NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 1

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	ESOL
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

Unit code	Level	Unit title
HA1R 72	National 2	ESOL: Preparation for Literacy
H997 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life — Listening and Speaking
H998 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life — Reading and Writing
H24H 73	National 3	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24H 74	National 4	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 74	National 4	ESOL in Context
H24H 75	SCQF level 5	ESOL for Everyday Life

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Overall, centres submitted approaches to assessment making good use of the unit assessment support packs.

Some assessors and internal verifiers had paid close attention to previous verification key messages reports for ESOL and practitioners had benefitted from accessing assessment Understanding Standards materials available on the SQA Secure website.

Generally, candidates undertaking the new *Preparation for Literacy* unit at National 2 were appropriately entered for this unit and, as a result of clear oral instructions from the assessor to the candidates, demonstrated a good understanding of how to complete the assessment tasks.

Across the levels verified, for outcome 1, reading, and outcome 3, listening, there was evidence that assessors had clarified candidates' responses by checking orally, which is good practice. Assessors should note this on the assessment task, or on the candidate assessment record or similar document.

Speaking

Mostly, candidate evidence was well organised and included clearly identified audio recordings of high quality for outcome 4 at National 3, 4 and 5.

In one centre, at National 2, the documentation that was used to record candidates' evidence for speaking did not reference the evidence against the assessment standards. As stated in unit assessment support packs, assessors may use any appropriate method of recording candidates' achievement and evidence, but this must be clearly referenced against the outcomes and assessment standards of the unit.

In the case of assessment by observation or oral questioning, evidence should include assessors' comments and other relevant evidence that shows clearly the basis on which assessment judgements have been made. Written records of assessors' comments assure reliability and support both assessors and candidates. In a few instances, for speaking assessment, no audio or video recording of the conversations, detailed observation notes, or a completed assessment checklist showing details of candidate responses, was provided.

In one centre, candidates appeared to have completed the same speaking assessment twice. The 'Common questions' document on the [SQA ESOL web page](#) states that: 'Preparation time is not a time to rehearse the conversation with their partner but to prepare their thoughts on their own.' It is not appropriate for candidates to do the same speaking assessment task more than once as they have then had an opportunity to rehearse the interaction.

In one recording provided as evidence, the speaking assessment had been conducted almost as two separate presentations on each bullet point, rather than an interaction. This approach does not allow candidates the opportunity to meet assessment standard 4.3, maintaining interaction as appropriate.

For one candidate at National 4 level, the speaking assessment lasted less than 3 minutes and the candidate was not able to produce sufficient evidence in this time to show that they had met all the assessment standards.

Listening

In the evidence submitted by one centre assessing National 3 outcomes 3 and 4, listening and speaking, the assessor took on the role of interlocutor very effectively and the result was a good example of a well-balanced conversation. For assessment standard 3.2, identifying clearly expressed opinions, the assessor provided a second recording of the candidate answering an additional question based on the opinions expressed by the interlocutor to ensure that this assessment standard had been fully met. By only re-assessing one aspect of the

task related to this outcome, the centre clearly demonstrated that it had fully applied and implemented the principles of Curriculum for Excellence in its approach to re-assessment.

In another centre, candidates had been allowed to listen to the listening text three times. The guidance in the unit assessment support pack is that candidates should normally listen to the recordings twice. Assessors should exercise professional judgement if candidates are unable to meet the assessment standards by listening to the text twice. Assessors should consider re-assessment of the assessment standards that have not been met.

Reading

Overall, the approach taken by most centres to the assessment and re-assessment of outcome 1, reading, was both valid and accepted.

In one centre the approach taken allowed a candidate to be re-assessed by answering a 'True/False' option question a second time. It states in the assessment conditions that assessors should use their professional judgement to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used. Checking orally or a re-assessment of a question with only two options to choose from does not generate more evidence to meet the assessment standards.

Writing

It was clear from the evidence provided that most centres verified are using the drafting process correctly and in a way that supports candidates.

In one centre, there was no evidence provided to show that candidates were allowed the opportunity to redraft their written work; while in another centre, candidates who had passed the outcome in their first draft were still required to produce a second draft and final written text. The unit assessment support packs state that candidates can produce a maximum of two drafts of each written text and then check the draft and produce a final written text. The original draft(s), including any notes and comments from the assessor and the final version may be kept as evidence for verification purposes. Detailed guidance regarding the drafting process can be found in the ESOL Common questions document.

Assessment judgements

In most centres verified, there was no doubt that the assessors had an excellent grasp of the assessment standards. The assessment judgements were in line with national standards, clearly based on the assessment standards and these centres demonstrated the basis on which the assessment judgements were made.

