



Higher National Qualifications (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

Administration

Introduction

There were 11 external verification events across 10 centres. The units verified were:

F84V 34	IT in Business: Spreadsheets
F84W 35	ICT in Business
F84E 35	Presentation Skills

The external verifiers who undertook these events are experienced in verification visits in international centres. Of the 11 visits, two centres had action plans put in place and three centres had certification suspended. All these situations were resolved, and are discussed under the appropriate criterion. All centres have qualified assessors who are familiar with the SQA standards.

One centre did not provide all of the information required in English and this meant that some of the documentation could not be included in the verification event, as SQA guidance requires all documentation to be available in English for a successful verification event to take place.

Category 2: Resources

Criterion 2.1: Assessors and internal verifiers must be competent to assess and internally verify, in line with the requirements of the qualification.

(This criterion should be completed for regulated qualifications only.)

All centres provided CVs for assessors and internal verifiers, and copies of their qualifications. Records showed details of appropriate training that had been undertaken. In one instance the continuing professional development records were not up to date, but discussions revealed that professional development had taken place. The external verifier reiterated the importance of all records being kept up to date. One assessor admitted that their spoken English needed to improve, and the verifier complimented the assessor's honest reflections on their abilities and their efforts in professional self-improvement.

There was documented evidence that some centres had taken part in the SQA continuing professional development event in August 2016, a valuable resource for all centres.

Criterion 2.4: There must be evidence of initial and ongoing reviews of assessment environments; equipment; and reference, learning and assessment materials.

All centres had systems in place to review assessment environments, procedures, equipment, learning resources and assessment materials prior to delivery. Almost all centres recorded this. One centre was using study books in Chinese, but the software in English. Verifiers reminded these centres that SQA recommends that all study guides be compatible with the software being used, and that these should be in English. One centre was using study guides for Office 2003, but Office 2010 software, and verifiers recommended that the study guides be updated.

Verifiers reiterated the importance of allowing adequate time for the delivery of a unit — especially a double-credit unit, which has a notional study time of 80 hours. One centre was delivering a double-credit unit in 45 hours.

An internal verifier noted an example of good practice in one centre, where the assessor in class had updated study materials to take into account advances in technology.

SAQ recommends that all centres use the SQA Toolkit for Internal Verification which is available online, via the SQA website.

Category 3: Candidate support

Criterion 3.2: Candidates' development needs and prior achievements (where appropriate) must be matched against the requirements of the award.

All centres require candidates to have passed their high school diploma to enter the foundation year. In addition, all candidates must meet the requirements of 4.5 IELTS or achieve 90% in the *Gaokao* English test. In some centres there was evidence of Personal Development Plan Guidance materials and individual plans for candidates. There was evidence in some centres that candidates are given information at induction on preparing development plans and also guidance on personal study and plagiarism. In some instances this was not recorded and was instead discussed with the external verifier, who recommended future recording of such activity.

The verifier further recommended that candidates continue to receive the necessary support in English language throughout their HND programme.

Criterion 3.3: Candidates must have scheduled contact with their assessor to review their progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly.

Almost all centres demonstrated scheduled contact between candidates and assessors. In some instances there were candidate tutorial records and individual student learning logs. In many centres candidates communicated with assessors using the WeChat platform.

In one instance there was a low pass rate for the unit being verified, and it was discovered that candidates were only receiving 45 hours contact time for a double-credit unit. It may be difficult to cover the range of theory and practice that is required for this unit in such a short time, and the external verifier advised the centre to consider an appropriate allocation of time to deliver and assess this unit.

In a few instances personal development plans were not being kept up to date. The external verifier recommended that all plans be reviewed on an ongoing basis, both for candidates' benefit, and so that assessors are aware of any candidates facing difficulties with their studies.

One centre is developing an FAQ guide for use next session, based on feedback from the current cohort. The external verifier commended this as an example of good practice, in which reflection on teaching methods is being used to improve future delivery.

