

Scottish Baccalaureate Inter-disciplinary Projects (IP):

A Guide to Quality Assurance Processes for Centres and their Representatives

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Overview of IP Quality Assurance Processes

3. Detailed Guidance on Quality Assurance Processes

Appendix A: Quality Forum Agenda

Appendix B: IP External Verification Reports

Appendix C: Centre Result Report

1. Introduction

The nature of the Scottish Baccalaureate Interdisciplinary Project (IP) is such that a collaborative approach between centres and SQA is necessary to quality assure assessments in a valid and reliable way. This is particularly the case when quality assuring the assessment of generic and cognitive skills (eg *Interpersonal Skills* and *Independent Learning*). For this reason, IPs are internally assessed and graded by centres and their partners. Grading decisions are then externally verified by SQA External Verifiers (EVs). An important feature of this external verification process is dialogue between centre representatives and EVs during a Quality Forum event. This dialogue may also continue after the event, if appropriate, when representatives return to their centres.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide centres, and their Quality Forum representatives, with a detailed overview of the processes involved in quality assuring the assessment of IPs. The [SQA Guide to Assessment](#), which includes general information on assessment processes and the quality assurance of assessment, will also be of value to centres. This can be downloaded from SQA's website at http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/25GuideToAssessment.pdf.

Throughout this guide, reference will be made to *templates and candidate guidance* where you might normally expect to see the term *Instrument/s of Assessment*. This is because the phrase *templates and candidate guidance* more accurately reflects the assessment methodology for the IP.

2. Overview of IP Quality Assurance Processes

The following stages are involved in the quality assurance of the IP:

- Internal quality assurance by centres – managed and participated in by centres and their partners
- Centre Submission of Proposed Grades and Materials for Verification
- Pre-Forum Central Verifier Event – managed by SQA and attended by EVs and supporting SQA Officers
- Quality Forums – managed by SQA, each chaired by an EV and attended by centre representatives and supporting SQA Officers
- Post-Forum procedures – which will involve EVs finalising their verification decisions and reports and may require further dialogue with centres and their partners.

Detailed guidance on each of these stages follows below.

3. Detailed Guidance on Quality Assurance Processes

3.1 Internal quality assurance in your centre

Purpose

Internal quality assurance carried out in your centre and in collaboration with your partners, is the first stage in the quality assurance processes for the IP. The purpose of internal quality assurance is to ensure, as far as possible, that:

- all those involved in delivering and assessing the IP in your centre, including partners, develop a common and appropriate understanding of the national standards of competence.
- the *templates and candidate guidance* you use with candidates are capable of generating sufficient evidence to allow them to demonstrate that they have reached the national standard of competence at particular grades. If you use the *templates and candidate guidance* contained in the Assessment Support Pack (ASP), this should be a straightforward process.
- all those involved in assessing the IP in your centre have made appropriate and consistent grading decisions for all candidates, in line with the national standard of competence.

The effective management of this stage of the quality assurance process is vitally important in the context of the IP.

Internal Quality Assurance Models

It is unlikely that you will use exactly the same model of internal quality assurance as other centres who are delivering the IP. The model you use will depend on several factors such as the number of assessors, partners and candidates involved, the location of your centre and the prior experience of assessors. However, any effective internal quality assurance model will normally involve the following:

- a standardisation process
- verification of the *templates and candidate guidance* you are going to use with candidates
- verification of internal assessment decisions.

The standardisation process: It is important that all those involved in delivering and assessing the IP in your centre work together at the planning stage to develop a common understanding of the IP Unit requirements and the standards of competence needed to achieve specific grades. Discussion of the Statement of Standards in the Unit, along with the *templates and candidate guidance* and exemplification contained in the ASP, is important to help minimise any differences in the interpretation of standards. Such discussion might involve, for example, identifying the key features of specific grades and/or matching grade criteria to aspects of exemplified materials.

It is also important that the standardisation process is on-going throughout delivery and assessment. This could be achieved by, for example:

- discussing and agreeing the appropriateness of each candidate's chosen project topic
- holding collective discussions of each candidate's skills development at each stage in the IP, to ensure a common understanding of the progress each candidate has made
- reviewing the same piece of mandatory evidence for all candidates then discussing any differences in assessor judgements.
- Discussing materials and information gathered at Centre Support events.

