



Higher National Qualifications (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2018

Mathematics and Statistics

Introduction

Six external verification visits were carried out by the team this session. In almost all centres visited, practice was of a very high standard.

H7K0 33 Engineering Mathematics 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 qualifications 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 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 had processes in place to ensure candidates' development needs are attended to and any prior achievements are taken into consideration. All centres regularly review their teaching materials to ensure 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.

At all centres visited, candidates had scheduled contact with assessors to review their progress and, where appropriate, to revise assessment plans.

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 internal verification reveals discrepancies in marking scheme interpretation, centres must ensure further clarification of the marking scheme so all assessors apply consistent marking decisions.

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 that were verified. SQA assessment support packs were used by all centres that were verified.

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

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

Where candidates are using a computer package (such as Excel) during assessment, centres should minimise the risk of collusion. For example, preventing the sharing of work across the network and internet, by disconnecting machines or disabling the use of communication software.

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. Assessors and internal verifiers could prepare a list of 'marginal' responses in order 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 external verifiers is disseminated to staff and used to inform assessment practice.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following example of good practice was recorded during session 2017–18:

Cross-marking

Some centres routinely cross-mark candidate evidence when the mark was 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 2017–18:

Marking clarity

Care should be taken when marking to show where marks are awarded. The totals should also be shown clearly. SQA recommends the use of its 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 professional judgement. Care should be taken that decisions are made in a fair and consistent manner.