



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Administration & IT
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H27Y	National 3	Administration in Action
H1YW	National 4	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YV	National 5	Administrative Practices
H1YW	National 5	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	National 5	Communication in Administration
H4KB	Higher	Administrative Theory and Practice
H1YW	Higher	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	Higher	Communication in Administration

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres used SQA Unit assessment support packs (UASPs), with Package 1, the Unit-by-Unit approach, being more commonly used; however more centres used Pack 3 compared to last year. All centres accurately and consistently used the UASPs.

Generally candidate evidence was well presented, tasks clearly labelled, and assessment approaches included. Centres are advised to use the most up-to-date version of both the UASP and its accompanying e-files. Centres must highlight the version of the UASP used (eg 1.2 or 1.1). The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from SQA Secure.

Another common approach evident at external verification was the use of tasks from other UASPs to re-assess candidates on specific Assessment Standards. This helped ensure re-assessment and judgements were clear.

Assessment judgements

Generally centres were making assessment judgements in line with national standards and the quality of judgements has improved from Round 1 last year. Candidates also appeared well-prepared for Unit assessment, with more candidates meeting the Assessment Standards than last year. However, there are a few points worth noting to ensure all centres follow best practice:

Check candidate evidence thoroughly for keyboarding errors

The error tolerance for each level is:

National 3:	1 error for every 10 words
National 4:	1 error for every 15 words
National 5:	1 error for every 20 words
Higher:	1 error for every 25 words

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

However, if a key piece of information includes a typing error which would result in the document not being fit for purpose, 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 typing error, it does in fact communicate inaccurate information and results in the document not being fit for purpose.

As noted in previous Key Messages Reports, any keyboarding errors should be identified on the candidate's printout. A few centres had not identified any or all of the errors on candidate evidence. Assessors should underline every typing, spacing or layout error within a task.

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

- ◆ formatting punctuation
- ◆ inappropriate punctuation
- ◆ inconsistent capitalisation (this counts as one error across the task)

Centres need to be diligent in checking candidate evidence for errors. It is critical that all errors are identified and counted by the assessor, to ensure the candidate has not exceeded the error tolerance for the task. This will allow the assessor to correctly judge whether or not the candidate has met the Assessment Standard.

E-mail

Misuse of 'CC' function

A few candidates incorrectly used the 'cc' function. 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. If candidates are asked to e-mail two people, then two e-mail addresses should be added to the 'To' address box.

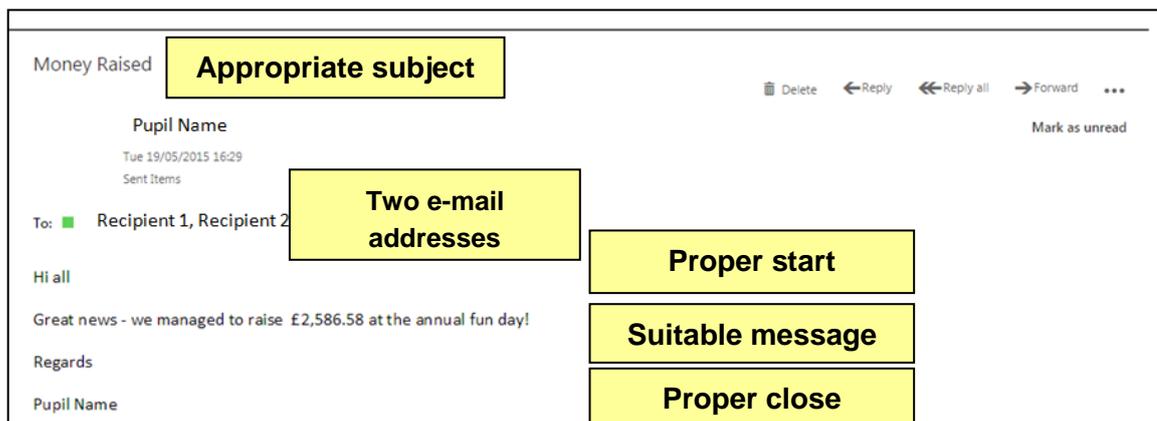
E-mail structure

All e-mails should have:

- ◆ a subject (some business systems automatically filter out e-mails which have no subject heading)
- ◆ a proper start, eg 'Hi' or 'Hello'
- ◆ a sensible, relevant main message
- ◆ a proper close, eg 'Thanks' or 'Regards'

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.

