



SQA Advanced Qualifications (China)
Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024
Business (including Graded Units)

Verification group number 254

Introduction

All external qualification verification for the 2023–24 session for Business was conducted through virtual events.

A number of new and revised units have been delivered during the 2023–24 session with the introduction of a new set of Business awards. The centres submitted evidence for the generic criteria and for the units selected for qualification verification separately. For each centre, a report was created covering the criteria identified as generic for each award, with separate reports for units by verification group based on the criteria relevant to delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance. The generic reports were completed first and submitted to the centres.

On completion of the unit reports the primary verifier led a meeting with each centre where the subject/unit verifiers could seek information and provide feedback. The unit reports were submitted along with outcome forms after the meetings had taken place.

The following Business units were selected for verification:

J4DK 47	Managing People and Organisations
J5FK 47	Business Fundamentals with Emerging Technologies
HP6R 48	Business Culture and Strategy
J5FL 47	Managing Business Culture and Strategy
J5FM 47	Project Management: Strategy, Decision Making and Risk
HP0Y 47	International Business Environment: Geographical Influences
HP0V 48	Global Business Organisations
J5TC 47	Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 1
J5TA 47	Business: Graded Unit 1
J5TG 47	Business with Information Technology: Graded Unit 1
HP11 48	Global Trade and Business: Graded Unit 2
HP07 48	Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 2
HP7D 47	Business: Graded Unit 2
J5TE 47	Business with HRM: Graded Unit 2

The following SQA awards were selected for verification:

GT32 48	AD Business
GT35 48	AD Business with Accounting
GM52 48	AD Business with Accounting
GM57 48	AD Global Trade and Business
GT37 48	AD Global Trade and Business
GP0N 48	AD Financial Services

GT36 48	AD Business with Marketing
GT33 48	AD Business with Human Resources Management
GT34 48	AD Business with Information Technology

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.

Subject report criterion

Evidence included: CVs/resumes, CPD records, copies of certificates, research interests and articles published, past employment history, SQA/CSCSE and other training events attended.

All assessors and internal verifiers were very well qualified, holding an undergraduate degree and one or more postgraduate degrees. Some staff also held professional body and teaching qualifications. Many of the staff had considerable experience of delivering, assessing and internally verifying SQA awards, with some working at more than one centre. Staff showed engagement with their subjects through scholarly activities relating to management and other subjects.

The records provided showed that assessors and internal verifiers were active in updating and refreshing their knowledge of SQA awards, units and processes by participating in internal training events relevant to the delivery and assessment of SQA awards. Participation in events sponsored by SQA and CSCSE were commonly identified in CPD records, and there were examples of staff holding 'Best Teacher/Elite Teacher awards', as well as some having attended teacher training courses offered by UK universities.

The movement of staff between centres and attendance at SQA events has led to a good degree of cooperation and networking between staff, which is very positive.

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Review policies, minutes of meetings, learning materials, resource checklists, teaching resources, IV and standardisation records, safety checks, ASP and US update records, equipment lists.

Most centres provided a policy explaining the review process, and then provided a series of documents to evidence the implementation of the policy. Providing a specific policy document explaining the review processes and opportunities for reviews provided a framework that made understanding the other evidence submitted a relatively simple task. Where a review policy was not submitted, it was generally more difficult to interpret the evidence provided. Whilst this was more difficult, centres were still successful, but the evidence sometimes appeared disjointed. It was simply easier to interpret the evidence and arrive at a valid verification decision when centres also provided an overall explanation of their process for reviewing resources’.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Centre entrance requirements, handbooks, induction details, guidance systems, PDP/Individual Learning Plans, support services, language support and certificates, staff availability and contact details, workshops, study groups.

As with criterion 4.2, 3.2 is easier to successfully evidence through a range of documents that cover candidates’ prior achievements and match those achievements against the requirements of the award. It is unlikely that a single piece of evidence could adequately demonstrate that the centre meets all of the aspects of criterion 3.2.

Centres were successful in evidencing 3.2, with some submitting a greater range of documents than others. Details of the admissions process and entry requirements that some centres provided were a good starting point. All centres must offer an appropriate language training year, and details of that year and candidate results again provided a useful insight. Centres must demonstrate that candidates who meet the language requirements are then prepared for the further two years of study.

Details of the induction that candidates experience are important, and some centres invest heavily in this, whilst for other centres details provided were limited. It is important that details of student support services, responsibilities and candidate entitlements are provided to candidates, and in addition to induction, this was often further provided in a candidate handbook.

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Timetables, tutorial times, delivery and assessment schedules, tutorial records, individual/personal development planning, communication records, staff availability details, student appraisal records, mentoring systems, support services, minutes of meetings.

Criterion 3.2 and criterion 3.3 are strongly connected with 3.3 focusing on the ongoing monitoring of progress and continuous support throughout the running of the course.

Centres provided timetables showing details of scheduled classes and tutorials. Many centres provided detailed teaching schedules for each unit and assessment schedules. Most classes were face-to-face, but a small number were held online. Almost all centres provided records of tutorials with examples of questions asked by candidates and tutor responses. Examples of online contact were often provided along with details of how candidates can contact tutors outside class times.

