



**National Qualifications  
Internal Assessment Report 2012**

**BAC Language**

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

Language Baccalaureate: Interdisciplinary Project

### General comments

This is the third year of delivery of the *Interdisciplinary Project* Unit. This year a total of 28 centres presented 56 candidates, with 34 candidates being presented for the interdisciplinary project as part of a Scottish Language Baccalaureate award and 22 undertaking the interdisciplinary project as a stand-alone Unit. All 28 centres and all candidates' evidence were subject to verification by External Verifiers.

During central verification the assessment decisions for 39 candidates were judged to have been in line with national standards. This represents 70% of the verified sample. Within 18 centres, assessment decisions were made which were fully in line with national standards. This is an indication that these centres have a solid understanding of the national standards and are confident in their grading of the interdisciplinary project.

Issues were identified in 10 centres where some of their assessment decisions were deemed to have been either severe or lenient in relation to the national standards. This resulted in External Verifiers recommending that a total of 12 candidates be down-graded and five up-graded. The final results for the Unit were 29 Grade A passes, 19 Grade B passes, five Grade C passes and three No Awards.

### Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

A support event was held in November 2011 which was attended by 59 delegates from both new and returning centres across both Languages and Science. The event provided a platform for discussion of the assessment criteria and national standards using a variety of exemplar material.

As in previous years, these events were cross-curricular between Languages and Science to help delegates focus on the skills being developed rather than the subject. The support event continues to be crucial in developing a strong understanding by centres of the Unit specifications, national standards and instruments of assessment, and new centres in particular benefit greatly from it.

The quality forum events provided centres' representatives with the opportunity to read and discuss candidates' evidence from other centres, helping develop and consolidate an understanding of national standards. Centres' representatives continue to participate fully in these events and comment on how much they gain from them.

Taking on board comments from the External Verifiers and centres' representatives, the Language templates were updated in June 2011. The format and content remain the same; however, more guidance has been provided for candidates as to what they are required to provide in each section.

Comments from centres' representatives at the support event and quality forums indicated that the update has been well received. Also, a candidate guide has been produced and is available on SQA's website.

As part of the updating of templates, the assessor checklist has been renamed the assessor report and it has been added to the list of required evidence. These changes have helped emphasise the place of the report in explaining the grading decision. The level of detail in the comments contained in many assessors' reports and in assessors' feedback to candidates continues to be commended by External Verifiers and is invaluable in the EV process.

Updating of the exemplar material on SQA's website continues with different material and supporting EV commentaries. These provide examples of A, B and C grades and the commentaries explain the grading decision of each exemplar.

### **Evidence Requirements**

There is a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit in many centres. All centres submitted all the mandatory pieces of evidence and an assessor's report for each candidate.

In general, candidates carried out a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects. Within several centres there are some candidates who have based their project round an annual language event run by their centre. Such events can allow candidates to meet all criteria but centres need to be aware of how the organisation of a repeated event as a project can affect autonomy and a candidate's individual skills development, making it more difficult for the candidate to meet certain criteria. Some issues related to these types of projects have been brought to the attention of the relevant centres in their EV report.

A few centres continue to provide interim reviews, progress logs and in some cases discs containing presentations and reports along with the mandatory evidence. These are not required and are not taken into consideration during central verification. Centres have been advised of this in their EV reports where it is relevant.

### **Administration of assessments**

All centres used SQA templates, though not all used the updated versions. As the new templates contain prompts to help guide candidates, it is important that centres use the most recent versions.

Internal verification procedures in many centres are now well developed and this is reflected in the number of grades which have been substantiated during central verification. A wide variety of approaches to internal verification are in evidence, and with more centres presenting in both Language and Science there are some excellent examples of inter-departmental verification in many of these centres.

Other centres are developing equally valid and robust processes of internal verification. At quality forums, centres' representatives gave full accounts of their internal verification mechanisms.

It is encouraging to see that some returning centres have acted on development points raised in EV reports last session, particularly in relation to internal verification and the supporting of grading decisions.

### **Areas of good practice**

Projects continue to cover a very varied range of challenging and interesting topics. The creativity and resourcefulness of candidates are producing some very innovative projects, providing them with numerous opportunities to meet assessment criteria.

The commitment of staff in supporting and mentoring candidates through the interdisciplinary project is to be commended. It is encouraging to see many young teachers, some of them newly qualified, participating in supporting candidates and promoting the interdisciplinary project and Scottish Baccalaureate.

Candidates have established a wide variety of links and contacts within Scotland and across the continent in carrying out their projects. Their creativity in making these links is to be commended. Many centres have also established strong working relationships with other centres or FE/HE establishments to support both candidates and assessors. This has been particularly in evidence in more remote centres.

Centres continue to develop robust internal verification procedures which are helping build confidence in making grading decisions.

Many External Verifiers have commented that candidates are being more reflective in their self-evaluation. This may be due to the improved prompts in the templates in relation to skills, though there is also evidence that some centres are asking for an initial skills assessment which will help candidates later in reflecting on how they have progressed through carrying out their project.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Centres should ensure that candidates sign and date all pieces of evidence, which should be completed prior to the grade submission at the end of March.

Group projects continue to be an issue. In their evidence, candidates must make clear distinctions between their own role and those of all others involved. Each role within the group should have sufficient autonomy, mileage and challenge to allow the individual candidate to potentially access all criteria.

Care should be taken with the evaluation of the project to ensure that candidates focus on their strengths, weaknesses and learning points within each stage of their project, rather than on an evaluation of how their project progressed. Candidates should follow the prompts in this section, which will help in its completion.

Centres should not submit evidence that is in draft form with corrections or assessors' suggestions for improvement. Evidence submitted should be in the final format on which the grading decision has been based.

Assessors should ensure that they have fully completed the assessor's report, indicating which criteria have been met with a tick. The awarding of criteria can then be explained in the comments section for each piece of evidence.