



NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Italian
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2015

National Courses/Units verified:

H21B 74 National 4: Italian: Using Language

H219 75 National 5: Italian: Understanding Language

H219 76 New Higher: Italian: Understanding Language

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The number of centres selected for verification in Italian was relatively small.

It is pleasing to note, however, that approaches to assessment used by centres that were selected for verification have all been 'Accepted'. This demonstrates that centres have followed guidelines and made use of the feedback and support provided by SQA in publication updates, the Verification Key Messages reports, and at events (for nominees and practitioners) during 2014–15. This should be reassuring for practitioners and is to be commended.

A number of centres used the Unit assessment support packs (available on SQA's secure site) to assess their candidates. Centres successfully adapted these assessments to suit the needs of their candidates or allow for personalisation and choice without affecting the Assessment Standards and Outcomes. This is to be praised.

It is important to note, however, that amendments should not alter the mandatory Assessment Standards included in the judging evidence table and any amendments must only be reflected in the exemplification column (fourth column) of the table, where necessary.

A few centres in the sample devised their own assessments and did so effectively using judicious and imaginative approaches. Some of these centre-devised assessments had been prior verified and accepted as a valid approach.

Centres should make sure they clearly indicate which Unit assessment support pack or prior verified assessment they have used, eg Package 1, N5, Reading. It is recommended that one copy of the judging evidence table, the texts and transcripts — for listening tasks — are also included for the whole sample. There is, however, no need to include one copy inside each candidate's clear envelope.

Assessment judgements

Again, it is pleasing to note that all of the assessment judgements made by assessors in centres have been 'Accepted' as they were in line with national standards. This demonstrates that centres have successfully implemented guidelines and made use of the feedback and support provided by SQA in publication updates, the Key Messages reports and at events (for nominees and practitioners) during 2014–15. Overall, staff have made best use of the expertise already in place in centres or in clusters of centres. This should be reassuring for practitioners and is to be commended.

Centres should ensure that they submit documentation for each piece of evidence, clearly demonstrating how assessment judgements are made and clearly indicating the overall outcome of pass or fail and for each Assessment Standard of the Outcome, eg an assessment Outcome record/ commentary/ checklist for each candidate.

Detailed commentaries about each candidate's performance are very useful for internal and external verification purposes. However, it is acknowledged that this approach can be time-consuming. Therefore, a detailed checklist for each candidate's performance can be just as useful for the verifier, and more practical for the centre. This could also be used as effective feedback to candidates.

Centres should supplement judging evidence tables found in the Unit assessment support packs with a range of possible answers to demonstrate how assessment judgements are made for each Assessment Standard.

Some centres clearly justified how they made their assessment judgements. This should be commended. Some centres noted each Assessment Standard next to each of the candidates' responses or on their written scripts as 1.2/2.3 etc... to evidence where the candidates had addressed these Assessment Standards. This is good practice as it is very useful and appropriate for internal and external verification purposes.

Centre-devised information on judging evidence must be clearly referenced against each Assessment Standard. The award of marks is not a feature of Unit assessments and there is therefore no 'pass mark'. The inclusion of 'marks out of' is not noted for verification purposes.

Specificities of the talking assessments

For the assessment of talking in the Using Language Unit, there is no requirement to submit an audio recording of candidate work. If no audio recording is submitted, centres must submit a detailed checklist or commentary with some examples of what each candidate says referenced against each Assessment Standard for the Outcome.

If a centre would like SQA to give more extensive feedback on the verification of a talking assessment, audio recordings would ensure a more detailed and accurate comment.

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Section 3: General comments

What evidence should a centre send in for a verification round?

Most centres submitted very clear and well-organised packages for verification, which is to be commended. This has facilitated the verification process and assisted in providing useful feedback to centres.

Centres should only send evidence at one level per candidate and should think carefully about how much evidence to submit. For instance, if a candidate has completed a reading assessment and failed it, been re-assessed and passed the re-assessment, it is only necessary to send in the re-assessment.

Centres should use a separate flyleaf and clear envelopes for each candidate.

When submitting evidence for a Unit, it is recommended that the same assessment task is submitted for all candidates being verified in the same Unit at the same level (ie six candidates being assessed in reading at National 4 with the same instrument of assessment rather than two or three different instruments of assessment).

Centres should refer to SQA guidance on how much evidence to submit for each candidate via their SQA Co-ordinator. This could be a covering note explaining the process used (eg cross-marking, discussion on validity of centre-devised assessments at meetings, etc) and a clear indication on the candidate scripts or on the candidate record form that the work was internally verified and the judgements agreed.

Some centres have spent a remarkable amount of time detailing their quality assurance procedures, which is to be commended.

The internal verification/quality assurance arrangements could be modelled on a whole centre one, rather than being developed for each subject to avoid duplication of systems.

Centres devising their internal verification procedures may find SQA's Internal Verification Toolkit helpful: www.sqa.org.uk/ivtoolkit

How to complete the SQA Verification Sample Form

Only 12 candidates should be entered with a maximum of two assessments per candidate if they form a Unit (eg a reading assessment and a listening assessment completing the Understanding Language Unit) or if combined (eg a reading assessment and a writing assessment, not forming a Unit, but interim results across two Units).

It is important that the Verification Sample Form is completed correctly and matches the information on candidate scripts and the Candidate Evidence Flyleaf. This is very important, as the judgement (pass/fail) entered on the Verification Sample Form is what the verification exercise is based on, regardless of what is entered on the candidates' scripts or individual record forms.

Centres should arrange candidates in alphabetical order for each level and/or Unit on the Verification Sample Form: eg A–Z at National 3 reading, then A–Z at National 4 listening, then A–Z at National 5 writing. The order of the candidates' evidence must match the order on the Verification Sample Form.

The Unit code (eg H219 73) and level code (eg 73) need to be clearly and correctly entered.

The 'Pass/Fail' column should **only** be completed with 'pass' **or** 'fail' and should not be left blank.

If a centre submits complete evidence for a Unit, eg a reading and listening assessments for the Understanding Language Unit, then the 'Pass/Fail' column on the Verification Sample Form should be completed to show the overall outcome for the Unit, **not** for each individual assessment. For example, a candidate needs to pass both a reading and a listening assessment to pass the entire Understanding Language Unit.

Some centres submitted 'Complete' evidence (eg evidence of reading and listening), however, on the Verification Sample Form, they stated that the evidence submitted was 'Interim'.

No entry should be made in the 'Nominee Review' column.

The judgement entered on the Verification Sample Form is for verification purposes and is not necessarily final as there might be an opportunity for a candidate to be re-assessed at a later stage if not already done.

How do I share my concerns/queries about any aspects of the verification process for Italian?

Any queries/concerns should be sent to SQA via the centre's SQA Co-ordinator. They should not be included in any envelopes destined for verification. The verification team consisting of nominees and appointees cannot respond to these, as their role is to focus on the verification process.

Can a prelim be used to assess Units?

This is not a recommended approach as the Unit assessments have a formative goal, following the study of a specific topic/context. It is important that candidates are not disadvantaged by a 'dual purpose' approach, which does not take into account differences between reaching a competency level in a Unit assessment and undertaking a Course assessment. If this approach is selected, the centre would have to create clear links against each Assessment Standard in the judging evidence table. It is important that the overall purpose question used — either commercially or centre-devised — by its nature covers the whole text and not only a passage of the text.