



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Graphic Communication
Verification event/visiting information	Event/visiting
Date published:	June 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H27X 74	National 4	Added value unit
C735 75	National 5	Course assignment
C735 76	Higher	Course assignment
C735 77	Advanced Higher	Course project

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

At Advanced Higher, it was noted that many centres were allowing their candidates to take on too wide a brief and thus limiting the chances of their candidates achieving high quality work. The candidates then produced 'quantity rather than quality of work'.

Centres are encouraged to engage with the candidates at the outset of the Advanced Higher projects to ensure that realistic briefs are being set.

At National 4, National 5 and Higher, centres are becoming far more familiar with the assignments and embracing the creative nature of the work within them.

At National 4 and National 5 the most popular assignments are the USB and Aqua J tasks, whilst at Higher the Sports Reception Desk task and the Point of Sale task were most popular.

At Advanced Higher the most popular option was for candidates to choose a technical graphics approach over the commercial and visual media graphics approach to their project, with a very few centres opting for a combined approach.

Centres that opt for the combined approach must guard against students producing quantity over quality across the whole assignment and not just at the graphic solution stage.

Most candidates kept to the 10 page limit for National 5 and Higher, and the 20 page limit for Advanced Higher.

Assessment judgements

The assessment judgements for National 4 were found to be in line with the national standard and in many instances the work produced by candidates at National 4 was found to be equivalent to National 5 standard. Centres are reminded that for next session, 2016–17, they may use their own assessments for the added value unit if they so choose (although, they are encouraged to submit these for prior verification before using them with candidates).

Assessment judgements at National 5 were found to be very much in line with the national standard and verifiers identified many centres where candidates were producing high quality work. In the few centres where generous marking was identified it tended to be across the CAD production, desktop publishing and evaluation sections of the assignment.

At Higher level most centres assessment judgements were found to be in line with the national standard and it was apparent that centres have taken on board most of the advice issued previously for this level. Some centres are still permitting/marketing retrospective planning work such as tracing of CAD drawings etc. Centres are reminded that retrospective planning and tracing is **not permitted** at any level for any course assignment/project, and must not be awarded any marks.

Some candidates at Higher did not produce three different CAD modelling techniques and centres are reminded that not all three techniques are required in the model — some can appear in the scene. Some candidates whilst producing the three techniques did not do so at a level appropriate to Higher. There were still some instances of a candidate producing a 'block' type model for the reception desk then being awarded high to full marks for CAD modelling.

Centres are reminded that BS8888 is the standard to be applied to all CAD drawings and that technical detail should be relevant to the task in hand as many candidates had produced inappropriate sections, some stepped, possibly just because they could, or perhaps they thought that they should and were then awarded marks simply for creating the views.

Higher candidates are required to create a 3D scene as part of the promotional activity. In some cases the quality of illustration was below what should have been achieved. Materials and textures (bump-maps) were often in an incorrect orientation or scale, making the scenes unrealistic and ineffectual.

At Advanced Higher level centres were much less reliable with their assessment judgements, with almost all centres marking too generously across the whole project and not just in one particular area.

Analysis of the graphic brief and initial research

Candidates should specify their target audience clearly as not doing so will make it difficult to create an effective specification and/or a graphic solution. Some initial research did not focus sufficiently enough on the graphical requirements and had little relevance to the needs of the target audience.

Producing a graphic specification

Many of the specifications created by candidates were lists of tasks that the candidate will complete. A valid specification should detail the particular graphics that will be created for the audience and any specific features required.

Some were not founded on any documented research while others were found to be too vague to develop any meaningful graphic solution and there was no development of the specification to narrow down the solution achieved.

Typically, candidates did not include technical specifications that would be relevant to the development of a graphical solution. These technical specifications should have been identified within the initial research. Not including required technical specifications makes it challenging for candidates to proceed with the project.

Project planning

For many candidates the project planning made no reference to intermediate target setting. The candidate must demonstrate key targets, show how they will help achieve the requirements of the target specification and specify the resources that would be required at each stage.

The project plans were limited to a range of graphics to be produced, however these were not justified against the specification, or time taken.

Project plans had been created, however some candidates had not made any justification for varying or detouring from the plan. Varying from the plan is acceptable; however candidates should make a record of why they had to do so. Candidates may record this within the project or their record-of-progress, which was all too often missing or not evident.

