



Higher National (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2017

Information Technology

Introduction

Visiting verification took place at centres in China in March 2017. Graded units in this group were sent to Scotland for verification in late spring. The units were delivered as part of Business HNDs and of Computer: Networking HND.

In all visits and remote events for both Resources and for Assessment and Verification a High Level of Confidence in maintenance of SQA standards was recorded.

The units reviewed are listed below

D75X 34	Information Technology: Applications Software 1
D7CY 35	Information Technology: Applications Software 2
H40G 35	Computing: Networking: Graded Unit 2 (Remote)

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.)

In all visiting verification activity, evidence of academic competency within the cognate area was available in the form of academic certificates, as was evidence of relevant CPD.

CPD records for assessors and internal verifiers also showed evidence of SQA quality training having been attended in all cases.

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

In all visiting verification activity, extensive evidence was seen of formal review of resources being carried out and recorded effectively.

All centres meet all aspects of this criterion well, and standardisation activity is a regularly occurring event.

Equipment reviews and maintenance logs were available to demonstrate that equipment is fit for purpose.

All centres demonstrated that assessment is reviewed on a regular basis, with evidence of pre-delivery checks, standardisation minutes and sampling activity. This is all recorded and implemented effectively.

Not reviewed for remote verification of Graded Unit 2.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Where reviewed, it was found that candidates embark on a three-year programme with year 1 being a foundation programme with the emphasis on English language skills. Candidates require an IELTS score before undertaking the HND.

While candidates undertaking an HND may be in possession of computer skills, it is unlikely that these could be matched to units in the award as these skills would not have been gained in an English-speaking environment. The foundation year helps to prepare candidates to undertake study of the award.

Not reviewed for remote verification of Graded Unit 2.

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

In all cases centres were effective in ensuring that this criterion was met.

Evidence was seen of scheduled contact with assessors. In all cases centres have a plan for the award and this is reflected in a personal learning plan which is maintained throughout the candidate's three years of study. This allows progress to be tracked and can be updated regularly.

In addition to timetabled classes, there is a system of guidance and support for the whole award. Evidence was seen of 'chat records' which provided further evidence of candidate individual support.

Not reviewed for remote verification of Graded Unit 2.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Evidence was seen of assessment and verification procedures, in the form of quality manuals. These procedures have been developed with SQA assistance.

In almost all cases assessors and internal verifier have all undergone SQA training, as evidenced in the Staff Information documents provided.

Internal Verification handbooks provide clear information on the internal verification system and procedures relating to the three-stage process (pre-delivery, mid-delivery and post-delivery). Internal verification reports were available for all units, and in all instances these indicated that all internal verification procedures are being adhered to. Evidence to support this was provided in minutes of standardisation and review meetings.

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

There was evidence that assessment instruments are selected appropriately. In most instances centres had devised their own assessments and supporting marking schemes for the IT units, and these had been sent to SQA for prior approval. There was also extensive use of the SQA instrument of assessment.

In all cases the marking guidelines had been adhered to effectively. Evidence was seen of one centre having written their own resit assessment for a closed book assessment and this had been successfully prior verified.

The assessment selection had been recorded in the standardisation activity and had all been subject to pre-delivery checks.

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

In all cases malpractice policy and procedure was provided, and covered both malpractice by candidates and malpractice by centre staff. In all cases candidates signed an 'own work' / 'academic honesty' declaration before assessment and this was provided as assessment evidence.

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

In all cases the verifier was satisfied that candidate evidence had been judged fairly, accurately and consistently across all candidates. The assessment judgements were in accordance with the evidence requirements in the unit specifications, which define the standard. This provides evidence that in most cases standards are well understood.

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

Centres have effective and secure systems of retention of candidate evidence.

All evidence was made available for verification purposes. The evidence had been internally verified in advance of the external verification activity. In all cases, once a unit is completed, this is then stored securely for five years after the end of the award.

Electronic evidence was securely held and made available to the verifier.

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

In all cases there was evidence that the information had been disseminated and staff were aware of the outcome of previous qualification verification activity. Evidence was available in minutes of meetings with regards to qualification verification feedback on units in the HND awards.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2016–17:

- ◆ Staff were undertaking CPD relevant to the Information Technology cognate area to expand their knowledge in this field.
- ◆ Taking comments from candidates from the student forum and providing this information to assessors engages the candidates in their learning programme and aids the assessor in reviewing learning, teaching and assessment.
- ◆ The provision of Exam (Assessment) Record Forms demonstrate the centre's commitment to combating malpractice in all forms.
- ◆ The writing of re-sit assessment instruments, and having them prior verified by SQA, is good practice.
- ◆ Academic Honesty Declaration and Candidate Assessment Checklist written in both Mandarin and English ensures that candidates are aware that they must abide by the rules advocated by SQA and the university. The signing of this Declaration before each assessment opportunity is good practice.
- ◆ A separate server for each computer lab means that each lab is a complete entity that is unaffected by any mal-activities anywhere else in the centre.

Specific areas for development

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

- ◆ Scripts should be annotated with marks awarded to allow the internal and external verifier to see exactly where marks have been given. This would aid the internal and external verifier to validate marking.