



NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Administration & IT
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2015

National Courses/Units verified:

Round 2 is for verification of the National 4 Added Value Unit (AVU), Unit code: H201. All centres are reminded that this is the focus of this round and that other Units or other levels should not to be submitted.

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres that were verified used approaches that were deemed valid. All centres accurately and consistently used SQA Unit assessment support packs (UASPs).

Across the centres sampled at external verification all three packs were used: Island Secondary School, Youth Beat and Eagle Eye. No one AVU pack proved significantly more popular than the others. Some centres had also used a second pack for re-assessment effectively.

Generally, candidate evidence was well presented, tasks clearly labelled, and assessment approaches included. All centres are reminded to include the actual instrument of assessment (assessment tasks) and corresponding judging evidence table along with their candidate evidence.

Assessment judgements

It was clear from the evidence submitted that many centres displayed a lack of thorough checking of candidate evidence. Many centres had missed numerous issues on candidate evidence that should have been identified. This could have been for a number of reasons, such as time pressures on assessors, large numbers of candidates sitting the one level, etc. However, no circumstances can justify errors in tasks consistently not identified by assessors in candidate evidence. Assessors must ensure that candidates sitting the Added Value Unit are only recorded as a pass if they meet the standard for National 4.

It is in the best interest of all centres to note the advice given below.

Check candidate evidence thoroughly for keyboarding errors

Error tolerance

As noted in previous Verification Key Messages, any keyboarding or spacing errors should be identified on candidate printouts. Many centres had not identified all the errors in candidate evidence — and some had not identified any. Assessors should underline every keyboarding, spacing or layout error within a task. These must be counted and the candidate should only be recorded as a pass if the candidate is within the tolerance for that task. Most centres need more diligence in checking evidence to accurately record candidates as a pass or fail for each Assessment Standard. The error tolerance for National 4 is one error for every 15 words.

Errors can appear anywhere in the task. Errors that are included within the tolerance are typos, minor layout errors (reference and date in wrong place) and spacing errors (eg one return between paragraphs, inconsistent spacing in a report). There is flexibility over layouts but a sensible business layout should be used.

However, if information is a key piece of information then a typo would result in the document not being fit for purpose, and therefore the candidate would not achieve the Assessment Standard. For example, if the cost of the trip in the task was £49, but the candidate keyed in £94, although this is a typo, it does in fact communicate inaccurate information, and results in the document not being fit for purpose.

Keyboarding errors were most commonly missed on word processing, desktop publishing and e-mail tasks. Common errors not identified by assessors were:

- ◆ inconsistent date formats within a task (see Dates section below)
- ◆ inappropriate/inconsistent time formats within a task (see Time section below)
- ◆ formatting punctuation
- ◆ inappropriate punctuation
- ◆ confusion between a dash and a hyphen (this counts as one error across the task)

- ◆ inconsistent capitalisation (this counts as one error across the task)
- ◆ no space after a colon (this counts as one error throughout the task)
- ◆ the task number included in titles/headings, eg in the database report title, chart title

It is critical all errors are identified by the assessor to ensure the assessor can correctly judge if the candidate is within the error tolerance or not so that the candidate is correctly recorded as a pass or fail for the Assessment Standard.

Following the task instructions

A number of assessors missed errors where the candidate had not followed the instructions in the task. For example:

- ◆ in Island Secondary School where five raffle prizes are entered into the database, many assessors missed the error where candidates had not changed the 'Prize donated' field for each prize from 'No' to 'Yes'
- ◆ incorrect formula for max and min (formula including the total rather than just the range of cells the max and min is to be calculated from)
- ◆ adding graphics — this requires a minimum of two graphics (see Graphics section)
- ◆ not e-mailing two people when the task specifically asks for this
- ◆ creating a business card but not including the telephone number
- ◆ not adding a specific paragraph or sentence to a document

Again, it is critical for assessors to identify all errors to ensure they correctly judge if the candidate has passed or failed the Assessment Standard.

Time formats

The table below lists acceptable time formats:

1000 hours	1000 hrs	10 am	10am
10:00 hours	10.00 hrs	10.00 am	10.00am
Do not accept a.m. or p.m.			

Consistency within a task is essential. If candidates have more than one format within a task, this should be underlined and counted as one error.

If the e-file to be used by candidates includes a time, the format of this time should be continued throughout the task.

Graphics

If a task asks for graphics, a minimum of two graphics should be evident. If two graphics are not evident then the candidate has not achieved the Assessment Standard. Options for graphics are shown below:

Clip art	Photographs
Scanned drawings	Word art
Watermarks	Borders
Graphic(s) must not be clipped by the margin or cover any data	

Dates

If a task requires a date, candidates must **always** include the year, and although there is flexibility over the format of the date (see below), there must be consistency of format within a task. If not, this is to be counted as one error. Acceptable date formats are listed below:

7 May 2015	07/05/2015
7th May 2015	May 7 2015
7/5/15	
Do not accept 'the 7th of May 2015'	

E-diary entries

As mentioned in previous Verification Key Messages, if the printout of the view requested in the task truncates recorded event(s), then extra printouts of the event(s) must be provided, so that accurate keyboarding and exact times can be checked. A screenshot is also acceptable as long as it is clear from the screenshot that an e-diary has been used.

For an all-day event, candidates must use the 'all day' facility in their e-diary. Recording the event from 8 am to 5 pm is not correct for an all-day event. Candidates that do not use the 'all day' facility should not be recorded as a pass for the corresponding Assessment Standard.