Graphic planning and production

Carrying out and using ongoing research

Many candidates' ongoing research did not support the development of the graphic solution; there was insufficient justification for the research conducted

and how it contributed to the project. Some had little relevance to the needs of the target audience and did not reference sources within the research materials and/or it was insufficiently detailed to achieve either the development of a graphic solution.

In some cases no information or conclusions impacting the graphic solution could be drawn from the research.

Using preliminary graphic techniques to communicate ideas

In a large number of cases the preliminary graphic techniques were valid for creating a graphic solution; however the quality was substantially lower and showed more limited skill than would be expected at Advanced Higher for the mark awarded.

Producing a range of graphic ideas or concepts

Some candidates did not demonstrate a range of possible graphic solutions to satisfy the needs of their chosen target audience(s) and did not show any development of their idea — linked to ongoing research — that would allow the creation of a valid graphical solution or solutions.

Most candidates had not shown a range of ideas, or developed their initial proposal in a manner which would warrant the marks awarded.

Producing a graphic solution

Centres are reminded that for a combined approach they must assess the strongest element of the graphic solution: technical graphics or commercial and visual media graphics. It cannot be an aggregate of the two marks.

Generally the technical graphic solutions lacked significant details in terms of dimensions, scale, tolerances, and view types, required for the target audience.

The application of drawing standards was significantly weak for this level of presentation.

Commercial and visual media graphics solutions lacked significant details in terms of screen resolution, paper size, file types, colour palettes, bleed, crop or registration information. The target audience would require this information to produce this graphic type.

Some graphic solutions did not address the brief or specification and the overall quality of the graphical solution was insufficient to warrant the mark awarded at Advanced Higher level.

Planning a client presentation

Typically, the planning for the presentation did not reference how the graphic solution was suitable for the target audience and in many cases it was a presentation of the candidate's journey through the project which would only have been suitable for the assessor rather than the audience initially identified.

Some planning for the presentation did not reference the type of presentation that would be created: verbal, audio/video, public display or electronic — or reference the equipment or resources required to produce and present the presentation. This is a crucial decision during the planning process and should be recorded.

Producing a client presentation

Some presentations did not address the needs of the target audience. The candidate presented information that would have little relevance for the audience such as slides of the progress through the projects.

Some presentations lacked focus. A client presentation should address the specific requirements of that client and how the candidate has generated a solution.

Evaluating the solution and the process

Typically the evaluation did not reference how the graphic solution achieved the requirements of the target audience and did not evaluate the choices made and processes used during the project to create the graphic solution.

Some evaluations only described the tasks and process carried out by the candidate, not their effectiveness in delivering the desired outcome.

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Section 3: General comments

Whilst almost all centres had provided evidence of, and had engaged in, internal verification processes there were still instances of centres being found to be 'not accepted' at verification due to arithmetic errors in their sample of candidates. Centres are reminded to closely verify not only their judgements but also the arithmetic totals at all levels.

At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels, a significant number of centres had not rendered work at an appropriate resolution. This made work pixelated and diminished the quality of the material produced. Candidates at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher should be confident in setting their software to render at a sufficiently high resolution for printing (typically a minimum of 350 dpi at 1:1 scale printing).

Several centres have started using different equipment including hand-scanners and tablet computers to scan or capture work to create presentations. Embracing new technology is at the heart of the new Graphic Communication course, but it is important that scanned work does not lose any of the quality or detail of the original. If in doubt, it can be useful to retain a copy of the original manual work with the rest of the candidates' work. This copy material can be held for viewing and does not form part of the 10 page limit.

Centres should be mindful of the assessment conditions set out in the course assessment specification for the assignment (National 5 and Higher) and the project (Advanced Higher):

The assignment/project will be carried out under open book conditions, but supervised to ensure that the work presented is the learners' own work.

The assignment/project is designed to discriminate between learners, and therefore would be expected to provide a wide range of marks. Stronger learners should be able to complete the assignment successfully with minimal support and guidance. Weaker learners may not be able to complete all aspects of the assignment within a reasonable time, or may require significant assistance, and so would achieve a lower total mark.

*Once the assignment has been completed and assessed, it should **not** be returned to the learner for further work to improve their mark.*

A final point to note is that whilst the assessor may give learners support and guidance, where any significant amount of support is provided this should be reflected in the marks awarded. The learner may be provided with feedback to help them achieve the next stage of the assessment; they are not allowed to be re-assessed on stages already completed.