

NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	ESOL
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2015

National Courses/Units verified:

H24H 73	National 3	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24H 74	National 4	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 74	National 5	ESOL in Context
H24H 75	National 5	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 75	Higher	ESOL in Context
H24H 76	Higher	ESOL for Everyday Life

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment

Overall, centres had submitted approaches to assessment making good use of the Unit assessment support packs or adapting and producing assessments that took account of guidelines in these. It was clear that some centres had paid close attention to ESOL Key Messages reports from last session and practitioners had benefitted from support from nominees and attending NQ ESOL CPD events held last session.

The majority of centres had used the Unit assessment support packs effectively to assess their candidates (available on SQA's secure site).

A few centres had adapted Unit assessment support packs or produced assessments to suit the needs of their candidates and allow for personalisation and choice. For example:

- ◆ A centre-produced assessment for National 4, Outcome 2, Writing, was submitted. The topic and context were relevant for the ESOL in Context Unit and the task appropriate for the specific candidates.

For Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, centres had applied the guidance in the judging evidence tables to ensure that candidates had met each Assessment Standard.

Some centres had re-assessed their candidates by devising additional questions on the text to re-assess an Assessment Standard that had not been met. This approach can, in most cases, be applied to Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, and is good practice.

There was a good example of an appropriately adapted candidate assessment record which included a column for comments by the internal verifier. It clearly showed which Assessment Standards were referred to, provided clear information for the assessor, supported feedback to candidates, and facilitated the external verification process.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment

The assessments and judging evidence table, column 4, in the Unit assessment support packs can be adapted to facilitate personalisation and choice but it should be noted that only column 4 in the judging evidence table can be changed. Columns 1, 2 and 3 must not be changed.

If centres have produced an assessment task, both the task and the information on judging evidence should be submitted.

A few Outcome 2, Writing, assessments used by centres required more detail in terms of scaffolding to provide an appropriate level of challenge for candidates at both National 5 and Higher. For example:

- ◆ A task was used from the Scholar Higher ESOL programme as an assessment. The task was an appropriate topic and context for Higher. However, there was not enough scaffolding in the task to allow candidates to demonstrate control of an appropriate range of detailed and complex language to achieve the task effectively.
- ◆ A task was used based on a NAB for Outcome 2, writing, and although the topic and context were appropriate, bullet points from the original task had been omitted which meant that the task was not complex enough to produce the range of language required at Higher level.

When making use of tasks from other sources or naturally occurring evidence, assessors and internal verifiers should ensure that the challenge presented by the assessment is sufficient to allow the candidate to demonstrate control of an appropriate range of language at that level.

For centre-produced assessments, the free prior verification service can be used. See Section 3, General Comments below for further information.

At all levels, there was some candidate evidence submitted for Outcome 2, writing, where candidates had been given too much support in the drafting process. Specific errors, particularly in relation to meeting Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2 had not only been identified but the assessor had either suggested the type of changes to be made or had actually corrected the errors. Use of the drafting process is good practice but assessors and internal verifiers must implement this effectively to ensure candidates receive sufficient but not excessive support between drafts. Candidates can produce a maximum of two drafts and a final version. The process should follow the guidelines below:

- 1 Candidate produces first draft of writing task (or a piece of writing produced independently by the candidate during the learning and teaching process).
- 2 If the writing is deemed to have met all Assessment Standards at that level, the assessor should not make corrections on the candidate's work but clearly identify it as a pass, either on the work or on a candidate assessment record. Candidates should be given feedback that relates to the Assessment Standards.
- 3 If the first draft of the writing is not deemed to have met all Assessment Standards **at that level**, the assessor should **underline only** errors that require to be corrected in order for the candidate to meet the Assessment Standards at that level. Candidates should be given feedback that relates to the Assessment Standards they have met and not met. This can be recorded at the end of the writing or on a candidate assessment record.
- 4 The candidate then produces a second draft, taking account of the feedback on the Assessment Standards and where possible, identifying and correcting errors based on **underlining only**. The process above in 2 and 3 is then applied to this piece of writing.
- 5 The final version, whether this is the first, second or final attempt, can then be word processed by the candidate showing no further changes.

