



NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Messages Round 2

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Mathematics
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2014

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics all levels

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Mathematics

Added Value Unit

As a result of feedback, the Mathematics Added Value Unit Test was amended in February 2014 to include the option for assessors to apply an overall threshold of 26 out of 43 marks when making a judgement on candidate performance. The existing guidance on judging operational and reasoning skills separately is also still a valid approach. The National 4 Lifeskills Mathematics Added Value Unit Test remains unchanged.

Additional support materials

Additional support materials were published in February 2014 for Outcome 2. A set of questions to assess/re-assess Outcome 2 (reasoning) in both National 4 Mathematics Units: *Expressions and Formulae* and *Relationships* has been produced as well as a set of questions to assess/re-assess Outcome 2 in the three National 5 Mathematics Units: *Applications; Expressions and Formulae;* and *Relationships*. These additional materials are available on the Mathematics

Unit assessment support section of SQA's secure site. They have been designed so that reasoning skills are attached to different operational skills or use a different context or strategy from Unit assessment support package 1.

Lifeskills Mathematics

Using SOLAR, SQA's online assessment tool

Centres may use a combination of paper-based assessments such as SQA Unit Assessment support packs and online assessment via SOLAR to assess Lifeskills Mathematics or Numeracy Units. It is not necessary for a whole cohort to be assessed using the same material or in the same medium and individual candidates need not have all Assessment Standards assessed using the same medium.

SOLAR summative assessments should be administered in the same manner as other instruments of assessment. SQA's guidance on re-assessment is that normally there should be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Re-assessment should be carried out under the same conditions as the original assessment. This applies to all methods of assessment, including the use of SOLAR. It may be the case that a candidate has started an online assessment using SOLAR and not been able to complete it in the allotted time, then completed the assessment of that Outcome or Assessment Standard using another version of the test at a later date. This would still count as a first attempt. If situations like this have occurred, and it may appear that candidates have had more than the usual number of assessment attempts, it would be helpful if centres included an explanation of this with any material submitted for external verification.

Numeracy

Assessment of Assessment Standard 1.1

This Assessment Standard assesses the use of units. A candidate can pass this Assessment Standard irrespective of whether or not they correctly perform the calculation.

For example: $£6 + £5 = £10$ — this could be awarded credit under Assessment Standard 1.1 although the candidate has miscalculated the total.

Numeracy bridging pack

Candidates who have passed the three Units of National 5 Mathematics, need only successfully complete the two questions covering Assessment Standards 1.3 and 2.3 in the bridging pack (or equivalent) for the centre to be able to enter them as a pass in the *Numeracy* (National 5) Unit (H225 75). It is not necessary for the centre to include a tracking grid to show where the rest of the numeracy evidence occurs within the assessment of the three Mathematics Units.

Assessment judgements

The vast majority of centres closely followed the commentary on making assessment judgements and made correct decisions.

If there is a difference of opinion between the original marker and an internal verifier, the centre should make the final assessment judgement clear. At times, this has not been the case. If the script is submitted for verification, then a short note explaining the reason for the final decision would assist greatly.

Re-assessment

In order for the level of demand to be equivalent in a re-assessment, centres are advised to change the context and the nature of the question so that candidates are not required to carry out identical steps to those in the original assessment. For example, if the original question tests percentage increase, then the re-assessment could test percentage decrease.

03

Section 3: General comments

Internal verification

In many cases, there was evidence of robust internal verification systems. Some centres included an explanation of their internal verification process. Some centres had set up a system to enable them to share expertise and assist each other with internal verification. Some authorities have also set up groups to support internal verification and help to achieve consistency in cases where unusual responses were encountered or assessment judgements were not straightforward.