



NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Graphic Communication
Verification event/visiting information	Event and visiting
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National Courses/Units verified:

H27V 74	National 4	2D Graphic Communication
H27W 74	National 4	3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication
H27V 75	National 5	2D Graphic Communication
H27W 75	National 5	3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication
H27V 76	Higher	2D Graphic Communication
H27W 76	Higher	3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

In this first year of Higher Graphic Communication, and the second for National 4 and National 5, centres are beginning to adopt new approaches to assessment and the general quality of candidate responses is improving. Most centres in the verification sample had chosen to adapt an SQA Unit assessment support pack by amending assessment tasks and the accompanying judging evidence information.

Assessors appear more confident in recording judgements and in the majority of cases the results were presented clearly with evidence of internal verification. This made the process of verification much easier than in previous events.

Evidence of internal verification was not present in all samples. Internal verification is a compulsory process when offering SQA qualifications. SQA has provided a model approach to internal verification and this is available from SQA's website. Centres are welcome to devise their own processes that take account of local factors.

Some centres have bi-level classes. This is a challenging but necessary requirement for many smaller centres — with both National 5 and Higher candidates in the same teaching set. It is pleasing to see that several centres have taken advantage of the Unit assessments and given both National 5 and Higher candidates the same general task. This appears to have reduced the burden of assessment on centres and also helped raise the standard of National 5 candidate responses. Higher candidates are expected to demonstrate a deeper understanding and greater application of skills. In some instances, National 5 work was bordering on, or exceeding, that required at Higher. If centres choose this approach, it is important to note that Higher and N4/N5 have different Assessment Standards and these must be applied.

Some centres made similar errors to last year which can lead to a 'Not Accepted' decision. These included:

- ◆ Candidates who were entered at two or even three levels
- ◆ Conflicting results between the assessor and internal verifier with no clear indication of a final assessment judgement — a clear assessment judgement must be made
- ◆ Not indicating if the evidence in the sample is a pass or fail for a particular Assessment Standard — but just recording 'pass' or 'fail' as an overall mark on an assessment

Some centres had missed opportunities to reward candidates as having passed an Assessment Standard. Candidates are only required to demonstrate competency in an Outcome once for this to become accepted. In some instances the verification team would encounter assessment judgements on an item where the candidate had failed, but subsequent evidence in the sample could have been used to justify a pass.

It is clear that centres continue to work very hard to support the candidates and provide detailed feedback. Many samples of centre evidence contained this feedback to candidates and this proved useful to the verification team in understanding assessment judgements. Centres also annotated many of their judgements. Whilst these annotations can prove useful if the judgement is at odds with the evidence provided, in some cases the verifier would accept the judgement without such annotations being necessary. Assessors should only annotate if the judgement is not clear.

No centres provided centre-devised assessments for the Higher Units. This could be a consequence of centres wanting to ensure that they are delivering the Units correctly in this first year. It is hoped that more innovative approaches to assessment will be used as familiarity the Units and Course develops.

Some centres had created their own assessment activities for National 4 and National 5. None of these had been through the prior verification process. It is strongly recommended that centre-devised assessments are prior verified to ensure that the activity is valid and at the appropriate level. This is a free service provided by SQA and details can be found online. The tasks the verification team

encountered were well presented and appeared to be appealing to candidates — this would have contributed to the strong candidate responses and the ease in making assessment judgements.

There were notably more technical and production drawings being used for verification purposes. It may be that centres want to ensure they have met the standard in this area, especially when using 2D or 3D CAD to help create these graphic types. Where creative layouts or DTP had been done, it was well presented and demonstrated a better understanding than in previous years.

Assessment judgements

Assessment judgements were broadly in line with the national standard and it is apparent that assessors have worked hard to ensure fair and reliable judgements across all levels. Unlike previous verification events, some centres appeared too generous in their assessment of technical and production drawing — especially when candidates had created the drawings using CAD software. This was most apparent at Higher level, where drawings did not demonstrate the range of skills or depth of understanding in creating clear and effective 2D or pictorial graphics.

In some instances, centres had confused technical detail and assessed material against a standard from the wrong Unit. For instance, some centres were assessing an isometric exploded view as technical detail from the 2D Unit or a step-section from the 3D and pictorial graphics Unit. These are likely to be simple administration errors and will hopefully be addressed as assessors grow in confidence and experience.

Assessment judgements were more reliable for National 4 and National 5 than Higher; this is to be expected during this first year. However, the volume of assessment materials is still larger than it needs to be for both levels. Many Assessment Standards can be achieved on one item, with all Assessment Standards being covered in fewer than five or six A3 pages. It is expected that candidates should be able to generate evidence through teaching and learning activities and more structured assessment tasks. Some centres were submitting more than 10 items for only a handful of Assessment Standards. This represents a huge undertaking for both the learner and the assessor.

Centres should take credit for the great efforts made to make this first round of Higher verification a success and there appears to be improvements in the delivery of National 4 and 5 Units. There were a wide range of graphic responses generated by candidates and the verification team was impressed with the quality and scope of material generated — a sure sign that the teaching and learning is going well.

Sample composition

Verification took part in two formats, with both an event and visits to centres. The visits were undertaken by the Principal Verifier and the Senior Team Leader. Both event and visiting verification approaches were successful.

It was noted that some centres had chosen to dual-enter candidates and had assessed some material at National 5 and others at Higher. This can cause confusion during verification. Centres are reminded that a candidate must complete all the Assessment Standards at a particular level to be eligible for the Course award.

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Section 3: General comments

Sample format

No centres sent in photocopies. Some 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 attach a copy of the original manual work for the verification team.

Approaches to learning

Many centres have changed their approach to teaching and learning and more CAD work is clearly evident. This change in approach is useful in preparing candidates for the Course assessment task and final exam. However, it was noted that some candidates had not applied appropriate drawing standards and conventions and had relied purely on the software to sort any issues. Centres may wish to consider different approaches to enable candidates to identify issues with production and technical drawings.

Internal verification

Internal verification is a key part of quality assuring your internal assessments. The verification team uses this to help validate assessment judgements. An effective internal verification process can highlight issues within the centre, which can then be rectified helping to ensure that a centre's assessment judgements are valid and reliable. The verification team found that where centres had carried out an effective internal verification procedure, this had contributed to the correct approaches to assessment and assessment judgements.