E-mail: misuse of 'cc' section

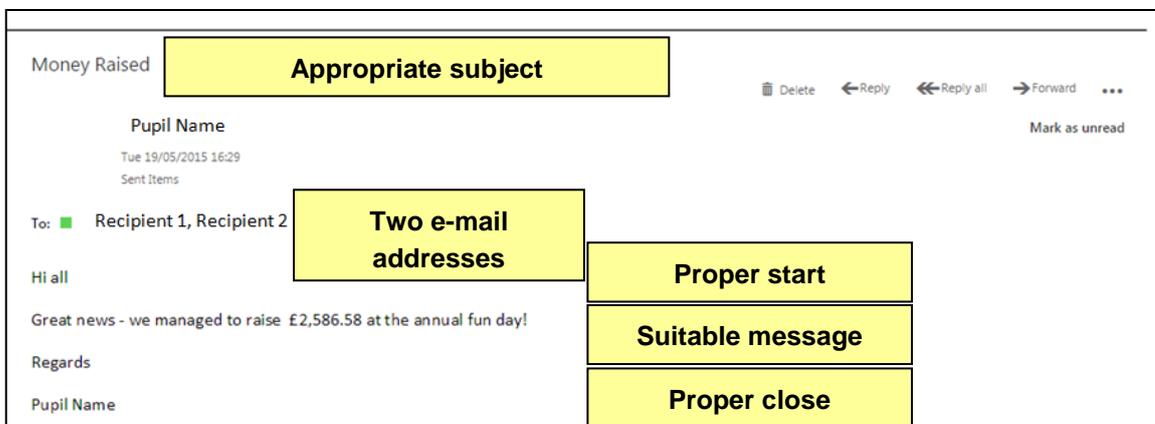
Many candidates are incorrectly using the 'cc' section. This facility should only be used when sending a copy of the e-mail to a person. If the task does not indicate that a copy is to be sent, then no e-mail address should appear in the 'cc' section.

E-mail: lack of structure

All e-mails should have:

- ◆ a subject (some modern business systems automatically filter out e-mails which have no subject heading)
- ◆ a proper start
- ◆ a sensible, relevant main message
- ◆ a proper close

Candidates should only pass AVU Assessment Standard 1.3 if they have followed this structure. Many centres are accepting e-mails that have no start or close. An example of an acceptable e-mail is given below (any personal information has been replaced):



Many candidates also had inappropriate punctuation in their e-mail, with the use of commas at the end of the start and close. This is to be counted as one error.

E-mail: addresses 'bouncing' back

Centres should double-check the e-mail printout to ensure the e-mail address(es) used are correct. If an e-mail address 'bounces' back or there is an error in place of the e-mail address then the candidate has not sent the e-mail; therefore the candidate has not achieved the Assessment Standard.

Original e-mails

Printed e-mails should be the original e-mail and not a forwarded e-mail.

Document size

Candidates are expected to create documents that are fit for purpose and this includes document size. In each AVU pack, candidates create a range of desktop publishing documents including business cards, posters, name badges and tickets. The document submitted should be a sensible size for that particular document. Business cards, name badges and tickets filling a full A4 page are not fit for purpose and should not be accepted.

Fonts/formats

In desktop publishing tasks, candidates are often asked to use a variety of fonts and formats. Candidates should not achieve a pass for the corresponding Assessment Standard unless there are a minimum of two different fonts and two different formats. Formatting options include:

Size	Bold	Centring
Underline	Italics	Borders
Shading	Colour	Justification
Bullet points	Right alignment	

Only formats added to a document should be counted. Any formatting already present in the e-file used should not be counted.

Presentation tasks

Centres must note, either on the candidate printout or on an observation checklist, whether candidates have applied animation and transition to their presentations.

Task order

Although grouping tasks that relate to the same Assessment Standard together indicates the centre has a firm understanding of the requirements of the Assessment Standard, for external verification purposes it is best to keep tasks in the order of the assessment tool.

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Section 3: General comments

The standard of checking candidate evidence was much higher in Round 1. We would encourage centres to maintain these standards, read the Assessment Standards carefully, check evidence thoroughly against these standards, and take on board the advice in this report — together with any recommendations given to them in their External Verification Report, if they were verified.

Verification documentation

All centres are reminded that the column for 'pass' or 'fail' on the Candidate Sample Form should be completed with the assessor's assessment judgement. There are only two options for this column — pass or fail. This column is to record the overall final assessment judgement for the evidence that has been included for each candidate. It is not a final judgement on their passing or failing the whole Unit. Recording 'Interim' in this column is not an option. It is just 'pass' or 'fail'.

Internal verification — internal quality assurance

Most centres cross-checked candidate evidence using different coloured pens and most provided a short narrative detailing assessment judgement discussions between the assessor and internal verifier, clearly highlighting the agreed final outcome, if there was disagreement. Most centres also included their internal verification policy which is important: it demonstrates good practice and assists the verification team in understanding how internal verification has been actioned in the centre.

However, the common theme was that both the assessor and the internal verifier missed keyboarding and instruction errors. It is essential that any internal verification procedure is as effective as possible. Our advice to both parties is to try to be diligent in their checking of candidate evidence and to fully understand what qualifies as an error.

SQA has produced an Internal Verification Toolkit which provides great advice and support on designing and implementing the best model and approach to internal verification depending on your subject, centre and candidate needs. It can be found at: www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

Local authority nominee(s)

All centres are encouraged to get in contact with their local authority nominee(s) for extra help, advice and support. Nominees have been well trained by the Understanding Standards team and are a valuable resource in your authority for centres to make use of.