Some centres provided details of progress reviews and examples of individual learning plans with targets for self-improvement. Written feedback to candidates on their performance is an area that could be improved at some centres. Some feedback was minimal beyond detailing where redo work was required, and it is useful to provide some detail of strengths and weaknesses even when a candidate has successfully completed an assessment.

Some centres provided details of ongoing English language support throughout the course, which is important as most centres identified language ability as an important factor in determining success.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Generic report criterion and subject report criterion

Evidence included: Assessments, unit specifications, marking schemes, quality/IV manual, staff manuals, verification/standardisation records, minutes of meetings, assessor summary IV reports.

All centres provided details of their internal quality assurance policy and provided completed verification records. The records contained details to a varying degree, but the majority were very thorough and many contained excellent observation, reflection and analysis.

Centres showed a good understanding of SQA requirements and demonstrated an appreciation of the need for the assessor and the internal verifier to work closely together to best ensure that standardisation is achieved. The records showed that checks were made identifying the unit requirements and standards, and that discussions took place to best ensure that assessment decisions were appropriate and consistent.

A number of new and revised units were offered, and the assessors and internal verifiers have worked hard to familiarise themselves with these units. Some centres provided excellent narrative accounts of assessment decisions in their records, but often the sampling records lacked details of how marginal assessment decisions were decided.

Most centres created an excellent assessor summary report for each unit, containing observations and reflection along with recommendations and analysis of performance. It was a positive strength when centres demonstrated that the reflection and lessons learned were taken forward and acted on. This has been strongly encouraged through the SQA 'Circle of Success' model promoted at the 2019 SQA Professional Development Conference and again in Shanghai in 2024.

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

Subject report criterion

Evidence included: Assessments, solution guidance, unit specifications, pre-delivery IV checks, IV/standardisation records and minutes of meetings, invigilation records, assessor/IV reports, quality manual, details of staff duties and responsibilities, teaching and assessment schedules.

All centres provided SQA and/or centre-devised prior-verified assessments. It was quite common that prior verified assessments were created by another centre and sharing resources is a positive development. With the new units, centres tended to use the SQA versions.

Some centres submitted invigilation records and attendance sign-in sheets for supervised assessments and examinations. All centres provided examples of originality/authenticity declarations to demonstrate that assessments were undertaken under the appropriate conditions and that each candidate understood their responsibilities. All centres had a policy relating to authenticity and malpractice.

Centre staff studied the unit specifications and discussed the standards and identified the requirements with the initial mandatory checks being recorded in the pre-delivery IV records. A

number of new and revised units were offered this year, and the assessors and internal verifiers worked had to familiarise themselves with these units. Some units, such as J4DK 47, have more than one potential assessment format, and centres managed to identify the requirements associated with their chosen format. The unit J5FK 47 has three separate assessment formats including a presentation, and the centres identified the requirements for this challenging unit.

Typically further IV records, standardisation and unit meeting minutes recorded discussions on to the selection and use of the assessments. Assessor summary reports would commonly analyse performance and make recommendations regarding future delivery and assessment practice.

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Quality/IV manuals, plagiarism and malpractice policies, authenticity checks and declarations, internal verification records, invigilation records, assessment attendance records/sheets, details of electronic authenticity checks.

All centres provided examples of originality/authenticity declarations, and all had policies and procedures as required by SQA relating to plagiarism and malpractice. Assessors and IVs undertake checks as an integral part of the assessment and quality assurance processes.

All centres have staff and centre manuals that detail staff responsibilities. Candidates are provided with handbooks that contain details of their responsibilities and information relating to the course and assessment. Some centres provided details of referencing guidance provided to candidates, often as part of induction and some provided paper/electronic guides.

Verification records include checks to ensure that the tutor and internal verifier have identified unit and assessment requirements. Some verification records included situations where plagiarism was identified and then dealt with in line with the centre policy.

Some centres also provided examples of invigilation reports and sign in sheets to further show that assessment conditions have been identified and applied. Sign-in sheets and invigilation records tended to be provided for units with an examination assessment such as the Graded Unit 1s.

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

Subject report criterion

Evidence included: Candidate work, IV records/minutes, assessor/IV reports, class results, assessor annotations and feedback.

All centres provided samples of candidate evidence as required for virtual verification events. The candidate responses included a range from excellent achievement to marginal work, and also included work judged to be insufficient in meeting the required standards. Redo and reassessment work was submitted when appropriate.

Results lists provided details of candidates achieving or not achieving outcomes, the overall unit achievement. Most indicated where redo and re-assessment had taken place. For Graded Units, the results showed the marks and the grade awarded. Some result records also identified the candidates whose work was submitted as evidence sent for verification.

A range of units from Business were selected for qualification verification. The units included a number of new Graded Units from years 1 and 2. A number of centres submitted evidence for J4DK 47 Managing People and Organisations, which is a relatively new unit with a choice of two assessment formats. Centres understood that the single holistic assessment requires candidates to evidence fewer evidence requirements than in the outcome-by-outcome approach.