See the layout below:



A few candidates structured their e-mail like a letter (Dear Sir/Madam and Yours faithfully). This is not appropriate for e-mail communication.

National 5 Administrative Practices Unit

Generally, candidate responses for Outcome 1 (Provide an account of administration in the workplace) achieved the minimum competency, however, there were a number of candidates who did not. These candidates provided an

identification but the Assessment Standard required a description. If a candidate has not described when the Assessment Standard specifically requires a description, then the candidate has not met the Assessment Standard.

The table below gives examples of candidate responses for Assessment Standard 1.1 (Describing the tasks, skills and qualities of an administrative assistant). The first column represents responses that are basic identification and therefore not acceptable in meeting the Assessment Standard. The second column represents responses that would be acceptable as descriptions and therefore would meet the Assessment Standard:

Identify	Describe
Answering the phone.	An Administrative Assistant will answer the phone politely at all times and deal with any enquiries.
Using databases.	An Administrative Assistant will create and update databases containing records about employees, customers or even suppliers.
Good communication skills.	An Administrative Assistant must have good communication skills. They will contact people on a daily basis in person, through e-mail and over the phone.
Well organised.	An Administrative Assistant will need to be organised as they will be dealing with lots of information and need to be able to make sure they can find it again at a later date.

For Assessment Standards 1.3 and 1.4, candidates are also expected to describe, this time describing the responsibilities of the organisation.

The table below gives examples of candidate responses for Assessment Standard 1.4 (Describing the key organisational responsibilities in terms of the security of people, property and information). The first column represents responses that are basic identification for the security of property and therefore not acceptable in contributing towards the achievement of Assessment Standard 1.4. The second column represents responses for the security of property that would be acceptable as descriptions and are therefore acceptable in contributing towards the achievement of Assessment Standard 1.4:

Identify	Describe
Lockers for employees.	Provide lockers or lockable drawers for employees to keep their personal items in.
Lock doors at the end of the day.	Have a policy that staff should lock their offices at the end of the day or employ security staff to check all rooms are locked at night.

Please note that if a candidate describes CCTV for the security of property and then they also describe it for the security of people, then this second occurrence of CCTV cannot be used to achieve Assessment Standard 1.4.

Higher IT solutions

A few candidates did not change the font in a query or a table of contents to the same font as the rest of the document. In mail merge letters, often the mail merge fields were a different font or different size. Inconsistent fonts in a letter, report and minutes should be counted as a presentation error. All presentation errors (eg inconsistent font, inconsistent line spacing, inappropriate page breaks) count as one error within the error tolerance for each task.

Some centres accepted pivot tables for Package 1 that did not provide all the required information. The task asks candidates to:

'Create a pivot table that summarises the total number of items of furniture and equipment that need to be purchased per room.'

Therefore the candidate's pivot table must at least show the total number of items of furniture and equipment per room otherwise they have not met the Assessment Standard.

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Section 3: General comments

It was clear that most centres had made a concerted effort to ensure the standards had been consistently applied and they are to be commended for this. We would continue to encourage centres to maintain standards by reading the Assessment Standards carefully, checking work thoroughly against these standards and taking on board any recommendations given in the External Verification Report, if they have been verified.

Verification documentation

The vast majority of centres completed and included all the documentation required for external verification:

- ◆ Verification Sample Form
- ◆ The assessment task and judging evidence table
- ◆ Candidate evidence
- ◆ A checklist of candidates and the assessor's assessment judgement for each Assessment Standard
- ◆ Internal Verification/Quality Assurance Policy
- ◆ Evidence of the internal verification actually being carried out