



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 2

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Computing Science
Verification event/visiting information	National 4 Added Value Unit — event National 5/Higher/Advanced Higher IACCA — visiting
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National Courses/Units verified:

H227 74	National 4	Added value unit
	National 5	Internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA)
	Higher	Internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA)
	AH	Project

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres had used an SQA produced assignment.

Centres should ensure that they are using the latest version of the assignment and that they have prepared any required files for the candidates in advance, as specified in the 'guidance for assessors' section of the assignment.

Some centres had created electronic pro-formas for candidates to use. This is acceptable so long as the electronic versions are **identical** to the paper versions — any deviation from this could affect the level of demand of the task and render the assessment invalid.

Assessment judgements

National 4

In the design of the database structure, the data types should be those that are mentioned on page 16 of the National 4 Course Support Notes — ie text, number, date, time, graphic, calculated.

Candidates must have evidence to show that they have met the assessment standards. For example, in Games Design, evidence would include screenshots of webpages and scoreboards. Evidence must also be of a reasonable size to read.

Design should be in an appropriate graphical or contemporary design notation.

The design of the user interface must show both the input and output.

National 5 and Higher

Assessors are reminded to check the 'Guidance on appropriate support from assessor' section in the assignments, and to reflect any assistance given in the marks awarded, along with a comment in the assessment record to explain this.

It is important that assessors use the criteria for a stage being complete and then assign it to the correct banding:

- ◆ If the evidence almost matches the level above, the highest available mark from the range should be awarded.
- ◆ If the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from the range should be awarded.
- ◆ If neither of the above is appropriate, then a mark from the middle of the range should be awarded.

A mark of 9 can only be obtained when a candidate has everything complete for that stage, allowing for a very slight error.

Candidates should not have marks deducted for having additional material within their solution. Marking should always be positive.

Stage 1 Analysing the problem

Assessors must only award marks relative to the 'Analysing the problem' stage.

The analysis stage must be marked for the assignment as a whole and not marked separately for the program and information system.

Stage 2 Building a solution (modular program design)

The design of the user interface must be annotated and include both inputs and outputs.

It is not necessary for candidates to provide more than one method of contemporary design notation.

SQA Reference Language (Haggis) should not be used as a design notation. Higher only: Data flow should show the variables that are to be inputted and outputted to subprograms. There is no requirement to use program-specific instructions such as 'by ref' and 'by value'. A number of candidates made the mistake of thinking that the data inputted and outputted from the program should be shown in the data flow.

Stage 2 Building a solution (modular program development)

Assessors should be careful not to mark 'internal commentary' too harshly. If the major steps of the program are internally commented on, that is sufficient.

Candidates must ensure they provide evidence of all their testing.

Stage 2 Building a solution (Information system design)

Validation, such as restricted choice and lookup of data from other tables, needs to be clearly stated. For example, it is not sufficient to say 'restricted choice' without stating what the choice is restricted to.

Candidates can show the design of their queries in any way that is appropriate, but they cannot screenshot the implementation of the query as evidence of design.

Stage 2 Building a solution (Information system development)

Many candidates did not ensure that they had evidence of all the requirements for this stage.

Assessors should ensure that the candidates have the candidate checklist and remind them to use it.

Stage 3 Reporting on the solution

Only one legal implication **or** one security implication is required; it is not necessary to have one of each.

Advanced Higher

Assessors must ensure that the marking reflects the evidence that a candidate submits.

Candidates must have detailed evidence for all stages of the project.

It is important to stress to the candidates that the Record of Progress and reflective commentary must be continually updated.

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Section 3: General comments

The majority of assessors have now gained confidence in the marking system used for the internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA) and are marking appropriately.

Assessors should feel free to add comments on candidates' completed assignments to explain how they arrived at their decisions on the banding. This not only helps the assessor come to their decision, but is also helpful to both the internal and external verifier.

The comments made by the assessors regarding the reasoning for their marks were invaluable to the verification process.