The new J5FK 47 Business Fundamentals unit was challenging for staff and candidates, with three assessment formats, including one outcome assessed by presentation. Some centres engaged their candidates through a range of activities designed to encourage active learning, which worked well. Centres did well in delivering and assessing this unit, and candidates generally coped well with the three assessments, although the portfolio for outcome 1 often became more of a report, which was acceptable.

All units require an element of assessor judgement when making assessment decisions, and the rationale of such decisions is best where there are clear and comprehensive internal verification records that contain a rationale for the decisions made. This is particularly important in the sampling record, where marginal work should have a brief rationale explaining how the final assessment decision was determined. There were some instances where such records were made, but most centres tended to record that assessment decisions were agreed by the IV without the detail useful in showing how marginal cases were actually decided.

Feedback to candidates about performance was mixed, with some excellent examples, but it is an area where some centres could focus on providing a brief summary of the candidate's work strengths and weaknesses. There tended to be less evaluative feedback given to candidates whose work was accepted as meeting the unit requirements, and more feedback provided to candidates whose work required redo or re-assessment. It would be useful to provide evaluative

feedback briefly outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the work to all candidates to help them improve future performance.

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Retention and disposal policy, data handling and management policy, details of storage facilities, storage records and access records.

All centres provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have a policy for evidence retention that meets SQA's requirements. The range of evidence submitted varied, with some centres providing more evidence and detail than others. The basic details tended to be the retention policy and a record of materials retained. Some centres went further and provided photographs of secure storage facilities and some provided details relating to the responsibilities of staff, security/access measures and document disposal arrangements.

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

Generic report criterion

Evidence included: Course meeting minutes, communication flow charts, IV records and distribution records, records of staff discussing and acting upon QV feedback.

All centres managed to evidence the dissemination of qualification verification feedback. Some centres provided stronger evidence than others with a clear communication policy followed up with supporting documents showing that the policy was being implemented.

Areas of good practice reported by qualification verifiers

The following good practice was reported during session 2023–24:

- ◆ Criterion 2.1
 - Explanations of the benefits and implementation of learning gained from CPD events.
- ◆ Criterion 2.4
 - A range of coherent evidence covering each element of the criterion.

- ◆ Criterion 3.2
 - Quality of induction and support services.
 - Quality study skills and mentoring support from peers.
 - Opportunity for candidate feedback and ideas for improvements.

- ◆ Criterion 3.3
 - Mentoring systems.
 - Individual/personal learning planning that encourages reflection, goal setting and engagement.
 - Support meetings with staff with tailored candidate support.

- ◆ Criterion 4.2
 - Assessor and IV summary reports containing analysis, evaluation and recommendations.
 - Standardisation and IV records and reports that evaluated and reflected upon delivery and assessment followed by actions to make improvements.

- ◆ Criterion 4.3
 - IV records containing excellent discussion relating to the assessments and their use.
 - Assessor/IV summary reports containing evaluative accounts of delivery and assessment of individual units that can inform future practice.

- ◆ Criterion 4.4
 - Use of a variety of checks including electronic plagiarism checks and questioning.
 - Development of policies relating to Artificial Intelligence.

- ◆ Criterion 4.6
 - Concise relevant accounts within IV explaining assessment decisions.
 - Excellent feedback to candidates to enable future improvement.
 - Cross marking/assessing to aid consistency in assessment.
 - Engaging candidates by asking them to participate in a range of activities to help encourage active learning.

- ◆ Criterion 4.9
 - Clear evidence in course records showing that QV feedback is received, disseminated and acted upon to help improve future practice.

Specific areas for development

The following areas for development were reported during session 2023–24:

- ◆ Criterion 2.1
 - Participate in more external events.
 - Evidence submitted needs to support all criterion elements.

- ◆ Criterion 2.4
 - Evidence appeared disconnected and disjointed where centres did not provide details of their review policies.
 - Evidence submitted needs to support all criterion elements.

- ◆ Criterion 3.2
 - Better/explicit details of candidate induction.
 - A range of evidence to show how candidates are selected and supported throughout their studies.

- ◆ Criterion 3.3
 - Introducing personal tutor systems and mentoring schemes.
 - Better feedback on performance for all candidates including those achieving assessments.
 - Language support throughout all years of the awards.

- ◆ Criterion 4.2
 - Explanations of judgements on marginal candidate performance to be recorded in the sampling record.
 - Greater reflection and suggestions for improvements
 - Better use of external and internal feedback to action improvements in future delivery and assessment.

- ◆ Criterion 4.3
 - Better recording of discussions in meetings and records.
 - Assessor/IV summary reports
 - Better use of external and internal feedback to action improvements in future delivery and assessment.

- ◆ Criterion 4.6
 - Better recording in IV records how marginal assessment decisions are determined.

- Greater and better feedback to candidates including those achieving assessments.
- In project Graded Units, more emphasis on the word count guidance.

◆ Criterion 4.7

- Providing a detailed retention policy along with supporting evidence that shows clearly that the policy is being implemented.

◆ Criterion 4.9

- Clear evidence that external and internal feedback is used to adjust and improve future delivery and assessment.