Verification of *templates and candidate guidance* to be used: The templates and candidate guidance in the ASP are generic in nature and have been designed to be suitable in a wide variety of contexts. They have also been quality assured by SQA which means that you can be confident that they will give your candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they have reached the national standard of competence at any grade. It is therefore strongly recommended that centres use these to help their candidates generate the evidence required.

However, it is recognised that there may be an occasion and/or a context in which you/your centre think alternative *templates and candidate guidance* would be appropriate. In these circumstances it is important that the proposed alternatives are quality assured within your centre **before** being used with candidates. To do this, you will need to work with other assessors to verify that the alternative *templates and candidate guidance*:

- cover the context, all stages, all generic and cognitive skills, and all aspects of the Evidence Requirements as stated in the Unit Statement of Standards
- are of a comparable standard to those contained in the ASP
- do not present any barriers to achievement for candidates
- will give all your candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they have reached the national standard of competence at any grade, in a valid and reliable way.

Whichever *templates and candidate guidance* you use, it will be important that all assessors develop a common understanding of their nature and purpose before candidates start to use them to generate evidence.

Verification of assessment decisions: Once candidates have completed their IPs, it is important that all those involved in delivery also contribute to the final grading decisions. Part of this involvement will include ensuring that grade criteria are applied consistently across all candidates and in line with the national standard of competence for the IP.

Consistency can be reached in a variety of ways and the most suitable way for your centre will depend on the number of candidates, partners and assessors involved. Approaches might include:

- assessors reviewing the same piece of mandatory evidence for each candidate independently, then discussing any differences in their findings before reaching a consensus on how well each piece meets the relevant grade criteria. This would be most appropriate at an early stage to promote a common understanding of standards before each candidate's evidence is considered as a whole.
- one assessor initially grading the candidate evidence then another assessor taking the role of internal verifier, i.e. verifying the original grading decision. Where discrepancies arise these can be discussed to allow a consensus to be reached.
- a group of assessors reviewing all candidate evidence along with initial grading decisions, then collectively discussing discrepancies between assessors' judgements before reaching a consensus on the overall grade for each candidate.
- assessors from different presenting centres discussing a sample of graded candidate evidence to check that they have all applied grade criteria consistently across candidates and with a common understanding of the national standard of competence. This approach might be particularly useful to centres in which there are only one or two internal assessors.

With all of these approaches Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Science IP assessors could work together to quality assure each other's assessment decisions. Again, this might be particularly useful for centres with only one or two assessors.

Whichever method you use in your centre, it is important to remember that a key feature of any reliable method is that it must involve more than one assessor.

3.2 Submission of Proposed Grades and Materials for Verification

Once all involved in the assessment, grading and checking process are confident that each candidate's evidence has been graded appropriately, proposed grades should be submitted to SQA in the normal way. **This must be done by the 31st March in the year of certification.** Due to the criticality of SQA having this information by this date, extensions will only be possible in very exceptional circumstances. If an unexpected situation has occurred which means it will not be possible to submit the grades by this date, please email national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk immediately.

By mid-April SQA will notify you of the candidates from your centre who have been selected for external verification. If you have more than six candidates entered for the IP, six will be selected. The selection will cover the range of grades awarded by the centre: where possible, this will be the full range of grades (A – C and Fail). If you have fewer than six candidates, all will be selected.

The five pieces of mandatory evidence for each candidate selected, along with the assessor report, must be packaged and **ready for uplift by SQA from your centre on the published date in April of the year of**

certification. We will provide you with detailed instruction about the uplift in a communication nearer the time. As with the submission of candidate grades, it is vital that we receive your materials by the deadline date and extensions will therefore only be possible in very exceptional circumstances. Please email **extensions@sqa.org.uk** immediately if an unexpected circumstance means you will not be able to meet this date.

Whichever submission route is used, the five pieces of mandatory evidence are:

- the candidate's project proposal
- the candidate's project plan
- the record of the candidate's presentation of his/her project findings/product
- the candidate's evaluation of the project
- the candidate's evaluation of his/her generic and cognitive skills development.

Plus the Assessor Report with the associated assessor comments.
(This will give EVs a fuller picture of the assessment process and the basis for grading decisions).

The Assessor Report and comments and information on your centre's internal quality assurance processes will be important in the quality assurance of IPs. EVs will consider these closely, along with the mandatory evidence, during the Quality Forum and when reviewing centres' grading decisions.

