

## **Moderation Feedback – Central - 2005**

**Assessment Panel:**

**Modern Studies**

**Qualification area**

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

**Modern Studies 10, 11 and 12**

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## General comments on moderation activity

The pattern of moderation made it harder to discern national patterns in 2005. The moderators have, however, identified some features and trends.

The standard of material presented by many of the 'Accepted' centres was not only adequate but of a high standard. In these cases there was evidence that national standards had been applied accurately and consistently. Candidates were presented at the correct level with the use of National Assessment Bank (NAB) assessments meaningful for a teaching and learning dialogue. Thorough assessment was indicated by full documentation that included feedback to candidates and availability of their reassessment material. The expertise of the teacher/lecturer was often discernible. There were no issues of validity or reliability. The moderators often compliment work that is constructed accurately and is of high quality. They usually give advice to centres that narrowly meet moderation requirements.

The centres that were 'Not Accepted' were few but caused concern. This decision indicates that the centre has not applied national standards or has been inconsistent in their delivery. The decision to reject a centre is made by more than one moderator and confirmed by the Senior Moderator. This is a precarious situation for any centre to find itself. The single most common reason for rejection was one of validity, where the evidence requirement across two study themes in Units D343 12 and D345 12 was not supplied. (See below Section 2)

The 'Not Accepted' decision requires immediate remedy at an unfortunate time in the session as candidates are about to begin their external examinations. Centres will almost certainly be recalled for further moderation which might be retrospective, random or over an additional Unit. Moderators are also available to visit a centre in this category.

## Specific issues identified

In 2001 a reduction in the evidence requirements was made in Units D343 12 (Political Issues in the United Kingdom) and D345 12 (International Issues) so that evidence of LO1 and LO2 was required across two study themes. In 2004 the moderators identified this as the single most recurring area of weakness when moderating Unit D343 12 and emphasised their concerns accordingly. This weakness resurfaced this year in the moderation of the International Issues Unit.

The moderators were concerned about the paucity of reassessment material that was submitted by some centres. The application of the split NABs where a candidate is only assessed in one Learning Outcome per study theme suggests a minimalist approach which is not encouraged by the moderators. Mindful of the fact that a question in the examination requires both Learning Outcomes the candidate may be disadvantaged by this practice. Importantly, the recommended time allocation for NAB items ought to be observed carefully in order for the candidate to be assessed accurately, placed at the appropriate level and prepared suitably for the external examination. The moderators appreciate that most candidates are likely to achieve NAB assessments first time in those study themes that are delivered last and are completed closest to the delivery of the external paper.

It was encouraging to see the application of the recent issue of NAB items by many centres. This indicates that more practitioners are aware that SQA Coordinators in their centres can access most recent materials, including NAB assessments, through the SQA's confidential website. Although minor modification of questions is acceptable to the moderators, providing the original NAB item is identified clearly, few centres offered changes. The typed NAB items and their original marking instructions do not require to be submitted if noted on the moderation sample form, however most centres do so as a professional courtesy to assist moderation. Where necessary a letter of explanation can be submitted with the centre's evidence.

Prior moderation, where the centre creates its own assessments and submits them to the moderation team, is an option available but rarely used in Modern Studies. This continued to be the case in session 2004-5. The creation of assessment items is an exacting task. Single assessments do not constitute complete items. Furthermore, most practitioners are aware that the Decision Making Exercise in Unit D344 12 requires a complex design and construction. Marking guidelines are required for every assessment. All centres that were moderated this year used NAB items to assess their candidates. Updated assessments, whose confidentiality is a condition of their use, are made available by SQA to centres.

The practice of submitting a letter of clarification with the moderation package is helpful where there is a particular difficulty with a piece of evidence. The moderators have encouraged this in previous events. Centres have been advised to contact SQA should they have any questions on the application of the NAB items but any advice given by the officers is not a substitute for moderation evidence.

It is important that practitioners keep abreast of recent developments in order to prepare their candidates thoroughly. The SQA website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) offers useful information.

## Feedback to centres

- The standard of material presented by many of the ‘Accepted’ centres was of an acceptable standard.
- The most common reason for rejection was one of validity, where the evidence requirement across two study themes in Units D343 12 and D345 12 was not supplied.
- The moderators were concerned about the lack of evidence of reassessment in some cases.
- It is important that practitioners keep abreast of recent developments in order to prepare their candidates thoroughly.
- Practitioners should be aware that SQA Coordinators in their centres can access most recent materials, including confidential NAB assessments, through SQA's website.
- The SQA website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) offers useful information.
- The members of the moderating team can be contacted, via the Qualifications Manager, for advice and support.
- Development visits, for which a charge will be made, can be requested by centres.