



**Higher National Qualifications (China)
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Mathematics and Statistics**

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

External verification for HN Mathematics and Statistics took place at a total of nine centres.

Many centres that were reviewed were found to have a clear and accurate understanding of the national standards for assessment, supported their students well, and kept detailed and accurate records. Some general areas of improvement are detailed below.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The assessors were generally conversant with the Unit specifications and exemplification material.

Evidence Requirements

In general, the centres and assessors were meeting all Evidence Requirements for Units, although attention should be paid to comments under 'Areas for Improvement' below.

Administration of assessments

The centres sampled appeared to be gathering evidence in accordance with the specification requirements (that is, closed-book assessments were being conducted as closed book, etc). There were instances, highlighted below under 'Areas for improvement', where consistency and accuracy of approach to marking could be improved.

Internal verification appeared to be generally sound across the centres sampled, although some centres did not write on internally verified papers, making it hard to confirm that verification had taken place.

General feedback

In general, centres were providing good feedback to candidates. Access to assessments appeared to be fair.

Areas of good practice

Many areas of good practice were identified:

- ◆ Unit specifications and exemplars were being used correctly.
- ◆ In general, internal verification appeared to be robust.
- ◆ Marking seemed to be of a generally high standard and consistency.

- ◆ Records of work appeared to be well maintained and highly organised, making the verification process run smoothly.
- ◆ High quality and comprehensive candidate feedback was provided at most centres.
- ◆ Records of assessor/verifier qualifications and CPD were detailed and comprehensive. Note that reading, study, and personal research can be added to CPD records as well as formal courses, etc.
- ◆ For F84K 35, at least one centre used slightly different assessments for each candidate in a class to reduce the risk of plagiarism.
- ◆ Centres took action to address the development needs of candidates.
- ◆ The materials used by centres were of a high quality.

Specific areas for improvement

Several areas for improvement were identified. Most of these do not apply to all centres, but are included here to show common problems, and to act as guidance for all centres.

Assessment instruments

Centres should modify Assessment Support Pack papers for their own centre. If several centres use identical papers then candidates from one centre could inform those at others of the content, thus compromising the assessment process.

Marking schemes should indicate the answers and where marks are allocated in detail, show where each mark is allocated.

Resit attempts should use an alternative instrument of assessment. Alternative instruments of assessment should be sufficiently different from each other to ensure that students cannot predict the content of an assessment. If alternative methods can be used to solve a problem, the marking scheme should contain these alternatives, including the detailed disposition of marks. If in doubt, a centre can submit a proposed assessment to the SQA for prior verification.

Resit attempts

An e-mail dated 13/9/13 was sent to centres indicating that it is possible to change responses after the end of an assessment. The term used was 'redo' or 'repair'. Although this practice is approved for some cognate areas, it is not appropriate for Mathematics and Statistics Units, and should not be used. Candidates who do not achieve an assessment on a first attempt should re-sit an alternative instrument of assessment.

Accuracy of marking schemes

In a few cases, marking schemes were inaccurate or unclear. Great care should be taken to ensure that marking is accurate, and consistent with the national standard. Care should be taken to ensure that marking is fair, neither too lenient, nor too severe.

SQA recommends the use of standard symbols when marking. These are available from SQA's website.

Note that one of the ASPs for F84K 35 contains an error in the graph illustrating the moving average. The moving average line should be aligned with the centre of the seasonally varying data, and not the left-hand end. Centres should ensure their own marking schemes use the correct moving average.

Internal verification

Where internal verification has taken place, the assessment should show re-marking in an alternative ink colour (say, green), so that this can be checked by an External Verifier.