For the purposes of external verification, the **final version and any drafts** must be submitted. These should clearly show a progression which is the candidate's own work.

For Outcome 4, speaking, candidates should be paired appropriately, where possible, so that one candidate does not dominate the conversation. When explaining and clarifying the task, assessors should inform candidates that it should be a natural and balanced conversation and that dominating the conversation and not responding to their partner's questions and comments could disadvantage them in terms of meeting the Assessment Standards. This was evident in some conversations in relation to maintaining the conversation, as appropriate, Assessment Standard 4.3.

Where the assessment task or the preparation for the assessment task involves group activity, centres should ensure that candidates are individually able to provide evidence that they have met the Assessment Standards.

Assessment judgements

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements

Overall, assessment judgements at each level were in line with national standards. It was clear that most centres had paid close attention to guidance in the Unit assessment support packs and ESOL Key Messages reports from last session. Practitioners also had benefitted from Understanding Standards packs on SQA's secure site, support from nominees, and attendance at NQ ESOL CPD events held last session.

For Outcome 1, reading and Outcome 3, listening, some 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.

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 Outcome 4, speaking, most candidates had been well prepared and conversations were balanced. This enabled assessors and internal verifiers to make consistent and reliable judgements.

Candidates had been clearly identified on the recordings for Outcome 4, speaking, which supported the verification process.

Some centres had made effective use of the candidate assessment record to show the basis on which judgements had been made and to provide useful feedback to candidates which clearly related to the Assessment Standards.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements

For Outcome 2, writing, Assessment Standard 2.1 and 2.2, some assessors and internal verifiers appear to be demanding a higher level of accuracy than required at the level being assessed. This can be seen from the number of drafts being submitted and the type of errors identified during the drafting process. Assessors should keep in mind that a first or second draft may meet all the Assessment Standards.

For Outcome 2, writing, a few centres had failed candidates on their first draft. Candidates should be given the opportunity to redraft their work to meet the Assessment Standards as described in Approaches to Assessment above. For Outcome 2, writing, Assessment Standard 2.3, which relates to style and layout at each level, assessors and internal verifiers should ensure that style as well as layout is addressed when assessing candidates' writing. The style of

writing required by the task, eg formal, informal, essay, report etc should clearly meet the Assessment Standard.

For Outcome 2, writing, assessors should clearly indicate on the candidate evidence whether it is a first draft, second draft or final version. If a candidate has been judged on their first or second draft this should be noted in the candidate assessment record.

When judging evidence for Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, centres should pay close attention to the judging evidence table, in particular where there are alternative answers. Professional judgement should also be applied where a candidate may have provided a slightly different response to that in column 4 which also meets the Assessment Standards. This could be added to column 4 and/or recorded on the candidate's assessment record.

For centre-produced assessments, a judging evidence table or similar document must also be produced to ensure consistent and reliable judgements are made. If the centre is selected for external verification, this document must also be submitted.

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Section 3: General comments

Internal verification

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 extensive or 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.

Evidence for external verification of Units

Centres should refer closely to guidance provided by SQA about the sample and evidence to be submitted.

In Round 1 a sample of three levels, where possible, was requested which had to include Higher if the centre had entries for Higher. The centre could select the other two levels.

The guidance on submitting a minimum of one Assessment Standard is only applicable if candidates have only completed one Assessment Standard/Outcome. The centre should send evidence for all assessment judgements made in the candidate assessment record or similar document.

External verification reports aim to provide detailed feedback to centres on assessment approaches and judgements. Limited feedback can be provided if the centre only submits one or two Outcomes, especially if these are the receptive skills, Outcome 1, reading and Outcome 3, listening. Where possible, centres should submit evidence for as many of the Outcomes as possible in order to receive feedback on both receptive and productive skills.

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.

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.