



**National Qualifications 2011
Internal Assessment Report
Access 1 and 2**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

(ie freestanding Units which contribute to NPAs or NCs etc.)

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified

Using Mathematics in Everyday Situations 1 — Access 2

English: Oral Communication — Access 2

Science — Access 2

Biology — Access 2

Healthy Basic Cooking — Access 2

General comments

Verification took place in April this year at a central event. Twenty-three centres were verified for the above Units.

Throughout the year verifiers have not been involved in any prior verification activities, suggesting that centres have become more confident in using the National Assessment Bank materials and that the exemplification materials supplied have suited the candidates being presented this session. In the samples verified, a large number of submissions were for only a few candidates and this would indicate that this level is being delivered by specialists in a mainstream setting.

From the evidence presented, the majority of centres now have a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of assessment procedures and processes at this level.

Centres, on the whole, were using and applying the support materials available and delivering consistent standards when marking.

Evidence was well presented and organised and each candidate's submission was on the whole well documented and labelled.

However, this year there were an increased number of Not Accepted decisions, which would indicate that there are still some centres that had not fully understood the procedures required. Fortunately, the majority of difficulties were administrative and easily rectified.

On the whole, staff in centres have used the National Assessment Bank materials creatively and have applied standards consistently. As a result, the assessments used have become more accessible to their candidates without altering the criteria.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

This session, showed that, on the whole, centres have now become very familiar with the Unit specifications and National Assessment Bank material, and are applying standards consistently.

All centres had used the prescribed National Assessment Bank materials and some centres had altered the assessment materials considerably to meet candidate need while maintaining the correct standards. The examples submitted within the practical subject areas were particularly innovative. It also means that these subject areas will become more accessible to all candidates.

For more prescribed subjects (eg Mathematics in Everyday Situations) some centres did not always use the correct, up-to-date National Assessment Bank materials and this led to difficulties when verifying.

Exemplification materials had also proven useful as centres were using the examples suggested.

Evidence Requirements

Again, this year, candidate evidence that was submitted was of an excellent standard and it was obvious that centres had interpreted correctly what had to be collected and submitted.

In many cases evidence was enhanced by additional materials, eg checklists and photographs. Although this is not mandatory, it was useful in putting the assessment evidence into context.

With Access level Units, assessments are often administered orally so it is useful to record candidates' answers or the particular task they have been asked to complete. For example, in the Mathematics in Everyday Situations Unit, candidates are asked to give change or purchase an item with coins. It is also helpful to record the coins used in the assessment task.

Administration of assessments

All assessments had been carried out at the correct level for each candidate. It was obvious from the wide range of methods by which assessments had been administered that assessors knew their candidates very well and had devised and/or designed assessments that were accessible to all.

Assessment at this level can be administered to suit the candidate's normal mode of communication and this had been followed well by all centres.

It is important however to ensure that when an assessment is given orally all aspects of the answer is recorded, this gives a very clear picture of the standard that has been accepted by the assessor.

Centres should also make sure that all evidence submitted is labelled, signed and dated — although this advice has been given out before, some centres still need to take this on board.

For some centres, mistakes had been made in marking and if an effective internal verification system had been in place these issues would have been avoided.

Most centres had shown evidence of internal verification and this has continued to increase over the years. It is good practice to show examples of the internal verification system used in the centre.

Access level is often delivered in isolation within a centre and it is vital that staff share assessment procedures and decisions.

Areas of good practice/areas for improvement

Verifiers found clear evidence of good practice as follows:

- ◆ Centres had organised and labelled evidence — including signatures and dates.
- ◆ On the whole, most oral evidence was well documented and scribed.
- ◆ There was increased use of effective internal verification procedures and systems.
- ◆ Creative and innovative ways of adapting National Assessment Bank materials to meet candidates' needs, but retaining wording, quantity and style of questions.
- ◆ Use of photographs and checklists to enhance and support assessment evidence — as already mentioned, this is not mandatory but illustrates context of assessment.

- ◆ In Science and Biology, National Assessment Bank materials had been altered to fit in with topics and checklists devised which made tracking of criteria very clear.
- ◆ In Home Economics: Healthy Basic Cooking assessments had been carried out holistically with the use of a comprehensive checklist ensuring that all performance criteria were included.

Specific areas for improvement

The following points summarise guidance that this year's verification sample suggests would be helpful:

- ◆ Ensure the Verification Sampling Form is filled in correctly when submitting evidence and that the National Assessment Bank materials used accompany the evidence.
- ◆ Include the marking scheme with the National Assessment Bank materials.
- ◆ Use the internal verification system to ensure that a quality assurance check has been carried out and provide evidence of the process.
- ◆ When delivering an oral assessment, record answers and/or tasks that the candidate has carried out or responded to.
- ◆ Ensure that evidence has been signed and dated, eg complete oral response attested by...