



NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

H27R 74	National 4	German: Understanding Language
H27S 74	National 4	German: Using Language
H27T 74	National 4	German: Added Value Unit
H27R 75	National 5	German: Understanding Language
H27S 75	National 5	German: Using Language
H27R 76	Higher	German: Understanding Language
H27S 76	Higher	German: Using Language

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres selected for verification were 'accepted'. This demonstrates that centres have followed guidelines and made use of the feedback and support provided by SQA in publication updates, the Key Message Reports and at events (for nominees and practitioners) during 2014–15. This is to be commended.

The majority of centres used the Unit assessment support packs (available SQA's secure site) to assess their candidates. Many centres successfully adapted these assessments to suit the needs of their candidates or to allow for personalisation and choice without affecting the Assessment Standards and Outcomes. It is important to note that amendments should not alter the mandatory Assessment Standards included in the judging evidence table and any amendments must only be reflected in the exemplification column (fourth column) of the table, where necessary. Centres should feel free to reformat the assessments provided in the Unit assessment support packs by slightly amending the questions, the texts or the layout to suit their candidates' needs

while maintaining the standards. Should the amendments to the texts or questions be minor, these would not require to be prior verified.

Centres should make sure they clearly indicate which Unit assessment support pack or prior verified assessment they have used, eg package 1, N5, Reading. It is recommended that one copy of the judging evidence table, the texts and transcripts (for listening tasks) are also included for the whole sample— there is no need to include one copy inside each candidate’s clear envelope.

When using Unit assessment support packs, it is important that centres use the most up-to-date online version. Centres have not been penalised for using older versions of the Unit assessment support packs, but they will be expected in future to use the most up-to-date version. Should a previous version be used, it would be helpful to the verifier if the centres included the corresponding version of the judging evidence table, text(s) and questions.

It is acceptable to add a glossary for vocabulary that might not be available in some editions of a dictionary. However, centres must ensure this does not provide an answer to any of the questions in the task.

Assessment judgements

A large majority of the assessment judgements made by assessors in centres were in line with national standards. Practitioners have made best use of the expertise already in place in centres or in clusters of centres. This is to be commended.

Centres should ensure that they submit documentation for each piece of evidence, clearly demonstrating how assessment judgements are made and clearly indicating a pass or fail for each Assessment Standard of the Outcome, eg an assessment Outcome record/commentary/checklist for each candidate.

Detailed commentaries about each candidate's performance are very useful for internal and external verification purposes. This could also be used as effective feedback for candidates.

Centres should amend judging evidence tables found in the Unit assessment support packs with a range of possible answers to demonstrate how assessment judgements are made for each Assessment Standard. Centres should merge in-house information on judging evidence with judging evidence tables to create one document to demonstrate how assessment judgements are made. Centre-devised information on judging evidence must be clearly referenced against each Assessment Standard.

Marks are not a feature of Unit assessment and there is therefore no ‘pass mark’. The inclusion of ‘marks out of’ will be disregarded for verification purposes.

It is important that centres have a consistent approach to assessing candidate evidence. For instance, if an explanation is expected to support the answer to the

overall purpose question, this should be clear in the question or it should be noted that this has been verbally explained to candidates and it should be noted in the judging evidence table. The same standard of answers should be expected from all candidates in the sample.

Many centres have clearly justified how they made their assessment judgements. Some centres noted each Assessment Standard next to each of the candidate's responses or on their written scripts as 1.2, 2.3 etc to evidence where candidates had addressed these Assessment Standards. This is good practice as it is very useful and appropriate for internal and external verification purposes. A couple of centres used a colour-coded approach, highlighting each response addressing an Assessment Standard in a different colour in the judging evidence table and then highlighting the candidates' scripts using this system. It was very clear where each Assessment Standard had been met.

Centres are reminded that at National 4, Assessment Standard 1.1 of the Understanding Language Unit is separate from and different to Assessment Standard 1.1 of the Added Value Unit. The correct Assessment Standard must be used when judging candidate evidence.

Similarly at National 4, Assessment Standards 1.3 and 1.4 of the Added Value Unit should be on the same topic as the reading texts used for Assessment Standards 1.1 and 1.2.

Centres are reminded that if a candidate does not respond correctly to the overall purpose question (Assessment Standard 1.1/2.1), the assessor can ask the candidate to explain their response orally. This could allow the candidate to justify their choice or change their choice **with justification**, and therefore possibly address this Assessment Standard. This conversation should be summed up on the candidate's script or individual record form. Following marking on a script by the assessor, a change of choice in the multiple-choice box **without justification** would not demonstrate that the candidate has understood the overall purpose of the text.

Centres should take a holistic and positive approach to marking candidate work. A candidate should be given credit for answers as long as they meet the Assessment Standards overall, regardless of whether they are necessarily in the correct place. For instance, if a candidate does not have the correct information in one question, but has it in another, they may still be able to demonstrate evidence of addressing an Assessment Standard by demonstrating understanding of main details etc. Equally, one answer from a candidate might address more than one Assessment Standard. This depends on the difficulty of the text the response relates to.

