

Moderation Feedback – Central -2005

Assessment Panel:

Geography

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

**Geography Intermediate 1
Higher
Advanced Higher**

General comments on moderation activity

The request by SQA, as in previous years, for centres to include the NAB item(s) and marking scheme(s) greatly assisted the team and reduced time lost trying to work out the NAB item used.

Specific issues identified

Candidate performance was satisfactory and few of those sampled had failed the Units.

The moderators were able to report that in most cases centres were applying marking schemes well and were clearly indicating where marks were being awarded.

There was evidence of cross marking in some centres and this was commended where identified.

Unlike last year centres completed the Moderation Sample Form accurately and as per instructions supplied by SQA.

Intermediate 1 and 2

Evidence, unlike last year, caused little concern. All but one of the centres had opted to present candidates for the new Intermediate course. Centres following the new course and using the new NAB items and marking instructions removed the perennial problem for moderators and centres of confusing half and full marks when assessing candidates work. Cross marking and annotation of scripts to allow candidates to improve are increasingly evident in centre across the country. Wherever this appears centres are commended.

One centre was deemed 'not accepted' as it had used 'old' NAB items/marketing instructions for the Unit moderated. While this was only one centre out of the sample moderated, if this level of error is reflected across the country an unacceptable number of centres may have assessed candidates incorrectly. Subsequent to the central moderation event, and after assessment review, having selected and used the appropriate NAB items/marketing instructions, the centre was deemed as accepted.

Higher

While the majority of centres moderated are familiar with the requirements of moderation, a number are still making basic mistakes. The use of full marks instead of half marks still persists. These centres are not following the guidance for markers in the NAB packs. All the centres moderated used appropriate NAB items and marking instructions. Cross marking and annotation of scripts to allow candidates to improve are increasingly evident in centres across the country. Wherever this appears centres are commended.

Advanced Higher

The quality of the work was generally very good with a number of centres/candidates presenting some outstanding work. It is evident that centres are providing good support mechanisms for candidates and have understood the new arrangements. Cross marking and annotation of scripts to allow candidates to improve are increasingly evident in centres across the country. Wherever this appears centres are commended.

Geographical Issues — Centres need to ensure that the full time is given to candidates to complete the NAB item. Some of the comments to candidates on the assessment marking grids were

bland and generic rather than specific and indicating a means of improvement for candidates.

Geographical Study — Where candidates wrote extended answers in sentences, the quality of their response and explanation tended to be better. Some candidates listed points and rarely gave sufficient detail for reasons and conclusion reached.

Three centres were deemed ‘not accepted’ at the central moderation event. For two of these centres the Moderators felt that the centre had been a bit harsh in their assessment of the candidates’ work. Subsequent to the central moderation event and after assessment review all three centres were deemed as ‘accepted’.

Feedback to centres

General comments

Many centres submitted evidence that had been carefully marked and presented. Ticks on scripts showed exactly where marks were being awarded and this was very helpful to the moderating team. Moderators commented on the number of centres in which scripts were annotated by the markers and this provided good feedback for candidates.

Centres which had obviously adopted a policy of cross marking/internal moderation procedures are to be particularly commended. Such centres presented few, if any problems, for the moderators as they had already identified and acted upon any inconsistencies or ambiguity, if there were any, in the marking of individual members of staff.

Centres that have single person departments might think about linking up with a neighbouring centre to facilitate cross marking.

Intermediate 1 and 2

Internal assessment at this level seems to be well understood and the move to the new Course seems to have gone well. However centres should ensure that all old NAB items are replaced with up to date NAB items to avoid any future confusion.

Higher

At Higher level only NABs published since May 2004 should now be used. While there is a choice of topics within NABs, 1, 2 and 3 for the Physical and the Human Environments, these NABs should not be mixed together. This repeats advice previously issued by SQA.

Advanced Higher

In general the quality of candidate performance exemplifies the high standard of support from teachers/lecturers given to candidates in centres.

If available, candidates might in future be shown completed examples of Geographical Studies and Issues NABs as a guide for their own personal development.

To be successful in the Units candidates have to be given a range of support mechanisms to ensure they develop the necessary skills required to complete the Geographical Issues internal assessment. The support may include class/group/individual teaching or discussion, identification of a suitable format/style, verbal and non verbal comments on how to improve and the exemplification of the required standard. While it is not the intention to recommend one style over another, it is important that candidates appreciate that the critical evaluation in the Geographical Issues Unit and Geographical Study must include key aspects as outlined in the instrument of assessment.

The moderators are looking for a number of items to satisfy their requirements.

These items are as follows:

- 1 The candidate has completed:
 - ◆ an outline for the interim report based on one aspect of a Geographical Study plus an interim report on the chosen aspect of a Geographical Study.

and/or

- ◆ that the centre has used an approved NAB item as supplied by SQA or similar item approved prior to moderation for the Geographical Issue

2 A completed internal assessment marking grid for the candidate.

3 Candidates are assessed element by element or PC by PC and not in a holistic fashion.

4 There is a clear policy being followed by the centre in relation to marking. This may be illustrated by the following:

- ◆ Ticks on candidate work, which are useful and help to identify where the teacher is giving credit, following the marking guidelines provided by SQA.
- ◆ Additional written comments on the candidates work in support of the decisions given on the internal assessment marking grid. This is highly valued both for the candidate to show how to improve his/her performance and for moderators to ensure a candidate/centre meets the requirements of the Unit.
- ◆ Detailed and accurate comments avoiding the use of subjective terms which might lead to confusion eg does the word 'basic' refer to a borderline candidate (2/3) or someone who has no understanding at all (1).
- ◆ Clear and unambiguous comments, allowing the Moderation Team to quickly identify where a centre is being too lenient or too harsh on the candidate.
- ◆ Cross marking of candidates work which is valuable evidence of internal moderation of the centre's work. Where staffing does not allow centres to cross mark internally then centres may think of pairing up with a nearby centre for mutual support.
- ◆ Detailed comments written by the teacher both on the candidate work and the internal assessment marking grid. These make it more likely that the teacher's judgement will be understood by the Moderator.
- ◆ Evidence that reassessment has taken place where necessary.