3.2 The Pre-Forum Central Verifier Event

At this event, EVs will have the opportunity to review the materials submitted by the centres which have been assigned to them. As it will not be possible to review/discuss all IPs at the Quality Forum Event (see below), EVs will also use the Pre-Forum Event to select IPs to take forward to the Quality Forum event.

3.3 The Quality Forum Event

An invitation to a May Quality Forum will be sent to your centre in mid-April. It is important that a representative from your centre attends this event and that he/she has been closely involved in the internal IP assessment and quality assurance processes which have been followed in your centre.

Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Forum is to give your centre representative opportunities to:

- Outline assessment and internal quality assurance processes used in your centre, and learn about those used in other centres.
- Develop an understanding of the national standards of competence for the IP when considering and reviewing a variety of candidate evidence along with assessor comments. Dialogue with other centre representatives and EVs will also contribute to this understanding.

- Contribute to a peer review discussion.
- Share examples of good practice and alternative approaches to the delivery and development of the IP with colleagues in your centre after the event.

The EV assigned to your event will have had the opportunity to review the materials submitted by your centre and the Forum will allow him/her to gather further information from your centre representative. This will help the EV to understand the evidence and how your centre has reached its internal grading decisions. The EV will also take into account feedback from all centre representatives during the peer review discussion before finalising verification decisions.

Preparation

Your representative must be very familiar with the details of your internal IP quality assurance processes and the materials submitted for verification. This will allow him or her to communicate these fully to the EV and other centre representatives at the Quality Forum event. It may help your representative to bring notes/prompts to the event to ensure s/he can cover all processes which internal assessors think have been important in internal assessment decisions. However, please note that SQA will not ask your representative for a written outline or a copy of his/her notes. Further guidance on the nature of the information your representative might bring to the Forum appears later in this guide.

Roles and Procedures

At the event, members of SQA Support Staff will provide administrative and general support. An EV will chair the event and representatives from other centres delivering the IP will also be present.

To ensure that the Quality Forum event achieves its purpose and runs smoothly it is important that all present have a clear understanding of their own roles and those of others participating in the event.

The role of your centre representative

The role of a centre representative is to:

- outline the internal IP assessment and quality assurance processes used in your centre.
- participate in a peer review of a small selection of candidate evidence from other centres, noting observations and feeding back through a group discussion.
- ask for clarification and raise questions in relation to the national standards set for the IP, as appropriate.
- feedback to colleagues in your centre following the event. (Please note that, whilst we would encourage centre representatives to share information on national standards, assessment, quality assurance and good practice, information related to the identity of centres represented in their forum must be treated as confidential.)

The role of the EV:

An EV will chair the event. As well as opening the event and briefing all participants about its nature and purpose, the EV will also ensure that:

- the forum starts and finishes on time, following the stated agenda
- all participants are clear about their roles and the stages of the event
- all centre representatives have an equal opportunity to provide information and discuss evidence in relation to their candidates' IPs
- the event is conducted in a supportive and professional manner throughout.

During the event the EV will:

- record information about each centre's internal assessment and quality assurance processes during the first part of the event
- assist centre representatives during the peer review process by responding to questions and/or offering clarification, as required
- identify examples of good practice in the assessment of generic and cognitive skills, and/or internal quality assurance, and share these with participants before the close of the event
- support centre representatives in developing their understanding of the national standard of competence for the IP, throughout the event.

The EV will also remain available after the formal close of the event to allow centre representatives to ask questions and seek clarification individually, if they wish to. This could include, for example, discussion of individual candidate evidence and grading decisions

Format of the Quality Forum

There will be a series of full day forums after the Pre-Forum Central Verification Event. One EV and one representative from each centre assigned to that Forum will attend. Normally there will be four – five centre representatives at each Forum. There will be a standard, fixed agenda for each - a copy of this can be found in Appendix A).

Sharing Information on Assessment and Quality Assurance Processes

After the event has opened, your centre representative will be given the opportunity to provide information on your centre's internal quality assurance processes. The information should include details of:

- your centre's assessment and quality assurance processes, including those used for internal verification
- links, partnerships and/or mentors who contributed to these processes
- interdisciplinary support within your centre or from partners
- additional information your centre thinks was relevant during the assessment and quality assurance processes.

Information should not include reference to individual candidates but should focus on general approaches and processes.

As well as facilitating the sharing of good practice, this session will help the EV to understand more fully your grading decisions and/or internal assessment approaches. At this stage the EV will take notes on this additional information. They will refer to these notes later when finalising their verification reports after the Forum.

