

## Moderation Feedback – Central (Postal) - 2005

**Assessment Panel:**

**History**

**Qualification area**

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

**History : Higher  
Intermediate 2  
Intermediate 1**

## General comments on moderation activity

The bulk of candidates and centres posed no problems for the moderators. This is explained by the coherence between the internal assessments made by NABs and those used for external assessment. Candidates and centres have a sound understanding of what is required. In all cases candidates had been entered for an appropriate level of Course and the vast majority of candidates demonstrated that they had achieved the Learning Outcomes.

Generally, candidates performed very well. For Higher, most candidates had written sound essays which were clear passes. The vast majority of Intermediate candidates also produced scripts which were above the National Standard.

It was noted that for both Intermediate and Higher some candidates introduced their essay by stating “In this essay I will...” and this has made it difficult for them to write a satisfactory introduction.

Intermediate candidates performed less well in carrying out evaluation. They were inclined to focus too heavily on the content of the source and to neglect the “origin and possible purpose of the source” which is, in fact, where they gain most marks. In particular, they were inclined simply to assert that a source was “Primary” without explaining what led them to this conclusion ie “It is Primary because it was written at the time of *whatever is asked in the question*”. Similarly, they commented that a source was biased without quoting any evidence to support their decision.

## Specific issues identified

There were no areas where procedures or specific Units/Courses caused misunderstandings, except for two cases where centres were using old NABs and marking schemes which had been withdrawn two years ago. In these cases the centres had to reassess candidates.

It is important to recognise that when assessments were reviewed a few years ago, the arrangements for both internal and external assessment were harmonised. Consequently, candidates and centres should encounter no problems with the procedures/arrangements for internal assessment.

## Feedback to centres

In 2005 the British Topic was moderated for History.

The vast majority of candidates' work was accepted because the National Standard was clearly understood by nearly all centres. This is probably because the NABs and their marking schemes match the form of External Assessment. Indeed, a number of centres submitted evidence taken from their "Prelims" and this is very acceptable because evidence which satisfies the requirements for successful Appeals will also satisfy the requirements for Internal Assessment.

It was clear from the evidence submitted that in History internal assessment has "bedded down" with the learning and teaching process. Most scripts were clearly marked with helpful comments which were directed primarily at the candidate but which were also helpful to the moderators. There was also more evidence of "cross marking" which is beneficial in centres where several people are involved in preparing candidates.

There were a few points raised by this year's evidence.

Revised NABs are available for all levels. Only revised NABs are acceptable for moderation.

NABs may be assessed holistically ie an aggregate pass indicates achievement. Where assessment is on an outcome by outcome basis, revisiting should be used only when a candidate has failed on one Learning Outcome. Rewriting an introduction or a conclusion to an essay is acceptable but rewriting the entire essay is not. For Intermediate, candidates can revisit only one answer and not more than one.

In writing essays some candidates start with the phrase "In this essay I will ..." which they follow with a declaration of their intention and a list of points about which they plan to write. The use of this form of words does not lead to a satisfactory introduction.

There were a number of cases where weak candidates drifted away from answering the question asked to writing "all I know about this topic". Candidates cannot receive credit for information which is not relevant to the question e.g. concentrating on the work of Booth and Rowntree when the question is about the effectiveness of the Liberal Reforms. Weak Intermediate candidates are inclined to drift away from "Explaining" (which is what the question asks) to describing eg. instead of explaining why Bruce won at Bannockburn, they record the events of the battle.

There are a number of points about evaluation answers for Intermediate. Many candidates still focus on the content of the source and not on the "author and possible purpose of the source". Only one mark is available for evaluating content – the remaining marks are for considering other aspects which may (or may not) make the source useful. Candidates do not receive credit for copying out the introduction to the source, nor for stating that the source is Primary or Secondary. They must explain their decision eg "It is Primary because it was written at the time of [*whatever the question asks*]". Similarly a bald statement that the source is biased does not receive credit, candidates must support their answer by referring to either the author or to evidence in the source. There should be a comment about the usefulness of the source. Logic suggests that it should be at the end of the answer after the candidate has considered the evidence but it frequently appears at the beginning of the answer and is supported by a series of statements to justify the decision.