

NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H24H 76	Higher	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24H 75	National 5	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 75	National 5	ESOL in Context
H24H 74	National 4	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 74	National 4	ESOL in Context
H997 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Listening and Speaking
H998 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Reading and Writing

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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 (UASPs). Some centres applied and implemented Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) principles in their approach to assessment by using adapted and centre-produced approaches to assessment that took account of the Assessment Standards and guidelines in the UASPs.

The majority of assessors and internal verifiers had paid close attention to previous Verification Key Messages reports for ESOL and practitioners had benefitted from support from nominees, attending NQ ESOL continuing professional development events, and from accessing assessment Understanding Standards materials available on the SQA Secure website.

From the evidence provided, it is clear that almost all centres have embedded the practice of underlining errors in the drafting stage. The drafting process is clearly outlined in ESOL Verification Key Messages (October 2015).

Most centres had provided evidence of the drafting stage for Outcome 2, writing; while some also provided appropriate feedback to candidates based upon the Assessment Standards.

For Outcome 2, writing, a few centres provided post-assessment feedback to candidates identifying next steps. This is not only good practice and supportive of candidates, but supportive of learning and teaching in line with the principles of CfE.

For Outcome 4, speaking, it was clear that some centres had provided candidates with appropriate practice of taking part in discussions and giving presentations while being recorded on audio/video during learning and teaching. These candidates were relaxed and confident in their approach to the assessment. Prior to a candidate's performance, most centres identified clearly the candidate, level, Unit and the UASP used on the recording.

For Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, where re-assessment was required, rather than re-assess a complete Outcome most centres implemented good practice and only re-assessed Assessment Standards that had not been met.

This is the first session for the new National 2 ESOL Units and centres had made use of the UASPs combining skills to assess candidates effectively.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment

The UASPs for ESOL set out one possible assessment approach. These can also be adapted for your own context or used to help you develop your own assessments. Centres are encouraged to adapt the assessments and to use alternative approaches to facilitate personalisation and choice. Candidates can also produce evidence during learning and teaching, taking into account any assessment conditions.

For centre-produced assessments or adapted UASPs, which are significantly different, the free prior verification service can be used to ensure they are valid.

If a UASP approach is being used, it should be the most up-to-date version published on the SQA Secure site. Information about updates to NQ ESOL UASPs can be found in the documents 'Languages National 3 to National 5 Notification of Changes' and 'Languages Higher Notification of Changes' on the [National Qualifications — Notification of Changes web page](#).

When using a combined approach to assessment, centres should endeavour to use a candidate assessment record or similar document which reflects this

approach to clarify the Outcomes and Assessment Standards met for each Unit. There are example candidate assessment records contained within each UASP.

Both audio and video evidence for assessment of Outcome 4, speaking, are appropriate but video evidence has been found to assist the assessment judgement process, especially with regards to Assessment Standard 4.3, maintaining interaction as appropriate.

For Outcome 4, speaking, candidates should be encouraged to focus on the assessment task from the outset and avoid at all costs a staged/rehearsed interaction; in general, candidates should be made familiar with appropriate strategies to conclude speaking assessments.

For Outcome 2, writing, if the candidate is unable to meet all of the Assessment Standards in their final version, following the drafting process, a new assessment task should be used to re-assess the candidate.

For Outcome 4, speaking, if a conversation/discussion is the approach to assessment and the candidate does not meet all of the Assessment Standards, they should be re-assessed using a new task.

An [ESOL Common Questions document](#), which contains information on approaches to assessment, was made available in October 2015.

Assessment judgements

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements

Most centres' assessment judgements were in line with national standards, reliable and accepted.

Where centres had made use of UASPs, assessors had made effective use of the information on judging evidence to support assessment judgements for each candidate. On the whole, assessment judgements were clearly based on the Assessment Standards and candidates had been appropriately identified as pass or fail against these. From the evidence submitted, it was clear that most assessors have accurately and consistently applied the Assessment Standards and they not only have an excellent grasp of the standards, but are striving to ensure that candidates produce professional, high quality work.

For Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, some assessors had shown good professional judgement in accepting answers synonymous with those provided in the UASP judging evidence tables and provided useful notes on the candidate assessment record to explain how assessment judgements were reached.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements

For Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, there was some good evidence that assessors were clarifying candidates' responses by checking orally, which is good practice. Assessors should note this has been done on the assessment task, on the candidate assessment record or equivalent document.

For Outcome 2, writing, while specification of errors and suggestions for development is good practice in learning and teaching, when making assessment judgements, assessors should not add comment upon candidate evidence other than clarifying for candidates which Assessment Standards were met, or not met, before the final draft.

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.

For Outcome 2, writing, at all levels Assessment Standard 2.3 refers to style and layout as appropriate. Conventions of layout for an e-mail can vary greatly and there may be a tendency to use a less formal style which can be appropriate and can allow the candidate to meet the Assessment Standard. For example, an e-mail invitation may have a number of different layouts but must achieve the purpose in conveying that it is an invitation.

For Outcome 4, at National 5, while judgements were mainly in line with national standards in relation to Assessment Standard 4.1, Using detailed structures and vocabulary, assessors should ensure that candidates also demonstrate use of detailed structures appropriate to the level. This guidance also applies to Higher Assessment Standard 4.1, Using detailed and complex structures and vocabulary as appropriate.

Understanding Standards packs are available on the SQA Secure site, which provide examples of candidate evidence with commentaries on the Assessment Standards that have been met/not met.

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Section 3: General comments

Internal verification

The majority of centres had submitted evidence of internal verification and in most cases this had been effective in both supporting the assessor and in ensuring approaches to assessment were valid and assessment judgements were reliable and in line with national standards.

A few centres had submitted an unnecessary amount of documentation for this which showed some duplication of evidence. Where possible, centres should review the processes and paperwork to ensure that activities are being recorded in the most efficient and effective way without placing undue demand on assessors or internal verifiers to duplicate information.

As well as ensuring national standards are maintained, internal verification should ensure that assessors are fully supported through the process of internal assessment. Internal verifiers and assessors may find the suggested approach in the [SQA Internal Verification Toolkit](#) useful to ensure national standards are maintained, assessors are supported and paperwork is not excessive.

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.