



NQ Verification 2013/14 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	English
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2014

National Courses/Units verified:

English National 3, 4 and 5

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Overall, centres should be commended for the approaches to learning and teaching taken and the attention to detail in assessing candidates' work. Some centres provided some wonderful examples of candidates' assessment material, including posters used during talks, records of discussion and thorough notes about questions asked as part of the Added Value Unit assessment.

There was a great deal of evidence to show the astonishing amount of work that has gone into making sure that candidates have covered all of the Outcomes, while also studying a huge range of texts. There were some very inventive responses to the Added Value Unit assessment, including some where candidates had demonstrated a real enthusiasm for the topic they had studied. Centres actively engaged with the new assessments by linking assessment approaches, assessing naturally-occurring evidence and allowing greater independence to candidates.

Assessment approaches

Analysis and Evaluation/Understanding Language

Outcome 1 — reading

Some centres had applied marks to Outcome 1 assessments, and while this may be helpful in preparing candidates for the external examination at National 5, this is not helpful in assessing whether candidates have achieved the Assessment Standards required for internal assessment. Centres are reminded that candidates are only required to achieve the Assessment Standards for internal assessment and focusing on marks can often lead to an incorrect assessment judgement by centres.

There were still some instances of centres submitting critical essays as evidence for Outcome 1 (reading). Centres are reminded that the assessment of Outcome 1 should be based on previously unseen texts.

The majority of centres were clear about re-assessment of candidates, although there was some evidence of centres who had offered re-assessment of Outcome 1 using the same assessment piece. Centres are reminded that once a piece has been assessed and feedback has been given to the candidate, a new assessment should be used for re-assessment. It was pleasing to see, however, that almost all centres were aware that for re-assessment candidates only needed to be re-assessed on the Assessment Standard they had failed to achieve, rather than the whole Outcome.

There was some evidence of assessment approaches which were too demanding and required candidates to achieve the Assessment Standards more than once. Centres are reminded that each Assessment Standard only needs to be achieved once in order for the candidate to achieve the Outcome.

Outcome 2 — listening

A small number of centres had misinterpreted the requirement for Assessment Standard 2.3, which asks candidates to 'identify and analyse various features of a speaker's use of language and its effect'. Centres are reminded that the focus for this Assessment Standard is on spoken language and not visual or aural media techniques, such as close-ups, camera angles, music and so on.

Added Value Unit

There were some instances where the approach to the Added Value Unit was driven by the assessor, rather than the candidate. Centres are reminded that the Added Value Unit assessment must feature the candidate's own choice of texts and should show evidence of personalisation and choice. Themes and ideas might come out of class teaching, but the spirit of the Added Value Unit is personalisation and choice and the independent application of skills. Candidates should demonstrate what they have learned, not what they have been taught.

Assessment judgements

Centres, where possible, should select evidence to demonstrate a range of assessment judgements: pass, borderline pass, borderline fail etc. There were a large number of centres who presented only clear passes.

There was some evidence of centres stating that candidates had passed when they had not achieved all of the Assessment Standards. Centres are reminded that all Assessment Standards need to be achieved in order for a candidate to achieve the Unit.

There was a lack of clarity from several centres in recording assessment judgements. For instance, some centres had recorded that candidates had passed on the flyleaf, but that they had failed on the actual assessment piece. Centres are reminded that, in order to verify assessment judgements, a clear statement of whether a candidate passes or fails must be recorded accurately. It is also helpful to record clearly where Assessment Standards have been achieved. Centres who demonstrated good practice made effective use of the 'judging evidence' tables to assess candidate performance against Assessment Standards.

Creation and Production/Producing Language

Outcome 2 — talking

There was a lack of consistency in how centres recorded where the Assessment Standards were achieved for Outcome 2 of the *Creation and Production* Unit. Centres are reminded that they must provide a detailed checklist with comments from the assessor in line with the Assessment Standards, or a recording of the candidate's talk. Simply providing a tick against the Assessment Standards does not provide enough evidence to ensure candidates have met the Assessment Standards.

Added Value Unit

There was some confusion about the assessment of candidates' evaluation of their researched texts. Some centres had been too restrictive in stating that the candidates must provide evidence for this in their final presentation. Centres are reminded that candidates can provide evidence for this element separately as is stated in the Unit: 'Candidates may provide evidence of their evaluation within the learning log, as part of a conversation or discussion or within the final presentation.'

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Section 3: General comments

A number of centres sent whole Units for verification. Centres are reminded that only one Outcome was required for this round of verification.

There was still some confusion surrounding the process of internal verification. For some centres, the importance of internal verification must be emphasised, as this process will help to pick up inconsistencies in assessment judgements and assessment approaches.

Many centres demonstrated effective internal verification approaches through cross-marking, sampling and providing commentary on assessment judgements.

On the other hand, some centres provided evidence of internal verification which was too onerous on the assessors. It is not necessary for every piece of work to be verified by several assessors — a sample is all that is required and this may be verified by one other assessor.