



**Higher National Qualifications (China)
Internal Assessment Report 2015
Personal and Social Development
(China)**

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

Higher National Units

DE3R 34 Personal Development Planning

DV0M 34 Work Experience

DH21 34 Working within a Project Team

F86Y 35 Developing the Individual within a Team

General comments

The external verification team made two visits to China and visited six centres. In addition to the visiting verification activity, selected postal verification was undertaken.

Visiting verification confirmed that centres continue to develop a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards in the delivery of HN Personal and Social Development Units. HN visiting verification activity re-affirmed that internal standards were being maintained and centres continue to build on the good practice which is highlighted in the internal assessment report on an annual basis.

Centres are diligent in the application of assessment and internal verification requirements of HN Units in the Personal and Social Development verification group. Increasingly, centres are establishing ways of contextualising and integrating Units within HN programmes of study.

Verification activity revealed some elements of good practice and highlighted some development issues which will be detailed within this report. However, HN visiting verification confirmed that there is an overall high level of confidence in the maintenance of SQA standards in assessment and verification within centres.

Centres do have a very clear and accurate understanding of HN qualification requirements and how to apply consistent assessment criteria through the use of SQA assessment exemplification materials. Assessment support materials have been revised and updated this year and will ensure that centres are able to work with current assessment instruments which fully meet the Unit specification requirements.

Internal verification systems and procedures are robust and generally fit for purpose although this report will highlight where there are development issues and how centres can improve the procedures operating within the internal systems.

External verification activity continues to reveal a high level of candidate support, the excellent standards being maintained in the delivery of HN frameworks and the attention to detail in the effective management of systems and procedures.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

HN external verification sampling continues to re-affirm that centres are familiar with exemplification materials and continue to make good use of SQA assessment support materials. There is no doubt that centres gain security in the knowledge that SQA exemplification materials conform to national standards.

Assessors need to focus on the standards in the Unit specification and ensure that these are being met in the delivery of the assessment support materials, for example: in the judgement of candidate evidence and being more pro-active in the standardisation of assessment decisions.

There was very good evidence of well-organised master teaching packs which contained Unit specifications, exemplification materials, instruments of assessment and learning and teaching programme schedules.

External verification reports indicated that centres should consider enhancing learning and teaching resources with 'questions and answers to test for underpinning knowledge as well as introducing a learning journal for HN candidates'.

Assessment approaches tend to be delivered on a Unit-by-Unit basis and there is a need to consider integrated assessment approaches across Units.

The external verification team continue to highlight how SQA supports the prior verification of centre-devised assessment instruments. It is important that centres understand that they can submit their own assessment instruments for prior verification.

Evidence Requirements

External visiting verification activity was extremely positive with a number of areas of good practice highlighted as centres continue to deliver a range of successful HN programmes and specific HN Unit delivery (examples of good practice will be highlighted later in this report.)

External verification sampling revealed that centres do have a very clear understanding of HN Unit Evidence Requirements and this was exemplified and reported in the following way:

Evidence Requirements were available from SQA exemplification materials and it was clear that centres had provided further exemplification of the national standards using course materials and formative assessment tasks.

Visiting verification activity endorsed the interpretation of HN Unit Evidence Requirements taken by many centres and also provided an opportunity for development issues to be discussed, for example: was the evidence sufficient? Were there any gaps and what steps could be taken to address this? Was the evidence at the right level? Was the judgement across various occurrences

standardised? Does the marking guideline support consistent judgements of the Evidence Requirements?

Centres are keen to address the need for improved standardisation approaches and methods in the assessment and internal verification processes and development needs were highlighted, for example: maintaining internal records of meetings and action points; internal sampling of candidate folios with records of feedback to support remediation opportunities; assessment decisions with clear and concise feedback to candidates showing how the assessment judgement has been reached; constructive written feedback throughout the assessment process.

The SCQF level of HN Units determines the level of analysis and justification required at SCQF levels 6, 7, and 8. The higher the level, the more detailed analysis and justification is expected.

Assessors need to ensure that HN candidates meet the evidence requirements at the level of the Unit specification. Effective assessment judgements rely on generating the appropriate depth of evidence which must include analysis and justification.

The verification team strongly recommend that two self-evaluation tools should be identified at SCQF level 6 and above to allow analysis and justification of the findings, for example: SWOT/Force Field/Johari.

Assessors need to ensure that they provide an interim results matrix for the partial completion of HN Units and that this is available when external verification is carried out.

Folio evidence should clearly map the evidence requirements for the chosen sample of HN Unit activity. Good practice is reflected in the use of highlighted summative assessment evidence, tutor feedback and clearly recorded assessment judgements.

Administration of assessments

External visiting verification activity was extremely positive as centres continue to deliver a range of successful HN programmes and specific HN Unit delivery.

External verification sampling revealed that centres do have a good understanding of HN Unit evidence requirements and positive feedback was provided as well as some areas for development.

Unit assessments tend to be delivered using a rolling assessment cycle and this is part of a well-structured HN programme framework which operates across a yearly cycle.

Centres have well-structured HN programmes and assessment schedules to allow them to deliver Units very effectively.

HN frameworks determine the level of HN mandatory and optional Units that can be delivered. Centres comply with the HN framework principles and guidelines. Centre assessments were generally at the appropriate level although there is a need to ensure consistency in the depth of analysis and justification of candidate responses.

Assessor judgements across the sample were consistent, fair, valid and reliable. It was evident throughout external sampling that assessor advice, guidance, support and direct feedback contributed greatly to successful achievements/outcomes.

