

# National Qualifications 2006

## Senior Verifier Report

Subject: Modern Studies

Assessment Panel: Modern Studies

## NATIONAL UNITS

### TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS MODERATED

D34312/11/10

Politics in the United Kingdom

### FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

#### **General comments:**

In order to clarify this year's moderation activity four areas are identified:

- 1 Issues of validity arising for the central event.
- 2 Issues of communication with the SQA.
- 3 Development activity: visits and support.
- 4 Advice to centres.

## **1 Issues of validity arising for the central event.**

- 1.1 The Verifiers confirmed that most of the centres called for verification are working to the national standard, with no issues of validity or reliability. In these cases there was strong evidence that candidates had been entered and assessed at the correct level. The most recent edition of the National Assessment Bank (NAB) assessments had been applied and marked at a consistent standard. Thorough assessment was indicated by full documentation. Reassessment material was available and feedback to students was clear and supportive. In some cases there was evidence of first-class delivery of the subject which invariably included excellent feedback to candidates.
- 1.2 A few centres were 'Not Accepted'. The single most common reason for non-acceptance, as in previous years, was one of validity, where the evidence requirement across two study themes in Units D343.12 and D345.12 was not supplied or was delayed. This issue will be obviated by the new assessment regime next year.

There are concerns, however, that the recurrence of this weakness might suggest that some centres are not keeping up to date with changes in regulations. This is particularly important for session 2006- 2007 with the implementation of the new Course arrangements. (See below Section 2)

## **2 Issues of communication.**

- 2.1 There was concern this year that outdated NABs were still being applied. The nature of Modern Studies requires regular updating of materials including assessments. In order to meet this demand NABs had been refreshed and re-issued. It is vital that centres apply the most recent edition of the assessment items.

Each centre's SQA coordinator has access to NAB items.

- 2.2 The onus rests with practitioners to check SQA documentation which provides the guidance necessary for accurate assessment. Guidelines, in unambiguous detail, are available in all centres and on the SQA website at

<http://www.sga.org.uk> .

Should there be any questions the Qualifications Manager and Officers, the Verification Unit and Verification Team can all be contacted for advice and support. (Please see section 4)

- 2.3 The responsibility of selection of assessment materials rests with the centre. Minor modification to NABs is acceptable. However centres are advised to apply for prior moderation if significant changes to NABs are made. A piece of work must be achievable within the recommended time allocation. This is important on grounds of consistency and fairness.
- 2.4 Verification Form MS00 which accompanies an SQA request for evidence names twelve candidates. The document also requests the centre to identify the NABs used. It is vital to the verification process that each centre provides this information clearly. Additional information in a covering letter can be helpful in assisting the verifiers. Furthermore, where a Preliminary examination has been constructed using NAB items, and candidate evidence is drawn from it, a copy of the prelim paper is needed for verification.
- 2.5 Photocopies are not acceptable for verification. Centres must submit candidates' original work.
- 2.6 Centres should be aware that candidates who have already been certificated in a unit are not required in a verification sample. Such a candidate ought not to appear on the list from which a verification sample is pulled and centres should ensure that this does not occur.
- 2.7 If any centre encounters difficulties in the course of the year and anticipates that it cannot reach a standard necessary to pass verification then it should contact the Qualifications Manager at the earliest opportunity. This will enable support mechanisms to be put in place.

### **3 Development activity: visits and support.**

- 3.1 It is clear from development visit requests that some centres require reassurance that their work is of the correct standard rather than needing guidance or direction. The Verifiers have been pleased to offer such confirmation.
- 3.2 The growth in entries at Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 raises a number of issues. It is an area under development, especially where Intermediate is being considered as a Standard Grade replacement. Clearly entering candidates at the appropriate levels must be of prime consideration.
- 3.3 Centres are advised that developments at Access 3 Level can be found on the SQA website.
- 3.4 Centres which are not in regular communication with other practitioners may wish to communicate with the Verification Team or request development visits. Occasionally the Verification Team is asked to consider units which have been designed for a specific group of students. Occasionally this can include a free standing unit of work. Clearly those units which are NQ course components are more likely of have a supply of support materials.

## **4 Summary of Advice to centres.**

The verifiers were aware in this year's event that advice given to centres had to apply to the 2006 regulations while at the same time preparing for the transition to the new arrangements. Hence, centres should note that:

- Good quality feedback to candidates indicates good practice.
- It is important to keep up to date with regulations and criteria for assessment.
- It is helpful for the verification process to send additional information by letter if required.
- It is essential to use the correct edition of the NABs. These are available from SQA coordinators in centres.
- The verifiers wish to remind centres of the importance of adhering to the recommended time allocation for NAB assessments.
- Photocopies are not acceptable for moderation.
- It is necessary to provide full documentation within the moderation package, including re-assessments.
- Identification of the NABs used by the centre assists the verification process.
- The Verification Team, via the Verification Unit and/or the Qualifications Manager/Officer can be contacted for support or clarification of any issue.
- Development visits, for which a charge will be made, can be requested by centres.
- SQA's launch packs for the new Arrangements have given indications of the standard expected in the new assessment design. Further exemplars are on the subject page of the SQA website.
- Additional information on support materials is to be found on the LTScotland website.