Access to HE Diploma Standardisation Report 2018-19

Health, including Biology

22nd November 2018, 9.30am-12.30pm, One Awards, Peterlee

Attendance:

9 delegates from 8 providers attended.

Abby Gilbert	Calderdale College
Claire Lowe	Calderdale College
Elaine Allcock	Darlington College
Robyn Cairney	Hartlepool College
Julia Meredith	Middlesbrough College
Ros Henderson	Newcastle City Learning
Michelle Kelso	Redcar and Cleveland College
Susan Gooding	Stockton Riverside College
Mel Cassap	Sunderland College

In addition, there was 1 external moderator, Angela Ince

The facilitator was Sue Scheilling, One Awards Lead Moderator.

Apologies: Marie Andrews, Stockton Riverside 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:

Sample 1: Human Biology – Project

Sample 2: Values and Practice in Care and Development – Report

The associated learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptor components were provided on separate sheets. The assignment briefs were not provided.

Summary of feedback from delegates and moderators

Sample 1: Human Biology – Project

Achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/ borderline/fail
2.1	Role of the system is explained	Achieved
2.2	The relationship between structure and function is included	Achieved
2.3	Discussion on the command verb (analysis). Some delegates considered this had not been met. There was some concern about the use of this term in this context. Following discussion some delegates thought it could have been 'just met' at level 3. Delegates considered that the wording of this AC needed to be reviewed to avoid misunderstanding for students and assessors.	There was no consensus
3.1	This was considered possibly borderline. Function was thought to be addressed but not structure of micro and macromolecules.	Borderline
3.2	Most delegates considered this AC was not met. One or two thought it could possibly be a borderline pass. The command verb analysis, again, seemed to be the issue.	Fail
4.1	This explanation was not supported with examples and considered unmet.	Fail
4.2	Expected example to maintain homeostasis was not included.	Fail

Grading judgements using GD components

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators *Delegates were asked to consider GDs following a successful hypothetical resubmission of missing ACs*	Consensus decision Pass/Merit/ Distinction/ Borderline
1	The work was, generally, informed by major areas of study.	M
2	Components a and c made it difficult to consider higher grades	P
7	The quality was good and choice of component (a) logical and fluent indicated a high grade. An interesting discussion on this judgement ensued, related to the demands of the brief. However, delegates considered that this component was met.	D

Sample 2: Values and Practice in Care and Development - Report

AC	Comments from delegates and moderators	Consensus decision Pass/ borderline/fail
2.1	Considered rather brief and one or two delegates considered it was a borderline achievement.	Achieved
2.2	Analysis considered brief and some delegates considered it missing. Descriptive work only related to legislation.	Consensus not achieved
2.3	Lacking an explanation of the importance of codes on care. One delegate considered it was brief but possibly met. The majority considered it not met.	Generally, not achieved but no consensus.

Grading judgements using GD components

GD	Comments from delegates and moderators *The same hypothetical scenario was used to consider grades following successful resubmission.*	Consensus decision Pass/Merit/ Distinction/ Borderline
2	Delegates considered that both GDs would only achieve Pass grades. Insight was thought to be lacking (component c)	Pass
7	One delegate would have considered a merit for this GD if the resubmissions had continued the 'flow' of the submitted work.	Pass/ Merit

Outcomes from discussion on Draft Assignments

The facilitator lead a discussion on the policy and practice of providers in relation to allowing draft assignments. The following key points were raised.

This item generated a great deal of discussion:
- All but 2 delegates had a 'no drafts' policy
- One provider had implemented a draft policy for this year but the delegate was not yet clear how it would work
- One provider was in the process of reviewing the policy with a view to implementing some form of draft submission process.

Problems related to drafts:
- predominantly associated with work load. Large numbers of students, number of assessments and time available in what is an intensive programme.
- The issue of drafts not being appropriate preparation for HE as many Universities don't offer this facility.
- Some practical issues related to defining the 'line' in relation to drafts and avoiding grade polishing, opportunities for students to access more tutors and the differences experienced, providing evidence of the amount and nature of feedback given and monitoring it.

Problems related to not allowing drafts.
- It Influences the number of resubmissions required and the grade achievement. This could influence retention. Much discussion around issues of fairness – if drafts are not allowed other processes introduced to assist students may result in unfair and unmonitored practice.
- Generally, delegates considered drafts could be useful particularly for first assignments in a unit. They could help to nudge students to address aspects of academic writing which was inappropriate in some way and possibly avoid resubmissions due to a small part of the assignment having been omitted.

Support for students with their assessments.
A variety of approaches were described:
- Value of formative assessment, use of the ungraded units to underpin academic development – the assessment strategy related to ungraded units was seen as being key in this regard.
- Several delegates used 'workshops' where students could explore their assignments with tutors.
- Classroom time spent with whole groups unpicking command verbs and ACs for assignments.
- Use of checklists a week prior to submission dates.
- Tutorials following return of work to ensure feedback is fully understood prior to next assignment submission. Some approaches involved other members of College staff e.g. progress coaches, specific skills tutors etc.

The major issues in providing this support included lack of standardisation, different tutors may use different approaches. Student expectations influenced by the differences. All delegates were adamant that it would be totally unacceptable to alter students work or tell them what to put into the assignment.

Policy review
As there were 2 delegates with experience of 'policy change' we explored the reasons this had taken place. Issues identified were conflict amongst members of staff regarding practice in relation to fairness and standardisation. Also mentioned was feedback from students related to perceived experience of 'unfairness' in practice. All delegates agreed that these issues would stimulate a review of practice and potential policy change. Other drivers to reviewing policy change were identified as, findings from analysis of grade profiles and the opportunity to explore issues at standardisation events, such as the one they were currently attending. All delegates agreed that the major factor in bringing about policy change was management support.

Agreed recommendations from the event

1. The use of the term 'analysis' needs to be carefully used in ACs, especially in the Science subjects.

2. Where analysis is used students need to better understand what this means in terms of the work they submit.

3. Component choice for GDs needs to be carefully linked to the nature of the assessment task. Asking for evidence of specific skills e.g. insight may not be appropriate.

4.It could be useful to unpick GD 7 and its components to ensure consensus on understanding of how the quality issue relates to what the student submits not just how it is presented.

5. A review of the support provided for students with their assignments needs to be carried out to ensure transparency, standardisation, monitoring and fairness for students.

Date report written: 25th November

Name of facilitator: Sue Scheilling