In some centres, not all assessment judgements were in line with national standards. For example, the assessment evidence submitted for some candidates was insufficient to support the assessor judgement of 'Pass' for units.

Writing

For outcome 2, writing, some centres had used the drafting process very effectively and made appropriate judgements against the assessment standards at each stage. Clear and appropriate feedback was given to candidates at each stage and this resulted in consistent and reliable judgements.

For the National 2 Everyday Life unit, one centre did not provide evidence that the candidates had met assessment standards 2.1, 2.2 or 2.3, but judged all candidates' responses as passes. There was no evidence to show that the candidates had applied the rules of upper and lower case accurately, had used basic grammar, spelling and punctuation sufficiently accurately to convey meaning, or had used basic conventions of layout as appropriate. When judging candidate evidence, assessors must relate their judgements to the assessment standards.

Reading and listening

For outcome 1, reading, and outcome 3, listening, most centres had made good use of the judging evidence tables and combined this with professional judgement against the assessment standards, accepting candidate responses that clearly met the standards.

In the assessment of reading, the assessor should check orally a candidate's answer if they appear to have just lifted a sentence or a number of words from the text. For some questions on the assessment task sheet it states that the candidate should answer the question in no more than two words. Where answers provided for these types of questions go beyond the stated word limit, assessors should re-assess by checking orally which of the words in the original answer the candidate would keep to stay within the word limit and note this on the assessment task or on the candidate assessment record or similar document.

03 ▸ Section 3: General comments

Some centres used the assessment task sheet, candidate assessment record or similar document effectively by adding clear comments about assessment judgements made. These comments also identified candidates' areas of strength and areas for development. This practice not only supports the assessment process, it supports candidates and informs further learning and teaching.

Some centres clearly demonstrated that they had fully applied and implemented the Curriculum for Excellence principles in the approach to assessment by only re-assessing required assessment standards within the outcomes.

Centres should not include practice materials in the evidence submitted. Similarly, centres should not use unit assessment support tasks for learning and teaching practice as this may limit the materials available for re-assessment.

Where a centre-produced assessment has been used, a judging evidence table or equivalent document — and for outcome 3, listening, a copy of the recording

or transcript of the recording used — should be included to show how the assessment standards can be met. This document also assures reliability and supports assessors.

Candidates should be instructed to avoid the use of pencil and complete final written texts in ink only.

For further guidance on assessment judgements, centres are encouraged to make use of the Understanding Standards packs available on the SQA Secure website.

Internal verification

It is clear that that the internal verification process adopted by some centres is thorough, detailed and highly effective. Some centres had made use of the recording documents from the SQA Internal Verification Toolkit and submitted these.

In a few cases where the internal verifier was not based in the same centre, good links between centres had been developed to support internal verification and documented professional dialogue between the assessor and internal verifier promoted consistency of standards.

The sufficiency and quality of evidence of internal verification processes submitted by centres varied greatly. There were excellent examples which fully demonstrated that it was a supportive and useful process with limited and appropriate paperwork. There were a few examples where paperwork was so limited it was difficult to establish that internal verification had supported the internal assessment process. A few centres had not submitted any evidence of internal verification.

As well as ensuring national standards are maintained, internal verification should ensure that assessors are fully supported throughout internal assessment. Internal verifiers and assessors may find the SQA Internal Verification Toolkit useful to ensure national standards are maintained, assessors are supported and paperwork is not excessive.

The Toolkit is a suggested approach and SQA recognises that many centres will have well developed processes in place.

Evidence of internal verification must be submitted along with the candidate evidence for external verification.

Prior verification

Centres are strongly advised to submit centre-produced assessments for prior verification if these differ significantly from the unit assessment support packs. This should be requested before assessments are used with candidates.

Submitting centre-produced assessment materials for prior verification assures that these materials allow candidates to meet the minimum assessment standards and can be used as an extra resource. Further information regarding prior verification can be found in Prior Verification Service for National Qualifications: Guide for Centres.

If a centre has used a prior verified assessment, the verification certificate should be included with material submitted for external verification. Further information can be found on the Delivery Processes and Information for Centres web page.

Verification Sample Form

It is important that this is completed correctly with reference to 'Pass/Fail'. This does not reflect candidates' final unit results, just the evidence submitted for verification at that point in time. This is explained at the bottom of the form and in the following examples:

♦ If you have submitted evidence for three outcomes and the candidate has passed two but failed one, you should insert 'Fail' on the Verification Sample Form. This does not reflect the completed unit result but only the evidence supplied for verification.

♦ If you have submitted evidence for one outcome and the candidate has passed that outcome, you should insert 'Pass' for that candidate even though they have not yet completed the unit.