The judging evidence table in the Unit assessment support pack should be used as a guide: the answers listed in column four are only examples of how a candidate may address each Assessment Standard. It is recommended that centres populate the judging evidence table (column four) with a range of other possible answers that they have accepted.

Talking assessments

No centres submitted evidence for Talking for round 1. For future reference the following points are to be noted:

- ◆ For the assessment of talking in the Using Language Unit, there is no requirement to submit an audio recording of candidate work. If no audio recording is submitted, centres must submit a detailed checklist or commentary with **some** examples of what each candidate says referenced against each Assessment Standard for the Outcome.
- ◆ If a centre would like SQA to give more extensive feedback on the verification of a talking assessment, audio recordings would ensure a more detailed and accurate comment.

03

Section 3: General comments

Most centres submitted very clear and well-organised packages for verification, which is to be commended. This has been helpful to the verification process and has enabled useful feedback to be provided to centres.

Evidence

Centres should only send evidence at one level per candidate and should think carefully about how much evidence to send in to SQA for verification. For instance, if a candidate has failed a reading assessment, been re-assessed and passed the re-assessment, it is only necessary to send in the re-assessment.

Centres should use a separate Flyleaf and clear envelopes for each candidate.

When submitting evidence for a Unit, it is recommended that the same assessment task is submitted for all candidates being verified in the same Unit at the same level (ie six candidates being assessed in reading at National 4 with the same instrument of assessment rather than two or three different instruments of assessment).

Centres should refer to SQA guidance (via their SQA Co-ordinator) on how much evidence to submit for each candidate.

Verification Sample Forms

Only 12 candidates should be entered, with a maximum of two assessments per candidate, if they form a Unit (eg a reading assessment and a listening assessment completing the Understanding Language Unit) or if combined (eg a reading assessment and a writing assessment, not forming a Unit, but interim results across two Units).

It is important that the SQA Verification Sample Form is completed correctly and matches the information on candidate scripts and the Candidate Evidence Flyleaf. This is very important, as the judgement (pass/fail) entered on the

Verification Sample Form is what the verification exercise is based on, regardless of what is entered on the candidates' scripts or individual record forms.

Centres should arrange candidates in alphabetical order for each level and/or Unit on the Verification Sample Form, eg A to Z at National 3 reading, then A to Z at National 4 listening, then A to Z at National 5 writing. The order of the candidates' evidence must match the order on the Verification Sample Form.

The Unit code (eg H27R 74) and level code (eg 74) need to be clearly and correctly entered. You will find the list of Unit/level codes on page one of this document.

The pass/fail column should **only** be completed with 'pass' or 'fail' and should not be left blank.

If a centre submits complete evidence for a Unit, eg a reading and listening assessment for the Understanding Language Unit, then the pass/fail column on the Verification Sample Form should be completed to show the overall Outcome for the Unit, not for each individual assessment. A candidate needs to pass both a reading and a listening assessment to pass the entire Understanding Language Unit.

Some centres submitted 'complete' evidence (eg evidence of reading and listening), however, on the Verification Sample Form, they stated that the evidence submitted was interim.

No entry should be made in the 'nominee review' column.

The judgement entered on the Verification Sample Form is for verification purposes and is not necessarily final as there might be an opportunity for a candidate to be re-assessed at a later stage.

Candidate Evidence Flyleafs

Centres should enter:

- ◆ 'complete' when both elements for one Unit are included, eg when reading and listening for the Understanding Language Unit are enclosed — note that 'complete' does not necessarily mean final; a candidate could be re-assessed at a later stage
- ◆ 'interim' when a single element from a Unit is included; eg only the reading element of the Understanding Language Unit is included

Internal verification

There was extensive evidence of sound internal verification procedures, which is to be commended.

Evidence of internal verification could include a covering note explaining the process used (eg cross-marking, discussion on validity of centre-devised

assessments at meetings.) and a clear indication on the candidate scripts or on the candidate record form that the work was internally verified and the judgements agreed.

Some centres have spent a remarkable amount of time detailing their quality assurance procedures, which is to be commended.

The internal verification/quality assurance arrangements could be modelled on a whole centre system, rather than being developed for each subject to avoid duplication. Centres devising their internal verification procedures may find the SQA's verification toolkit helpful: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/71679.5825.html>.

Prelims

Prelims are not a recommended approach to Unit assessment as they have a formative goal, following the study of a specific topic/context. It is important that candidates are not disadvantaged by a 'dual purpose' approach, which does not take into account differences between reaching a competency level in a Unit assessment and undertaking a Course assessment. If this approach is selected, the centre would have to create clear links against each Assessment Standard in the judging evidence table. It is important that the overall purpose question used, either commercially or centre-devised, by its nature covers the whole text and not only a passage of the text.

Queries

Any queries/concerns should be sent to SQA via SQA Co-ordinators. They should not be included in any verification envelopes. The verification team, consisting of nominees and appointees, cannot respond to these as their role is to focus on the verification process.