



**Higher National Qualifications (China)  
Internal Assessment Report 2012**

**Business Graded Unit**

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

# Higher National Graded Units

DL1K 35	Business with Accounting: Group Award Graded Unit 2 — level 8
DL1N 35	Business with Accounting: Group Award Graded Unit 3 — level 8
DM1G 34	Global Trade and Business: Group Award Graded Unit 1 — level 7
DM1H 35	Global Trade and Business: Group Award Graded Unit 2 — level 8
DN82 34	Business: Group Award Graded Unit 1 — level 7
DN83 35	Business: Group Award Graded Unit 2 — level 8
DN84 35	Business: Group Award Graded Unit 3 — level 8
DL24 34	Business with Human Resource Management: Group Award Graded Unit 1 — level 7
DL28 35	Business with Human Resource Management: Group Award Graded Unit 3 — level 8
DL1E 34	Business with Marketing: Group Award Graded Unit 1 — level 7

## General comments

A number of Graded Units from the different awards were externally verified, with examinations being verified at the central verification event and projects verified through visits. External verification was very successful and there appears to be a generally good understanding by centres of the requirements, demands and standards attached to each of the Graded Units.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Assessors are familiar with the Unit specifications and the assessment exemplars. Some work still needs to be done in ensuring that assessors identify and apply the appropriate standards that are expected in candidates' responses at the level of each Unit. This requires continuing effort on the part of centres and staff, who should keep making reference to the Unit specifications to refresh themselves of the appropriate standards. They should also take guidance from the comments of the external verification team made in their external verification reports.

## Evidence Requirements

The assessors in general have a good appreciation of what is required and how the Units are to be delivered. A cautionary note should be sounded in terms of marking. Some of the external verification reports indicated a slight erring towards generosity at some centres. In the examinations it is vital that marks are awarded for genuine points that are explained, analysed, discussed, etc. It is not sufficient to merely identify points and gain marks without relevant explanations in support of the points identified.

It is strongly advised that, before marking, a markers' meeting takes place so that those involved are reminded of the marking requirements and to enhance consistency. It is equally important that, in marking projects, the marks are

deserved and can be justified. New staff should be given relevant guidance to help inform them of how the Units are delivered and assessed, and of the relevant standards.

### **Administration of assessments**

Many centres have now had several years' experience of delivering and assessing the Graded Units, but it is important to appreciate the significant challenge that the Graded Units continue to pose for centres, staff and candidates alike.

There are still differing approaches on how to prepare candidates for the examination of Graded Units. Ideally, centres should focus on examination technique through the use of practice questions based on practice case studies. Centres are advised not to base practice questions on the actual case study that will be used for the examination. In marking any of the Graded Units, it is important that half-marks are not used.

Centres should ensure that marks are awarded in a transparent manner, and in exams should differentiate between basic marks and those awarded for development. In the projects it is important that the additional marks are justified and that the criteria against which they have been awarded are clearly identified. Centres must ensure that a candidate has passed each stage of the project before they are allowed to move to complete the subsequent section or sections.

In the projects, candidates can find it difficult to selecting an appropriate topic, and centres will undoubtedly have to continue to give appropriate guidance regarding the selection of suitable topics for the project. There should be a reasonable range of topics used, and centres should avoid having candidates working on very similar projects. It is vital that centres maintain tight control over the project, and keep candidates to the timescales they set.

### **General feedback**

While some centres were good at providing feedback to candidates on their projects, other centres need to increase their efforts in developing this practice. Feedback to candidates helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and provides the guidance that will enable them to improve. The centres must provide sufficient guidance to candidates to support them in the creation of their projects.

Centres need to continue to clearly identify marks on the examination scripts, and there should be sufficient explanation and analysis to justify the awarding of marks. In the projects, centres should clearly identify marks for each component in the project and for each subsection in accordance with the guidance in the relevant assessment exemplar. It is particularly important in the project to identify the criteria that have been met for the awarding of marks above the minimum marks. No access issues were identified during verification.

## **Areas of good practice**

Much of the good practice identified through external verification involves doing a good job, and it is pleasing to see that centres have identified the requirements of the Graded Units and have reacted appropriately.

In effect, what is required is a continuation of the work that has been achieved, and centres should continue to follow the guidance provided in the exemplars, Unit specifications and external verification reports. The practice of double marking is very useful, and commenting where a mark might be questionable is very helpful and adds a degree of transparency. Similarly, where markers have disagreed over marks, some note as to how the differences were resolved is very useful. These practices are to be encouraged.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

The external verification team noted that in some cases the marking was slightly lenient, and in a few cases there was a slight slip towards awarding marginally higher marks than were merited. In examinations there has to be explanation to gain a mark, and simple identification is not sufficient. Centres must work to keep a careful eye on this in future, to avoid candidates gaining a higher mark than their work merits.

It is crucial that centres maintain the security of the assessments and the assessment process. This is particularly important in the case of examinations, but is also important for all Units. Centres should maintain security and remain vigilant against potential security breaches. A lax approach endangers the credibility of the awards, and alternative exemplars are rarely available to replace those that are compromised.