



# NQ Verification 2014–15 Key Messages Round 1

01

## Section 1: Verification group information

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

### National Courses/Units verified:

National 4, National 5 and new Higher Mathematics  
National 3, National 4 and National 5 Lifeskills Mathematics

02

## Section 2: Comments on assessment

### Assessment approaches

The vast majority of centres used SQA Unit assessment support packs. Support pack 1 was the favoured for all levels from National 3 up to Higher.

If centres make any amendments to either the assessment or marking guidance and judging evidence table, then these should be submitted along with the candidate evidence.

### Mathematics

All centres used approach 1 for assessing candidates — all subskills are assessed and a candidate demonstrates a pass if they achieve at least half marks for National 4 and National 5, and more than half marks at Higher.

### Lifeskills Mathematics

Some centres are using pack 2 as the favoured approach with pack 1 being used for re-assessment purposes, if necessary. A number of centres using Solar were verified.

## **Numeracy**

Using a threshold approach was the most popular mechanism of demonstrating whether a candidate achieved a pass for an Outcome. However, centres must be vigilant that if a candidate does not reach the threshold for an Outcome, then perhaps they could still achieve a pass with individual Assessment Standards.

When using the Outcome threshold approach, only three marks for Units can count towards the threshold — one for money, one for time and one for measure.

The threshold approach can only be used for an Outcome not across the Unit as a whole.

## **Re-assessments**

### **Mathematics**

#### **Outcome 1**

For Outcome 1 questions, contexts are not always applicable so ‘changing the numbers’ may be the only option (eg factorising a sum of terms with a numerical common factor). However, if the original question was, for example, a sine rule question where the angle was asked for then, in the re-assessment, ask for the side instead. Where a context exists, then for any re-assessment the context should be changed.

#### **Outcome 2**

For this Outcome, re-assessment of either Assessment Standard should be attached to a different sub-skill from that used in the original assessment — or use a different strategy/context.

### **Lifeskills Mathematics**

Where possible the contexts should be changed, eg if the initial assessment is time management in the context of cooking then the re-assessment could be time management in the context of planning a journey.

## **Assessment judgements**

The majority of centres made reliable decisions across the assessments submitted.

The most common mistake in marking is the lack of follow-through marking. Where a candidate has made a mistake, the subsequent marking must be checked to see if further marks can be awarded according to the marking guidance.

## Section 3: General comments

There were many examples of excellent marking, where a tick or cross was evident for every mark.

In general, if an answer requires rounding, then the unrounded answer must be stated first.

Care needs to be taken transferring marks from candidates' scripts to judging evidence tables. In one case, a candidate did not achieve the pass they were entitled to.

There were some excellent examples of internal verification and mechanisms of recording discussions between the original marker and the internal verifier. It is important that when a discussion has taken place between the original marker and the internal verifier, then the end result needs to be clearly recorded.

The following are taken from the General Marking Guidance and were evident as areas that some centres need to pay particular attention to:

- ◆ Working subsequent to an error must be **followed through**, with possible full marks for the subsequent working, provided that the level of difficulty involved is approximately similar.
- ◆ Candidates may use any mathematically correct method to answer questions except in cases where a particular method is specified or excluded.
- ◆ In general, as a consequence of an error perceived to be trivial, casual or insignificant, eg  $6 \times 6 = 12$ , candidates lose the opportunity of gaining a mark.
- ◆ Where a transcription error (paper to script or within script) occurs, the candidate should normally lose the opportunity to be awarded the next process mark.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to include the correct units with their answers. Reference should be made to the marking guidance for individual assessments. In general, candidates should not be penalised more than once for equivalent omissions in an assessment opportunity.