

NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

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|---|----------------|
| Verification group name: | Modern Studies |
| Verification event/visiting information | Event |
| Date published: | March 2015 |

National Courses/Units verified:

| | | |
|---------|------------|--|
| H23C 73 | National 3 | Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom |
| H23F 73 | National 3 | Social Issues in the United Kingdom |
| H23G 73 | National 3 | International Issues |
| H23C 74 | National 4 | Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom |
| H23F 74 | National 4 | Social Issues in the United Kingdom |
| H23G 74 | National 4 | International Issues |
| H23C 75 | National 5 | Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom |
| H23F 75 | National 5 | Social Issues in the United Kingdom |
| H23G 75 | National 5 | International Issues |
| H23C 76 | Higher | Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom |
| H23F 76 | Higher | Social Issues in the United Kingdom |
| H23G 76 | Higher | International Issues |

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Overall, centres made good use of SQA-produced Unit assessment support (UAS) packs. Many centres also successfully adapted these materials to suit their own requirements. The evidence provided by centres confirms an awareness of comments and recommendations made in previous key messages reports. A number of centres made use of internally-produced assessments which had been prior verified. In almost all cases, instructions to candidates were clear and indicated the Assessment Standard. Assessments were accompanied by appropriate 'Judging evidence' tables (marking instructions). Most centres followed a Unit-by-Unit model for assessment. Evidence submitted at Higher showed that centres had built on previous experience from Nationals 3 to National 5.

A number of centres provided evidence of good practice:

- ◆ Assessment prompts gave a clear indication to candidates of the Assessment Standards.
- ◆ Provision of internal verification policy was evident, with evidence that this policy had been carried out during the assessment process.
- ◆ Successful amendments were made to material provided in the Unit assessment support packs — updating statistics and/or adapting the assessment to suit the needs of candidates.

There were some areas requiring development by centres:

- ◆ There is a need for evidence that a centre's internal verification process has been carried out — more and clearer evidence of how and where internal verification has actually taken place and clear evidence of how disagreements have been resolved.
- ◆ Centres need to be clear that Unit assessments differ from Course assessments. Unit assessments, therefore, should be designed so that all candidates have the opportunity to achieve the Assessment Standard for particular Units at an appropriate level.
- ◆ Greater care needs to be taken when creating marking instructions or 'Judging evidence' tables. (Please refer to UAS packs). Care taken with this will help in making accurate and consistent assessment judgements.

Assessment judgements

Most centres had made secure assessment judgements at all levels submitted. Some centres were unsure of the Assessment Standard for a particular Outcome.

A number of centres provided evidence of good practice:

- ◆ There was good evidence that many centres were implementing their internal verification policy — cross-marking of scripts, indication of where candidates had achieved the Assessment Standard on scripts, sampling of scripts by an internal verifier, recording details and decisions on straightforward grids. These scripts showed clarity in decision-making; decisions were accurate and consistent.
- ◆ Centres were, on the whole, making accurate judgement across all levels. Great care had been taken to ensure that this was reflected at Higher level.
- ◆ Accurate judgements were frequently followed by accurate recording and comments on appropriate grids.

There were some areas requiring development by centres:

- ◆ Most centres understood the instructions and submitted the correct assessment materials and candidate scripts. Some centres did, however, submit more scripts than necessary and did not include the appropriate internal verification policy and evidence that it had been carried out.
- ◆ There is a need for centres to be aware of the Assessment Standards for all Outcomes and to make decisions which accurately reflect whether the candidate has achieved a particular Outcome.
- ◆ In some cases, a candidate could have achieved the Outcome with a verbal prompt from centres. Centres should record when this has been given.

Centres using Course assessment to assess Unit Outcomes fail to assess Units accurately and consistently. Unit assessments need to be assessed using Unit Assessment Standards and should not be assessed on a 'marks for points' basis.

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Section 3: General comments

Generally, centres submitted well-organised evidence of assessment approaches and assessment judgements made. There was evidence of consistency in applying the Assessment Standards.

Internal standardisation procedures still need to be addressed to ensure consistency of approach and accurate assessment judgements.

Centres should ensure that they use the most up-to-date versions of SQA-produced materials.

Centres selected for verification are advised to ensure that all relevant documentation and evidence is enclosed, in order for verification to proceed.

Centres should make use of their local area support networks in order to make sure that all is in order.