

## Moderation Feedback – Visiting - 2005

### Qualification area

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

**ESOL Access 2  
ESOL Access 3  
ESOL Intermediate 1  
ESOL Intermediate 2  
ESOL Higher**

**HN ESOL UNIT**

## **General comments on moderation activity**

### **Context**

In 2003/2004 the new NQ ESOL Units were piloted along with assessment materials and there was good uptake from centres which had previously offered the ESOL Modules. Four centres were visited as part of the pilot. Three new External Moderators double-banked on these visits for training purposes.

During the pilot year, FENTO and SQA provided three training days, one in Glasgow, one in Edinburgh and one in Dundee, for ESOL Practitioners across Scotland in order to promote the new qualifications and provide an introduction to SQA qualifications for those ESOL staff unfamiliar with SQA and internal assessment. The training days were successful as an initial training in delivery and assessment and the qualifications have been introduced in more centres in 2004/2005. In 2004/2005, two further training days were held, one in Dundee for centres in that area and one in Glasgow for EAL teachers.

In order to increase the amount of support available to new centres and deal with queries about the Unit specifications and exemplar assessment materials, the Senior Moderator requested that visiting moderation be put in place for the session. This strategy proved to be effective with centres appreciating the face-to-face contact and support and advice from the team.

The exemplar assessment materials, apart from the listening tests on CD, were revised and made available on the secure website as NABS in December 2004. A set of exemplar candidate evidence was also made available at this time. The process of revision of both the Unit specifications and the NABS for Intermediate 2 and Higher has continued throughout the year.

### **General evaluative comment on the overall ability of the candidate group for each area**

Candidate evidence has now been sampled through external moderation for all levels of the NQ ESOL Units currently available. In general, the standard of candidate ability demonstrated has been of an appropriate standard. At this stage in the development of the qualifications and with new centres offering SQA qualifications, there have been occasions where the External Moderators have been able to offer guidance on the level of candidates and appropriateness of the qualifications that they have been entered for. At Access 2 and 3, assessor expectations have in a few cases been higher than the standard required and in a very few cases at Higher there have been some cases where Assessors and Internal Moderators have not yet fully grasped the standard. These variations are to be expected with new qualifications, especially as many Assessors are so unfamiliar with the practice of internal assessment.

### **Areas where candidates performed well**

English for Work Purposes Higher and English for Work and Study Intermediate 2 have produced some exceptionally good evidence for Outcome 1 and Assessors involved reported that the impact on candidates, of preparing and delivering presentations and taking part in the follow-up discussion, has been extremely positive.

In many centres, Writing at Intermediate 2 level demonstrated a high level of ability in candidates.

### **Areas where candidates performed less well**

In many instances it has been reported by Assessors that candidates performed less well in Listening assessments and required more attempts.

The quality of candidate evidence for Speaking at Access 3 and Intermediate 1 varies greatly, according to the experience and knowledge of the Assessors. In some centres this evidence is very strong with candidates demonstrating excellent communication strategies, but in other centres it is clear that Assessors have not fully understood the guidelines and candidates are not demonstrating their communication skills. This is yet another indication of the need for Assessor training.

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## **Specific issues identified**

### **Areas of common misunderstanding with procedures**

In a few cases there has been some confusion in centres about the subject specialist requirements for the Internal Moderator. In centres visited this session it has been easy to provide clarification on this and find suitable arrangements for internal moderation.

ESOL Units within centres are sometimes isolated from mainstream activities, unfamiliar or not up-to-date with SQA qualifications and procedures and lacking the centralised support of other subject areas.

### **Areas of common misunderstanding with specific units/courses**

#### **Transactional English Access 3**

Some centres have not correctly interpreted the guidance for role play in Outcome 1.

#### **Personal and Social English Access 3 English Language Study Intermediate 1**

Some centres, largely through lack of experience in setting-up assessment, have not succeeded in producing “natural conversations” for Outcome 1. Closer attention to the performance criteria and assessment guidance is required and this could be supported by further exemplars of conversations being circulated to centres.

Centres have had difficulty with the short time allowed to demonstrate that candidates meet the performance criteria.

#### **Correction of writing**

It has been necessary in a number of cases to draw attention to the guidelines for correcting 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of writing to ensure that centres are consistent.

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## **Feedback to centres**

There is no need for general feedback to centres as this is more effectively done on an individual basis at this stage in uptake of the NQ Units.

Centres should be kept fully informed of developments in the qualifications and consulted on the revised Unit specifications and NABs over the coming year.