SQA Advanced Qualification (China)

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024

Marketing, Sales and Advertising

Verification group number: 399

Introduction

In the 2023–24 session, the following units were selected for verification in China:

♦ HP6N 47 Marketing: An Introduction (SCQF level 7) — 14 centres verified
♦ HP76 47 International Marketing: An Introduction (SCQF level 7) — 1 centre Verified

These units are part of the following SQA awards which were selected for verification:

♦ GT32 48 Advanced Diploma in Business
♦ GT36 48 Advanced Diploma in Business with Marketing
♦ GM52 48 Advanced Diploma in Business with Accounting
♦ GT33 48 Advanced Diploma in Business with Human Resource Management
♦ GT34 48 Advanced Diploma in Business with Information Technology
♦ GT37 48 Advanced Diploma in Global Trade and Business
♦ GP0N 48 Advanced Diploma in Financial Services

Since the last marketing QVSR for China in 2017–18, the verification process has changed significantly. It now focuses on awards and units within the awards, rather than verifying units across awards. Individual HN/Advanced Diploma awards are selected by SQA, and then specific units within the award are selected for verification.

The process now involves the division of the criteria into 'generic' and 'qualification'. The generic covers seven criteria — 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7.and 4.9 and needs to be done only once for the award. This avoids the need for centres to repeatedly submit the same evidence each time a unit is verified. This means that the qualification part (unit verification) only requires a review of four criteria — 2.1, 4.2 (also a generic criterion), 4.3 and 4.6. This process has proved to significantly reduce the workload of both centres and verifiers.

None of the units selected are new, and none have had any revisions this session. Seven of the China awards include the unit Marketing: An Introduction (HP6N 47), and the unit International Marketing: An Introduction (HP76 47) is included in two China awards.

In session 2023–24 all China verification visits were virtual. All centres verified achieved a result of High Confidence for the marketing units.

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 was reviewed as part of the unit qualification criteria verification.

Centre staff are all well qualified in terms of academic qualifications with first degree and post-graduate qualifications. Many have a great deal of experience in delivering and assessing SQA qualifications. CPD records showed that many staff have taken part in SQA training events, particularly webinars and online events run by SQA. It was clear from the CPD evidence that centre continue to commit resources to training staff and ensuring that they are familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Although all staff CPD records met the basic requirement, there was considerable variation in the quality of individual records, so a number of recommendations have been suggested by verifiers — mainly relating to additional activities that could be included, timelines covered, and including activities relevant to the units being delivered by staff.

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

This criterion was reviewed as part of the generic criteria verification.

Centres were mostly able to provide evidence that they have systems in place to ensure ongoing reviews. These systems included regular reviews where necessary changes are made to the learning environment and materials etc. The internal verification process covers the checking of assessments and learning materials, and all centres were able to demonstrate that they consider the resources required. Centres submitted resource checklists and centre details including information on class rooms, library services and computing facilities etc.

In almost all cases, centres use the SQA CASPs, but have devised their own assessment instruments for re-assessment (and submitted them to SQA for prior verification). However, almost all centres still use the SQA CASPs as the preferred assessment instrument, and only use their own assessment for re-assessment of candidates.

Category 3: Candidate support

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

Most centres provided details on how candidates are recruited for the awards and the entry requirements that they must meet. Candidates were provided with inductions that consisted of different formats and varying lengths of time. Centres submitted induction checklists and programmes as well as candidate handbooks.

All candidates have to complete a first year studying English where they must gain a minimum score for IELTS of 4.5 before being able to proceed to the first year of the Advanced Diploma programme.

Centres operate their own systems of student support, which were described in policy documents. Centres provide access to specialist support services as required. Many centres provided evidence of individual learning plans for students.

All centres provided copies of individual tutorial records showing tutor/assessor records of meetings with candidates.

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

Centres provided details of timetabled guidance slots, individual tutorial time and tutor out-of-class availability. Examples of completed tutorial records provided examples of feedback given to candidates and indicated an ongoing effort to provide support. Some centres also provided evidence of tutor-candidate communications including email and WeChat. Contact and the availability of help and support are critical in helping to improve success rates.

Category 4: Internal assessment and verification

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

Almost all centres provided an IV policy and procedures document, but a small number of centres had only included the centre's IV policy and procedures document in the generic evidence files and not in the qualification files. It is essential that qualification verifiers have access to IV policies and procedures to establish that the centre is correctly implementing them. Fortunately, in these cases, the verifiers knew to access these documents in the generic files.

All centres provided completed three-stage IV records and evidence showing that standardisation was taking place. Records commonly contained a lot of detail with regard to discussions and decisions being made. The records were often supplemented with minutes and assessment summary reports.

The internal verifier and assessor feedback summaries were provided in different formats by a number of centres, and provided useful evaluative feedback on the delivery and assessment of the individual units. Some were excellent and are certainly examples of good practice. The detail of the IV records was generally very good, and usually a clear indication that standardisation was often taking place as part of the quality process.

In a few cases the pre-delivery records still often tend to take the format of a checklist, with little or no record of any discussion having taken place. Evidence from many centrecentres of both interim and end sampling records was often detailed. In a few cases class results records were not provided and sampling records did not have candidates' names. This information is useful to external verifiers when they are reviewing the centre IV sampling and when selecting their own sample from the candidate list.

