



Higher National and/or Graded Unit (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

Mathematics and Statistics

Introduction

Four external verification visits were carried out by the team this session. In almost all the centres visited practice was found to be of a very high standard. However, there were a few cases where assessments and/or marking approaches did not meet the national standard.

The following units were externally verified:

H7K1 34	Engineering Mathematics 2
D76E 34	Mathematics for Computing 1
F84K 35	Statistics for Business

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.

All assessors and internal verifiers involved in the delivery of the qualification were competent to assess and internally verify, in accordance with SQA's policies and procedures.

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

All the centres visited had established internal quality control procedures, and there was documented evidence of effective ongoing reviews.

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 visited have processes in place to ensure that candidates' development needs are being attended to and that any prior achievements were taken into consideration. All centres regularly review their teaching materials to ensure that they are appropriate to the needs of candidates.

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

Candidates have scheduled contact with assessors to review their progress and, where appropriate, to revise assessment plans at all centres visited.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

All centres visited have developed robust, effective and routinely applied internal quality control procedures.

When discrepancies in marking scheme interpretation are identified through internal verification, centres must ensure that the marking scheme is clarified so that all assessors apply consistent marking decisions.

When an internal verifier identifies incorrect assessment decisions, action must be taken in a timely manner.

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

Internal verification of assessment instruments is universally applied by all centres verified. SQA assessment support packs (ASPs) were used by all centres verified.

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

All the centres verified have adopted a variety of procedures to ensure the authenticity of candidate submissions.

In cases where candidates are using a computer package, such as excel, during assessment, preventing the sharing of work across the network and internet by disconnecting them, or preventing the use of communication software would reduce the risk of collusion.

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

Most centres visited had clear, effective and routinely applied policies that ensured candidates' work was accurately and consistently judged by assessors. Centres should ensure that follow through marks are awarded where appropriate, as long as working is not eased.

Some candidates had trouble expressing the complicated vocabulary of statistics, and some assessors and internal verifiers were uncertain about whether a response should be accepted or not. Centres must ensure full alignment and consistency across all assessors. Assessors and internal verifiers could prepare a list of 'marginal' responses to standardise what is or is not an acceptable response in these cases.

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

All centres visited complied with SQA policies and procedures regarding the retention of candidate evidence.

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

All centres visited had policies and procedures to ensure that feedback from qualification verifiers is disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

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

Cross marking

Some centres routinely cross-mark candidate evidence when their mark came near the threshold for achievement. Assessors and internal verifiers worked together on marking and internal verification, this allowed discussion to take place to gain consensus on assessment decisions.

Specific areas for development

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

Marking clarity

Care should be taken when marking to show where marks are awarded, and the totals should also be shown clearly. SQA recommends the use of our general marking symbols, which can be obtained from the website. Marking allocation should be clear, whether a mark is awarded or not.

Note that half marks should not be used.

Similarity of alternative instruments of assessment

Alternative assessment instruments should be of a similar standard, but should be sufficiently different from each other that candidates will not be able to predict the content of the assessment. Question order could be changed from one assessment instrument to the next. In cases where performance criteria are sampled, different samples should be selected in different assessment instruments.

Number of attempts at assessments

SQA's advice is that there should normally be one, or in exceptional circumstances two, re-assessment opportunities. The decision of what constitutes an exceptional circumstance rests with your professional judgment.