One centre did not allow candidates to undertake assessment unless they had 70% attendance and this resulted in low achievement. The verifier questioned whether this indicated a lack of support from assessors prior to the assessment.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

Criterion 4.2: Internal assessment and verification procedures must be implemented to ensure standardisation of assessment.

All centres have internal assessment and verification procedures in place to ensure standardisation of assessment, and in almost all centres this is adhered to. In more than a few centres verifiers noted that the standardisation procedures were not being followed and that incorrect documentation was being used. In one centre the verifier had little confidence in the marking of two of the outcomes.

Verifiers recommended that scripts, which have been internally verified, should be marked with the name of the internal verifier and the date of the verification. They reminded centres to make sure they have alternative assessment instruments in place for re-assessment, and strongly recommended that these be submitted for prior verification.

One centre had an end-of-unit internal verification report, which proved to be a useful document; it summarised issues arising from assessment carried out during this semester, including comments regarding plagiarism, updating learning materials, and tutorial activities.

Criterion 4.3: Assessment instruments and methods and their selection and use must be valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair.

All centres are using SQA-produced assessment support packs/assessment support packs (China) (ASPs/CASPs). Most centres have alternative assessments which have been prior verified. Pre-delivery checks ensure that the most up-to-date unit specification and ASP/CASPs are being used. There was evidence of two centres sharing alternative assessment instruments, which had been prior verified.

SQA recommends that all centres should have prior-verified, alternative assessment instruments.

Criterion 4.4: Assessment evidence must be the candidate's own work, generated under SQA's required conditions.

All centres have a policy in place to ensure that candidates submit their own work and in almost all instances this is adhered to. Candidates sign a document at induction and in almost all instances sign a document when submitting a piece of work. In addition, in some centres the use of electronic files helped assessors check that the work submitted was the candidate's own. SQA recommends that all centres adhere to a strict naming convention for electronically submitted work.

The external verifiers saw evidence of plagiarism in one centre. This had been identified by the assessor and the candidates were made to submit another piece of work, as set out in the centre's plagiarism policy. In this centre, there was one further instance of plagiarism, which had not been picked up by the assessor, neither had the script been internally verified as part of the sample.

Criterion 4.6: Evidence of candidates' work must be accurately and consistently judged by assessors against SQA's requirements.

There was evidence in all centres of meetings and discussions relating to marking schemes and there was evidence of standardisation where work had been assessed and internally verified. In almost all centres assessors gave candidates clear feedback. In one centre there was a lack of consistent marking and this led to the external verifier requiring all work to be remarked; the centre was unaware that all outcomes had to be marked.

In most centres there was a clear audit trail for submission, remediation and re-assessment.

Criterion 4.7: Candidate evidence must be retained in line with SQA requirements.

All centres retain candidate evidence in line with SQA requirements. In all centres it is stored for longer than required and in most centres it is stored in secure conditions. In a few instances only the SQA co-ordinator has access to the files.

Criterion 4.9: Feedback from qualification verifiers must be disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

All centres ensure that the results of a verification event are disseminated to the appropriate staff. A variety of means is used, including course team meetings, physical distribution of the verification report (which has to be signed to show that it has been read and understood), and meetings with internal verifiers and assessors. In a few instances the verifiers noted that the report is discussed at pre-delivery meetings and identified on the pre-delivery notes with actions taken.

Areas of good practice report by qualification verifiers

The following examples of good practice were reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ One centre is developing an FAQ guide for use next session, based on feedback from the current cohort.
- ◆ Study materials having been updated to take into account advances in technology.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development was reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ SQA recommends that all centres take part in the SQA Continuing Professional Development event.
- ◆ Centres need to allow adequate time for the delivery of a unit.
- ◆ All documentation must be available in English to ensure successful verification.
- ◆ All study guides should be appropriate to the version of the software being used.
- ◆ Candidates should continue to receive support in English language throughout their HND programme.