

NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Classical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H21N 73	National 3	Life in Classical Greece
H21P 73	National 3	Classical Literature
H21S 73	National 3	Life in the Roman World
H21N 75	National 5	Life in Classical Greece
H21P 75	National 5	Classical Literature
H21N 76	Higher	Life in Classical Greece
H21P 76	Higher	Classical Literature
H7WP 77	Advanced Higher	Social Aspects of the Classical World
H7WR 77	Advanced Higher	Researching Classical Studies Issues

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

A wide and welcome range of assessments was provided. This displayed, in general, a careful and effective use of Unit assessment support pack materials, often with a slight variation to suit local choice of theme covered in *Life in Classical Greece*, or text covered in the *Classical Literature* element. The spirit of each package was, however, maintained.

A number of centres had provided centre-developed material with varying degrees of reliability.

Material seen at National 3 had been imaginatively developed.

Most centres adopted Unit-by-Unit assessment packages. Use of the H21 N/P/S Package 2 Combined approach to Assessment Standard was also seen.

Recommendations

Where centres decide to develop their own assessment pack it would perhaps be to their advantage to make use, as previously recommended, of SQA's prior verification service.

While most centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of Unit assessment from the published literature, there was clearly a misunderstanding, at Advanced Higher, of the requirement for assessment of the 'researching' element (*H7WW 77 Researching Classical Studies Issues (Advanced Higher)*): the process is being assessed/verified, not the product.

While the use of marks is not excluded from the process of deciding upon pass/fail, centres are reminded that expectation of performance beyond pass/fail may be inclined to bring pressure and adversely affect candidate achievement. When assessment is allied to 'exam type' evidence, centres are reminded that Unit assessment is not to be affected by time restrictions. This is expressed in the Unit assessment support pack literature. In similar consideration, candidates should be 'supported throughout the process' — which is difficult to achieve in an 'exam type' setting.

Assessment judgements

Most centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard. However, it would be advisable for centres to note the recommendations below.

Where internal verification had been in evidence there was generally a clear path of support for making judgements in an agreed manner.

Recommendations

At Higher, *H21P 76 Life in Classical Greece (Higher)*, ensure that Assessment Standard 1.2, specifically '...at least two developed points about each of a similarity and a difference...' is clearly conveyed to the candidates.

For responses in *H21S 76 Life in the Roman World (Higher)*, the above comment could usefully be considered and applied.

A clear indication of an acceptable response, by means of a tick or indication that an Assessment Standard has been met, eg AS 1.3, is recommended to display where judgements have been made. This would aid both internal and external verification.

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Section 3: General comments

Material provided for verification was clearly documented in most cases. Centres are reminded that where Unit assessment support packs have been adapted, or centres have developed their own assessment, all columns of the judging evidence table (where this approach is used) should be populated. This clearly indicates the standard and responses that the centres are expecting candidates to meet.

Centres which develop their own assessment packages, particularly at Higher and Advanced Higher, might be advised to include in column 4 (Assessment for candidates...) of the judging evidence table a phrase such as 'any other valid point' which would allow for a wider expanse of candidate response rather than an (almost) prescribed expectation.

In most cases there was clear evidence of a process of internal verification of assessment. Centres are reminded that to offer SQA qualifications an effective internal quality assurance system must be in place to ensure that all candidates are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently to national standards. Centres can refer to the Internal Verification Toolkit available at www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

Centres using a combined approach to Assessment Standards were able to display opportunity for personalisation and choice and much of the evidence submitted had been produced during the learning and teaching process with success and clear candidate involvement.