplars (see earlier comments).

Other recommendations included improvements to centre documentation relating to:

◆ **Staff CPD**

Staff should be given adequate opportunity for their own development and there should be a system for establishing their requirements. CPD allows staff to use a variety of learning experiences to develop themselves professionally and personally. Staff should provide evidence of development to demonstrate they have updated and enhanced their competence, within the last year, by completing CPD activities.

◆ **Standardisation activities**

Standardisation is an important part of ensuring the reliability of assessment decisions for all candidates in a centre. Standardisation exercises can identify any discrepancies between assessors in their judgement of candidates' evidence and allow adjustments to be made to remedy these. As well as reducing subjectivity among assessors, it helps to improve the consistency of their judgements and allows internal verifiers to identify and disseminate good practice.

◆ **Retention of candidate evidence**

SQA's quality assurance requires centres to retain all candidate evidence for Units for a minimum of three weeks after the official completion date of the Unit/Group Award. If centres are advised by SQA that they have been selected for verification activity before the completion, all candidate evidence must be retained until after verification has taken place and any required actions have been met.

◆ **Dissemination of EV reports**

It is recommended that centres disseminate copies of the external verification reports to their staff to allow them to benefit from the points noted in these reports.