



**National Qualifications
Internal Assessment Report 2012
NQ Business Management**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

- ◆ DV4G 10 Business Enterprise (Int 1)
- ◆ DV4G 11 Business Enterprise (Int 2)
- ◆ DV4G 12 Business Enterprise (Higher)
- ◆ DV4K 11 Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations (Int 2)
- ◆ DV4K 12 Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations (Higher)
- ◆ DV4L 11 Business Decision Areas: Finance and HRM (Int 2)
- ◆ DV4L 12 Business Decision Areas: Finance and HRM (Higher)
- ◆ DV4M 13 Managing Organisations: The External Environment (Advanced Higher)
- ◆ DV4N 13 Managing Organisations: The Internal Environment (Advanced Higher)

General comments

It is clear from the verification exercise this year that centres have a very clear and accurate understanding of the National Standard. National assessments are organised and conducted within guidelines and learners are given the mark that they deserve.

Forty nine centres were externally verified this year and four of these were 'not accepted'. Reasons for the 'not accepted' result included using old NABs, lenient marking, and allowing learners to sit the assessment in two parts. As a useful reminder, a list of what constitutes a 'not accepted' result is given later in this report.

Most centres are assessing evidence to the National Standard and the learners have a very good understanding of how to tackle the various command words. There are still some inconsistencies when assessing 'Explain' and 'Distinguish' questions because some centres credit points that are merely descriptions, or identifications, rather than explanations. Previous Internal Assessment and External Assessment Reports provide further guidance on this as does SQA's Understanding Standards website. These reports can be found at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2601.html and guidance on command words can be found at: www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/NQBusinessEducationCommandWords.pdf

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres appear to be very confident in the delivery and assessment of Units in Business Management. It is clear that advice given in SQA's subject update letters and in various reports is being followed.

Most centres are using the most up-to-date NAB assessment (for Int 2 and Higher dated June 2010 or later) but one or two centres are still using NABs at these levels that are older than this. Centres are reminded that NABs dated prior to June 2010 will not be accepted.

NABs at Intermediate 1 have recently been reviewed and a number of changes made. These revised NABs **must be** used from session 2013-14 onwards, however, centres can use the updated NABs from session 2012-13, ie this session onwards.

A list of valid instruments of assessment (as at July 2012) issued by SQA is provided below:

Intermediate 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NABs 1, 2 and 3 for all Units dated August 2006 ◆ NABs 1, 2 and 3 for all Units dated 2012 ◆ ASP dated 2009 for Business Enterprise
Intermediate 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NABS 1, 2 and 3 for all Units dated 2010 (or later) ◆ ASP dated 2011 for all Units
Higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NABs 4 and 5 for all Units dated 2010 (or later) ◆ ASP dated 2011 for all Units
Advanced Higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NABs 1, 2 and 3 for all Units dated 2006

Centres are reminded that they can use SQA's Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) which offer an alternative to a traditional NAB. They are designed for learners studying Units who will not progress to the final examination as there is less emphasis on the use of command words. Alternatively, centres can devise their own instruments of assessment in line with the appropriate Unit Specification and submit these to SQA for prior verification.

During 2011-12, a number of centres raised a query with the term 'cash flow statement' that appeared in a number of NABs. The term 'cash flow statement' has since been replaced with 'cash budget' in the appropriate NABs.

From 2012-13, in line with marking in the external assessment, learners should not be awarded marks for answering questions with pieces of legislation that are no longer relevant. For example, candidates should no longer be referring to the Sex Discrimination Act or Race Relations Act, but instead should be referring to The Equality Act 2010.

Evidence Requirements

Centres have a very clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Units verified.

Centres carefully followed the marking advice given in each NAB and awarded marks appropriate to the command word, using their professional judgement where necessary.

The marking scheme for each NAB should be applied consistently each year and where centres wish to make significant changes to a NAB and/or its marking scheme, this should be submitted to SQA for prior verification.