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

All centres provided copies of the correct Unit Specifications and a valid assessment instrument. Centres used, in the majority of cases, the SQA CASPs. All but three centres provided a copy of an alternative assessment instrument for use when reassessing candidates. The assessment instruments being used are part of the pre-delivery check, and recorded in the IV records. This is important as it provides the

opportunity for staff to check that they are using the correct up-to-date assessment and refresh their ideas about standards and issues involved in assessing the units. Records indicated that there were no serious issues with assessments and they were recorded as accepted as being valid, reliable, equitable and fair. All centres had the up-to-date unit specification for each unit.

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

Centres use a variety of means in determining authenticity of the candidate evidence. The almost universal approach is for the candidate to sign an honesty/authenticity statement that is submitted along with their work. In addition, each centre has a malpractice/plagiarism policy that candidates can access in some form or other so that they are aware of what constitutes malpractice and plagiarism, and the potential consequences.

For units that are open book and assessed in the candidates' own time, the use of electronic authenticity checkers is particularly useful. However, only one centre was using plagiarism software for the marketing units. It is hoped that the use of electronic checkers will grow in future.

There was a general improvement in the standard of candidates' referencing compared to previous years. A few centres required candidates to use Harvard referencing, but most candidate referencing consisted of a simple list of sources. A continuing recommendation is for open-book work to have more resources allocated to help improve referencing skills.

All assessment evidence reviewed was generated under the conditions set in the Unit Specifications.

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

All centres provided evidence that candidates' work was being accurately and consistently judged by their assessors.

The outcomes in Marketing: An Introduction require a substantial written response by the candidates, and it has been common for there to be a poor pass rate on first attempts. It is disappointing that most centres are still experiencing a high level of redo/rework. This obviously adds to the workload of both candidate and assessor, so it is hoped that centres consider strategies to improve candidates' performance in this unit.

Normally assessors provided assessment feedback to candidates on a checklist or on the scripts (and in many cases both). Generally, the level of assessor feedback has improved, but the amount of feedback was variable. Sometimes it was very detailed and would help candidates improve their responses, while on other occasions it was very basic and of limited use.

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

All centres have a retention/data processing policy, and all verified this year provided the evidence and records as required by SQA. Most centres retain candidate evidence for a longer period than required by SQA. Retention periods vary and depending on whether there has been an appeal against an assessment decision.

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

Centres were able to clearly demonstrate that they have a process in place to ensure the dissemination of feedback from external verification activity. Most centres provided evidence that showed distribution of qualification verification reports by the SQA co-ordinator and minutes of team meetings where the reports were discussed. Some centres had review of reports as an agenda item on their pre-delivery checklist. Some good examples contained actions being set to help improve delivery and assessment in the next academic session. Overall, qualification verification reports were made available as required, and areas of good practice and recommendations distributed.

Areas of good practice report by qualification verifiers

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

♦ Comprehensive and detailed CPD records provided by the assessor and the internal verifier.
♦ Excellent use of the Assessor's Summary Report to identify areas that candidates find challenging in their assessments, as well as suggestions on ways to help candidates improve their performance moving forward.
♦ Excellent post-delivery assessor and IV reports with good analysis and comments.
♦ Excellent communication between the assessor and internal verifier with many meetings to discuss student progress, learning support and after class tutorials.

- The use of double marking of candidate scripts as part of the standardisation process.
- Excellent feedback comments to assessor by the internal verifier in the sampling and feedback report, particularly useful for a new assessor.
- Good use of learning materials, PowerPoints, videos, chat groups and case studies to support learning prior to assessment.
- Extremely detailed marking scheme being used to ensure the consistency and equitability in relation to marking candidates' work.
- Excellent assessor feedback to candidates both on individual assessment sheets and on the candidates' scripts.
- Good use of Harvard referencing by candidates.
- The regular use of questioning of candidates to authenticate candidates' own work.
- The use of plagiarism software to ensure candidates' own work.
- The use of individual progress review and feedback records for tutorials following assessment of candidates

Specific areas for development

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

- It is recommended that CPD records should cover professional development activities for at least the previous 12 months.
- CPD relating to the marketing industry, and specifically digital marketing, would be recommended to make sure that knowledge of current industry practice is up to date.
- The centre should provide greater detail of internal verification procedures when submitting evidence.
- A candidate result checklist with the class results should always be submitted with the verification evidence. This helps the IV and EV to select a representative sample of candidate work/assessor decisions to verify. It also provides a convenient way of identifying the overall pass rate.
- A copy of the centre's internal verification procedures should always be submitted with the unit evidence.
- The IV sampling record should show the candidate names and any relevant comments by the IV about the assessor's decisions.
- It is recommended that the sampling record form is redesigned to provided information about pass/fail, re-work and re-assessments.
- Future sampling should be representative rather than random, to ensure that a cross section of candidate results/assessor decisions are internally verified.
- The centre's record of sampling and feedback form should be used as this has the provision for candidate names to be listed and for internal verifiers to provide comments about the assessor's judgement (if appropriate) against each candidate.

- The internal verifier's report and feedback to the assessor would benefit from a greater level of analysis and discussion about candidate performance and suggestions for improvement.
- Candidates should be encouraged to provide referencing/list of sources when completing open book assessments.
- The centre should consider adopting plagiarism software for open book assessments.
- The centre should consider possible strategies to improve the candidate first attempt pass rates. (This refers to the unit, Marketing: An Introduction.)