Internal verification systems are evolving and centres are keen to build on good practice. Internal quality assurance systems and procedures ensure assessment instruments, sampling and internal verification is carried out effectively.

Assessment instruments consisted mainly of SQA exemplification. Centres are familiar with the standards and continue to make good use of assessment checklists.

Master teaching packs provided a wealth of learning and teaching resource materials and held records of internal verification meetings, relevant action points, standardisation activities and internal sampling.

General feedback

Candidate feedback was very positive indeed and indicated how they were enjoying their HN programme. Candidates routinely indicated how PSD Units supported their own personal development, increased confidence in their studies and an understanding of likely progression routes. Some candidates indicated how the PDP (Personal Development Planning) Unit had taken up a lot of their time on their course programme.

Assessor feedback was generally very consistent and supportive throughout the assessment process. Candidate evidence maintained high standards and good use was made of advanced research skills, PowerPoint presentations, reflective accounts and self-evaluations.

Centres set up entrance tests to screen candidates and assess their level of competence (including English language) for the appropriate HN entry level. Pre-entry procedures dictate appropriate access to assessment and this is monitored throughout the programme using tutorial assessment feedback and additional support with the English language.

There was good evidence of knowledge and understanding of self-evaluation tools, learning styles and learning theories, SMART targets, reflective accounts, self-review and evaluations.

Good use was made of online We Chat, Ukey platform and blogs to disseminate information to assessors, internal verifiers and candidates.

Celebrations of success were organised at the university graduation for HND students and helped to raise the profile of their studies.

External reports ranged from reasonable to high levels of confidence.

Centres were well prepared for visiting verification with comprehensive internal documentation and well-organised candidate evidence. Some centres were exceptional in their initial presentations to visiting verifiers outlining centre systems and procedures. Staff were keen to supply evidence to support the report criteria and to highlight good practice examples within the centre.

Areas of good practice

DE3R 34 Personal Development Planning

Centres are familiar with the step-by-step approach and candidate folio evidence revealed a wealth of information and self-evaluation. Good practice was highlighted in centres where the step-by-step approach was applied consistently and there was structured folio evidence which showed consistent analysis and justification of the findings as well as reflective evaluations.

F86Y 35 Developing the Individual within a Team

Candidate evidence revealed good depth of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to effective team participation skills.

Candidates need to be able to apply the knowledge, skills and understanding of effective team participation in a practical task, for example: real situation, project or case study approach. The key to this is to devise a practical investigative approach that students will be able to relate to. There is a need to ensure that in Outcome 1 candidates fully explore the consequences of a poor application of consultation, communication and interaction skills.

DV0M 34 Work Experience

The delivery of Work Experience (DV0M 34) revealed a wide range of contextualised work experience placements which related to the overall HN programme, for example: business administration; tourism and hospitality. There was good evidence to support a good level of candidate satisfaction and some measured success in obtaining and securing employment. Candidate evidence was exemplified in excellent candidate logs, placement arrangements and protocols, assessment activities and candidate evaluations.

DH21 34 Working within a Project Team

Working within a Project Team is popular and contextualised within HN programme design frameworks, for example: computer software, design and engineering. The Unit is often delivered by offering relevant project proposal options with direct subject relevance to candidates, who clearly enjoy planning, implementing and evaluating the project tasks.

The challenge is to ensure the successful delivery of the Communication and Working with Others Core Skills. There was good evidence of the reading task being contextualised to the project proposal. Specific areas of improvement are highlighted in the following section.

Specific areas for improvement

Assessors need to ensure that they refer to the national standards as detailed in HN Unit specifications. There is a tendency to use the national exemplars without referring to the national Unit specification.

The SQA exemplar for Personal Development Planning (DE3R 34) identifies a seven-step cycle and assessment folio evidence contains a fair amount of over-assessment. PDP aims to develop personal, educational and career goals as a structured and supported process which can be used in a lifelong learning context.

HN Unit assessment evidence must be differentiated across SCQF levels 6, 7 and 8. Candidates must provide detailed analysis and justification throughout the levels. It is simply not good enough to download skills questionnaires and provide no analysis and justification of the findings.

Careful consideration should be given to the use of a team project and/or case study approach to the delivery of the HN Unit: Developing the Individual within a Team (F86Y 35).

Centres must provide evidence of assessment judgements prior to external verification. This is just as relevant mid-cycle as it is at the end of the Unit delivery. An SQA External Verifier must be able to see a partially completed result matrix and/or completed matrix during the external sample.

The delivery of the WWPT (DH21 34) Unit presents a real challenge to assess Core Skills Communication and Working with Others at SCQF level 6. Centres need to ensure that the assessment of communication is evidenced appropriately using the exemplar checklists. The reading task must be sourced by the assessor (candidates must not be allowed to use their own reading reference materials) and the assessment exemplar questions must be accurately completed for this task. The speaking and listening assessment must be observed by the assessor and the assessment checklist completed. It is a good idea to use the project as a final presentation where the candidate has to provide an individual input of their contribution to the peer group. The written task is completed when the project is assembled and the candidate contribution is fully documented.

The Core Skill component of Working with Others is achieved using a final self-evaluation of the individual contribution to the team project and the evidence of individual and teamwork contributions provided in scheduled project team meetings.

Work Experience (DV0M 34)

The delivery of this Unit has to involve a real work environment placement. Achievement of this Unit cannot be simulated and involve role-plays in a classroom environment.

Work placements need not involve lengthy periods as the Unit design is based on a minimum of 40 hours duration. Work placement experience should involve a sustained period in employment, for example: one or two weeks. This Unit does not require the candidate to spend their summer vacation in a work placement.