



# **National Qualifications 2008**

## **Internal Assessment Report**

**Subject: Business Management**

**Assessment Panel: Business Education**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within National Qualifications in this subject.

## NATIONAL UNITS

### TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS VERIFIED

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 & HRM (Int 2)
DV4L 12	Business Decision Areas: Finance & HRM (Higher)
DV4M 13	Managing Organisations: The External Environment (Advanced Higher)
DV4N 13	Managing Organisations: The Internal Environment (Advanced Higher)
DV4P 13	Researching a Business (Advanced Higher)

All were verified centrally.

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

#### General comments:

The post NQ Review NABs have now been in place for two academic sessions and centres are clearly comfortable with their use. Fifty centres were verified this year, covering Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher levels. In the vast majority of cases evidence was well organised and clearly documented. Most of the samples examined demonstrated a high level of consistency in the approach taken to internal assessment, and there was evidence of sound marking and good practice throughout. Candidates had clearly been well taught and many scored justifiably high marks in the NABs. Most centres have now established systems of internal verification and many had cross-marked all the scripts in their submission.

Most centres appear to be aware that the NABs at all levels must be administered in a single sitting of one hour. Only one centre had used partial reassessment – this is not permitted under the new arrangements, and future submissions based on it will not be accepted. Only a few centres continued to award half marks, which is against SQA guidelines, and could potentially mislead candidates, as no half marks are awarded in the external exam.

It would be helpful if centres could indicate the reasons for any apparent deviation from the norm in administering the NABs. Two centres which had offered the NAB in two half hour block had done so owing to the involvement of two different teachers in delivering the course but this was not made clear in their initial submissions. Whilst splitting the NAB in this way is unacceptable under any circumstances, an explanatory note would have speeded up the verification process. There may be other, different circumstances in which prior clarification of why a particular approach has been taken might avoid a centre being asked to resubmit its evidence. It is therefore very helpful to the verification process to include an explanation of the reasons for anything that might appear out of the ordinary to the verifier.

## **Advice on good practice and areas for further development:**

Most centres used ticks or brackets – and sometimes a combination of both - to indicate where marks had been awarded. Brackets are to be preferred as they make it easier to identify exactly what section has been awarded a mark. It is important also to put marks in the margin opposite the bracketed section; there were one or two instances where marks had been wrongly calculated owing to failure to do this.

Whilst commendable, internal verification of all scripts could prove daunting in a centre with a large number of presentations; the cross-marking of 10-15% of scripts is an acceptable minimum. An exception to this would be where the marker is relatively inexperienced: in this case it is good practice for a more experienced marker to cross-mark the entire sample and discuss and explain any disagreements. It is accepted that internal verification of Advanced Higher assessments in particular can prove problematic, as frequently only one teacher in a centre is involved in delivering this course. In such circumstances it might be possible for centres located close to one another to come to an arrangement to verify each others' scripts.

It is helpful if the internal verifier marks in a different colour of pen or pencil from the original marker and initials the final mark. In some submissions this year there were initials beside the final mark but no other indication of cross-marking. Under such circumstances it is hard to assess the extent of internal verification. The practice of one centre, which provided an Internal Verification table with one column for the first marker's result, one for the second marker's result and a third for a brief comment on the reason for any discrepancy, was extremely helpful and is to be recommended.

Some centres added helpful comments to their candidates' scripts and a few enclosed results sheets with feedback issued to candidates. Several centres however avoided adding any comments at all. A possible reason for this is that they are aware that comments are not added to scripts in the final exam, and therefore believe they should treat all assessments in the same way. However, centres should be aware that the "No comment" rule applies only to the external exam. Adding comments to internal assessments helps both the candidate and the verifier to see why marks have or have not been awarded, and can indicate the way forward to the candidate.

The holistic nature of the revised NABs and their greater length make them more similar to the final exam than the previous versions. The internal assessment process provides a good opportunity to familiarise candidates with the list of command words and their different meanings. For example, care should be taken to ensure that candidates are not awarded identification marks for questions requiring description. In a similar vein, it was pleasing to note that a number of centres clearly expected more detailed answers to questions asking for explanation than to those requiring description, in line with what would be expected in the external assessment. This is excellent preparation for the final exam.

Relatively few centres submitted amended versions of the marking schemes. It is accepted that marking schemes cannot cover every eventuality and that, on occasion, it may be necessary for a centre to add to or amend them. Candidates frequently make valid points not covered by the printed solutions. In such cases annotations help to provide justification for particular decisions. It also helps to simplify the verification procedure if centres enclose all the relevant NABs and marking schemes with their submissions, and indicate clearly on form VS00 which assessments have been used for which candidates.

Many of the centres verified had all or most of the above practices in place. In the vast majority of cases the occasional error in marking made no difference at all to the outcome for individual candidates. A small number of centres need to be reminded that NABs must be undertaken in a single sitting and that there is now no partial reassessment; submissions which ignore either of these stipulations will not be accepted for verification.

This year's verification process has demonstrated that the internal assessment process is being conducted with both confidence and competence, and centres are to be congratulated on what has been achieved.