Access to HE Diploma
Standardisation Report 2020-21

Engineering, Maths and Physics
26th January 2021, 2.00pm-4.00pm

Online via Teams

Attendance:

Six delegates from four providers attended:

Chris Bell	Sunderland College
Stefania Istrat	Newcastle City Learning
Jeff Marsay	Sunderland College
David Meek	Sunderland College
Stephen Roddam	Redcar and Cleveland College
Dan Still	Middlesbrough College

There was one external moderator: Dan Still

The facilitator was Dave Pickersgill (One Awards Diploma Moderator).

Apologies: Mark Stokell Sunderland College

Aims and Objectives of the event:

Aim: To provide opportunities for those involved in the assessment and/or moderation of the Access to HE Diploma to increase their understanding of assessment requirements, and to compare their assessment judgements with others delivering and/or moderating units in the same subject area.

Objectives:

To undertake activities which enable participants to:

1. Compare assessment judgements in relation to student achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
2. Compare assessment judgements in relation to student achievement of grade indicators.
3. Explore and confirm QAA and One Awards requirements for assessment.

Samples of student work chosen for the event:

Unit title: Chemical Science – RA1/3/AA/05G – 16 structured questions

Unit title: Mechanical Science – XH1/3/AA/01G – 5 structured questions

The associated learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptor components were provided on separate sheets. The assignment briefs were not provided but a summary of the tasks were available.

Summary of feedback from delegates and moderators

Sample 1: Chemical Science (RA1/3/AA/05G) 16 structured questions

Achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/ borderline/fail
	For all assessments, it is good practice: (i) for questions to clearly indicate which assessment criteria is assessed. (ii) to use command verbs, as in the AC.	
1.1(a)	Questions 1 and 2 provide information on 1.1(a). However, does the question ask the learner to 'explain' as required by the AC? Question 4 does require an explanation.	All achieved except 1.(d) as no opportunity to achieve was provided.
1.1 (b)	This is probably covered in question 9. However, more detail could be requested in the question. Question 9 specifies a word count of maximum 500 words. Does this allow the student a sufficient number fo words to meet the AC? There was some discussion regarding word counts. It was felt that a range should always be given, not a simple maximum.	
1.1 (c)	Questions 5, 6 and 9 assess this AC. However, it would be preferable for question 5 to use the word, 'explain' as commented on above.	
1.1(d)	Questions 7 and 8 partially assess this AC. Question 8 could include a request for more explanation. It was felt that this AC was not fully assessed by the questions posed.	
2.1(a)	Assessed on question 9.	
2.1(b)	Assessed on questions 11 and 12.	
2.1(c)	Assessed on question 9.	

	It was felt that AC 2.1(c) could be extended to include melting.	
2.1(d)	Assessed on questions 13 and16.	
2.1(e)	Assessed on question 14.	

Grading judgements using GD components

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision
1a	The majority of the work was felt to be at a merit level: some questions provide detailed merit responses. For example, question 4 provided an adequate, but not 'Distinction' level explanation. Many areas for development and opportunities to expand explanations were noted. It was also noted that the word count limit could have caused the student to not provide full explanations. Overall it was felt that the sample should be graded as a Merit. There was a very good grasp of the material but not excellent.	Merit
7a	The questions are answered, as requested, with consistently logical and fluent responses. The student should refer directly to the diagrams and references within their text. This would be mentioned in the assignment brief. It was also felt that this was not the best GD to use for structured questions.	Distinction

Sample 2 – Mechanical Science – XH1/3/AA/01G – 5 structured questions

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision
2.1	Achieved on question 1, 2. Question 2 includes an incorrect use of SI units. 8.0kN should be written as: 8.0 kN.	All achieved. There are examples of the incorrect use of SI

2.2	Achieved on question 1, 2.	units in the answers to questions 1-4. This is the same error as in question 2.
3.1	Achieved on question 3.	
5.1	Achieved on question 4.	
5.2	Achieved on question 5.	

Grading judgements using GD components

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision
1a	The layout is excellent, maths is accurate, and the explanations are clear. It was felt that the use, by the student, of Φ for diameter was incorrect. D should be substituted.	Distinction
3a	This GD is incorrectly written. GD3 should include GD3a and/or GD3b with GD3c This assignment only has GD3a.	Distinction
7c	Referring to question two, if SI units are written incorrectly in a question, is it acceptable to penalise a student for making the same error in their response?	Merit

Outcomes from discussion Covid-19 disruption

The facilitator led a discussion on the Covid-19 disruption. This was in line with the continuing theme of contingency planning following on from last year's theme. The following key points were raised:

- Many students are forced to work at home because of (i) children isolating (ii) childcare issues (carer is ill or self-isolating).
- Few students are attending regular classes, but many are taking part in remote classes.
- Students are missing practical and laboratory work. Some providers are rescheduling such classes towards the end of the academic year in the anticipation that it will be possible to deliver such classes at that time. They are also anticipating the need to request unit adjustments in the near future. One

provider is planning the Summer provision of a short unaccredited 'Engineering Laboratory Skills' course before students move to their progression route.

- Several providers have a dongle/student laptop loan scheme in place. This provides hardware to students who otherwise might struggle to purchase such devices.

- A range of IT applications are in use. For conferencing these include: CANVAS conference, Google classroom, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. In addition, VLEs are heavily used to provide learning material.

- Some novel teaching techniques are now in place. For example: one tutor has taken a Whiteboard home and is both teaching live and recording short demonstration videos which are then accessed electronically.

- The increase in remote learning is leading to more independent students, a good preparation for Higher Education. However, this lack of contact has caused more retention issues than in the past. It was felt that those students who have been retained will remain until the end of their course.

Agreed recommendations from the event

1. Chemical Science – RA1/3/AA/05G: One Awards should consider extending AC 2.1(c) to read '(c) melting and boiling points.'
2. Assessment questions should clearly indicate which AC is assessed.
3. If possible, assessments should utilise command verbs, as used in the AC.
4. If word counts are provided in assessments, they should provide a range (for example 450 words ± 10%), not a maximum, or minimum.
5. It is good practice to use assistance/support when writing assignments. This could be from colleagues or using One Awards sample assignment briefs https://www.oneawards.org.uk/access-to-he/ahe-info-providers/ahe-guidance-resources/ahe-assignment-briefs/
6. SI units should always be correctly written in assessment material.
7. Ensure that Grade Descriptors are correctly utilised. For example, GD3 must include 'and/or b with c.' If this is not achieved, QAA regulations are not met.
8. Providers are requested to be pro-active in suggesting suitable samples for use in standardisation events. These could be signposted at sampling visits or in interaction with Lead Moderators.

Date report written: 27th January 2021

Name of facilitator: Dave Pickersgill