All representatives will have a five minute slot at this stage. After each representative has shared information with the group, there will be a further five minutes for the EV and centre representatives to ask for clarification or raise questions. If an EV would like to clarify any part of the information provided by your representative, s/he may use this time to do so. Alternatively, s/he may speak to your representative individually at some point later in the day.

Peer Review

Once all centre representatives have provided additional information about their IP quality assurance processes, they will have the opportunity to read and discuss one IP from each of the other centres who are attending the same forum.

The purpose of this review is twofold:

- it will give your representative an insight into the development and assessment of the IP outwith your own centre, and help to develop and refine his/her understanding of standards
- it will help to inform SQA's evaluation of IP quality assurance processes, and the development of future understanding standards and quality assurance activities in relation to the IP.

Reading will take place for the remainder of the morning session and each representative will make notes related to assessment decisions, assessor comments and examples of good practice identified for each selected IP.

While representatives are reviewing the IPs, they will have an opportunity to ask the EV questions related to the evidence or the national standards of competence. Representatives will also be asked to note any instances where they think they would have made a different grading decision about a particular IP.

In the afternoon a peer review discussion will take place and the EV will take notes of the feedback from centre representatives for each of the selected IPs.

Identifying and Sharing Examples of Good Practice

After the peer review session the EV will lead a session designed to highlight examples of good practice in IP development, content and/or quality assurance which have been identified. If time permits, centre representatives will also be able to share any insights they have gained and/or examples of good practice they have identified during the review.

Following a brief reminder to all representatives of the remaining quality assurance processes which will follow, the event will then close. At this stage your centre representative will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification or advice on any issues s/he might wish to discuss individually with the EV. EVs may also use this time to seek further clarification on any point, if this is required.

3.4 Post-Forum procedures

Purpose

The post-Forum procedures include:

- a one day central event for EVs to finalise external verification of centre grading decisions and complete External Verification reports
- informing centres of the results of external verification
- ensuring all outstanding issues are fully resolved to allow certification to take place on time.

There are three possible outcomes of IP external verification. These are:

- **Accepted** – this indicates that all your centre’s grading decisions have all been accepted and no issues, or only minor issues, have been identified.
- **Issues Identified** – this indicates that an issue has been identified with one or more of your centre’s grading decisions and we are asking that all internal assessors involved collectively review the relevant decisions in light of EV comments and guidance.
- **Not Accepted** – this indicates that an issue has been identified with the *templates and candidate guidance* used in your centre which has meant that candidate/s have been unable to generate the evidence which would demonstrate that they had met the national standard of competence for the IP.

Within 3 working days of the post-Forum event, SQA will send the *External Verification Report*, candidate evidence and related assessor reports back to your centre. The *External Verification Report* will clearly indicate the result of external verification, give detailed feedback and provide advice, where appropriate (see Appendix B for examples of these reports). Where the result has been either ‘**Issues Identified**’ or ‘**Not Accepted**’ you will also receive a copy of the *Centre Results Report* indicating any recommended changes in grading. (A copy of a *Centre Results Report* is contained in Appendix C).

If the result has been ‘**Issues Identified**’, your centre will be notified of the date by which it should inform SQA of the result of your internal review. At this stage, you may wish to ask for advice or further clarification. Requests should be made to SQA NQ Verification staff (nqverification@sqa.org.uk) who will then contact an IP EV, if this is required. The EV will then get in touch by telephone, e-mail or a visit to provide support, as appropriate.

If, after the internal review, your centre confirms to SQA that it has revised grading decisions in line with EV recommendations, no further action will be required (a form will be provided for this purpose). However, if your centre

indicates that it has reviewed the original grading decisions and still wishes these to stand, further dialogue will be needed to ensure all outstanding issues are resolved.

When the result of external verification has been '**Not Accepted**' SQA/an EV will be in touch to discuss the specific issues and any action your centre needs to take to have the '**Not Accepted**' decision removed.

If your centre does not accept the advice contained in the *External Verification Report* in either of these cases, and all internal assessors remain confident in the original grading decisions, it should follow the normal external verification appeals process.

3.4 A Final Note

SQA values feedback from all centres involved in delivering and assessing the IP. At the end of the quality assurance processes you will be asked to send feedback on you and your centre's experiences this year. However, feedback from centres is also welcome at any stage in the process and will be used to inform evaluation of the IP, its assessment and quality assurance.