As a reminder, a list of reasons that would result in an automatic 'not accepted' decision is given below:

- ◆ using partial reassessment (eg use oral reassessment for any part of an assessment or permit candidates to go back and attempt questions that are answered poorly)
- ◆ reassessing candidates using the same instrument of assessment as the first attempt

- ◆ allowing an assessment to be undertaken in more than one sitting — regardless of the circumstances
- ◆ submitting photocopied evidence
- ◆ awarding half-marks
- ◆ using instruments of assessment from the National Assessment Bank (NABs) that are no longer valid

It can often be clear from comments written on submitted evidence that centres fully understand what is required to gain marks. Comments can be written on internal assessments (unlike external assessments) and this is to be encouraged. They can indicate to a learner, and also External Verifier, why marks were or were not awarded. It is also good practice to highlight to learners any spelling and/or grammar errors in order to promote literacy development.

Administration of assessments

The majority of centres administer assessments in the appropriate way and assess their learners competently. The work submitted to SQA is well organised and the accompanying paperwork completed in accordance with the instructions given. Learners present their work very well.

Most centres use brackets to indicate where marks are awarded rather than ticks and this is to be encouraged. Using codes to clearly indicate which part of the answer is being credited (eg D for description, J for justification, Ex for explain and ID for identification) not only helps the learner to see where marks have been awarded and why, but also ensures the correct application of the marking scheme with respect to each command word.

There was some excellent evidence of internal verification, but this was not consistent across the range of centres verified. It is good practice to internally verify a sample of assessed work. This can be particularly useful where a teacher is delivering a Unit for the first time or where issues have been previously identified.

It was often difficult to gauge the extent to which internal verification took place; a signature at the top of a script is not sufficient. Excellent practice would be to double-mark a script in a different pen colour and to use a feedback sheet to record the original mark, the mark awarded by the internal verifier, and a final column indicating the agreed mark. If there is a discrepancy between the assessor and internal verifier, a comment should be written to indicate what mark stands and why. For example:

Question Number	Mark (Assessor)	Mark (IV)	Agreed Mark	Comments
1	3/4	2/4	2/4	<i>One point had not been sufficiently explained to be awarded a mark.</i>

Some centres used different colour feedback sheets attached to the evidence verified to show that internal verification had taken place and included comments.

It would also be good practice and useful to the external verification team if centres would include a statement outlining their internal verification process. This would assist in making a more informed judgement as to the existence or level of internal verification used by a centre, as it is sometimes not evident in the sample submitted as to the extent and nature of the internal verification carried out and the process employed.

Areas of good practice

The majority of centres are very competent at assessing qualifications in Business Management. Areas of good practice include:

- ◆ Using the correct valid instrument of assessment.
- ◆ Using brackets to indicate where marks are being awarded and not ticks.
- ◆ Codes to indicate why an answer is being given credit with respect to each command word.
- ◆ Thorough internal verification including double-marking in a different pen colour, colour-coded comments sheets and internal verification meetings.
- ◆ Providing feedback to learners on why they were awarded or not awarded marks.
- ◆ Highlighting spelling and/or grammar errors to promote literacy development.
- ◆ Using centre-devised instruments of assessment that had been prior verified by SQA.
- ◆ Highlighting the internal verification process employed in the sample submitted.
- ◆ Including a written statement with evidence submitted to SQA to explain anything that might appear out of the ordinary.

Specific areas for improvement

In order to further improve the standard of assessment in Business Management, centres are encouraged to:

- ◆ Ensure the most up-to-date and valid instrument of assessment is being used every time a Unit is being delivered.
- ◆ Ensure they understand how to apply the marking scheme with respect to 'Distinguish' and 'Explain' questions for example.
- ◆ Ensure internal verification is thorough and more than just a signature at the top of a script.
- ◆ Ensure marking follows the guidance given in each instrument of assessment and from 2012, do not award marks for answers which refer to out-of-date pieces of legislation.
- ◆ Ensure they are aware of the reasons that will result in an automatic 'not accepted' decision being given at external verification.
- ◆ Familiarise themselves with areas of good practice identified above that they could adopt in their own centre.