Appendix A: Quality Forum Agenda

Scottish Baccalaureate IP: Quality Forum Agenda

09.30	Registration and tea/coffee	
10.00	Welcome, including the nature and purpose of the event	EV
10.05	Outline of internal quality assurance processes	Centres
10.45	Tea/coffee break	
11.00	IP Review	All
12.45	Lunch	
13.30	Peer Review	EVs/ Centres
15.15	Sharing Good Practice	EVs
15.45	Close	

Timings for refreshments and lunch may be subject to change.

Please note: EVs will remain available at the venue after the quality forum. This will allow centre representatives to raise any remaining issues and/or ask for advice. It will also give EVs a further opportunity for dialogue with representatives, if they still need clarification on any issue.

Appendix B: IP External Verification Reports

Scottish Baccalaureate IP Central Verification Report Outcome Accepted			
Introduction			
This report has been designed to provide readers with quality assurance information relating directly to the qualification areas verified on the date of this verification event.			
Central Details			
Centre Name			
Centre Number			
Verification Details			
Date of Verification			
Unit / Course Verified			
Code	Level	Title	
Verification Group			
Name			
Number			
SQA devised assessment material used <input type="checkbox"/> <u>or</u> Centre devised assessment material used <input type="checkbox"/>			
<i>(Check box, select box, right click then Properties and select "Checked")</i>			

Comments

1. The verification sample selected

2. The assessment materials being used

3. The evidence available

4. The assessment judgements sampled

5. Effectiveness of Internal Verification

Good Practice

Please list the details of any issues identified

Development Points

Please list the details of any issues identified

NQ Verification – Confirmation (SQA Use Only)	
Date Received	
Authorised By	NQ Verification
Date to Centre	

Introduction

This report has been designed to provide readers with quality assurance information relating directly to the qualification areas verified on the date of this verification event.

Central Details

Centre Name	
Centre Number	

Verification Details

External Verifier Name	
Date of Verification	

Unit / Course Verified

Code	Level	Title

Verification Group

Name	
Number	

SQA devised assessment material used or Centre devised assessment material used

(Check box, select box, right click then Properties and select "Checked")

Comments

1. The verification sample selected

2. The assessment materials being used

3. The evidence available

4. The assessment judgements sampled

5. Effectiveness of Internal Verification

Assessment & Internal Verification

Issues Identified

Please list the details of any issues identified

Actions Required

Outline the actions required by the centre to allow assessment decisions to be accepted.

Good Practice

Please list the details of any issues identified

Development Points

Please list the details of any issues identified

NQ Verification – Confirmation (SQA Use Only)

Date Received	
Authorised By	
Date to Centre	

Scottish Baccalaureate IP
Central Verification Report
Outcome Not Accepted



Introduction

This report has been designed to provide readers with quality assurance information relating directly to the qualification areas verified on the date of this verification event.

Central Details

Centre Name	
Centre Number	

Verification Details

External Verifier Name	
Date of Verification	

Unit / Course Verified

Code	Level	Title

Verification Group

Name	
Number	

SQA devised assessment material used or Centre devised assessment material used

(Check box, select box, right click then Properties and select "Checked")

Comments

1. The verification sample selected

2. The assessment materials being used

3. The evidence available

4. The assessment judgements sampled

5. Effectiveness of Internal Verification

Assessment & Internal Verification

Issues Identified

Please list the details of any issues identified

Actions Required

Outline the actions required by the centre to allow assessment decisions to be accepted.

NQ Verification – Confirmation (SQA Use Only)	
Date Received	
Authorised By	
Date to Centre	

Appendix C: Centre Result Report

Centre Code: 5009759
 Centre Name: Springfield College
 IP Unit Code/Prod Level: F784 47
 IP Title: Languages: Interdisciplinary Project

Cand	SCN	Surname	Forename	DOB	Result	Result Date	Bacc Entry	IP Verification Result
1	080004443	Distinction	Language Fifty Seven	22.01.1994	B	25.11.2012	Y	
2	976081072	Distinction	Live Language Eight	01.03.1941	A	01.12.2012	Y	
3	970931473	Distinction	Live Language Five	07.02.1984	B	01.12.2012	Y	
4	970007431	Distinction	Live Language One	22.02.1982	A	01.12.2012	Y	
5	970502157	Distinction	Live Language Three	23.02.1984	B	01.12.2012	Y	
6	970010262	Distinction	Live Language Two	11.12.1982	B	01.12.2012	Y	
							IP Entries: 8	
							Baccalaureate Entries: 8	