



**National Qualifications 2013  
Internal Assessment Report  
Expressive Arts Bacculaureate**

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

# National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

Expressive Arts Baccalaureate: Interdisciplinary Project

## General comments

This was the first year of delivery of the Interdisciplinary Project Unit in Expressive Arts with seven candidates undertaking the Interdisciplinary Project from six centres. All presenting centres were subject to external verification. At central verification, the evidence submitted from five candidates was judged to be in line with national standards. This represents an accuracy level of 71%. Issues were identified with assessment decisions in two centres. The assessment decision on one candidate was deemed to have been severe and this candidate was upgraded. The assessment decision on one candidate was deemed to have been lenient and this candidate was downgraded. Five candidates completed the Interdisciplinary Project as part of the Baccalaureate award and two as a stand-alone Unit.

The results for the Unit were: two Grade A passes, four Grade B passes, one Grade C pass, and zero No Awards.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

A support event was held in November 2012 and this was attended by most presenting centres. Delegates used exemplar material from Science and Language Interdisciplinary Projects as a basis for discussion on the assessment criteria and national standards and to help develop familiarity with the specifications for the Unit. External Verifiers chaired discussions on national standards and the assessment process. Delegates were very appreciative of the event.

All centres presenting candidates in this first year of the Expressive Arts Baccalaureate have previously presented candidates in Science and/or Languages. This means that within the centre, there is a sound knowledge and experience of national standards through development visits and events, and from their experience of presenting candidates in the Science or Language Interdisciplinary Project Unit. Centres already have a well-developed mechanism for assessing and internally verifying Interdisciplinary Projects and this has been extended to include this new curricular area.

At the Quality Forum events, centre representatives demonstrated their familiarity with the specifications for the Unit. They made valuable contributions to discussions and appreciated the opportunity to interact with External Verifiers and assessors from other centres to further develop their knowledge. The Quality Forum events also provided centre representatives with the opportunity to see

and discuss candidate evidence from other centres, helping develop and consolidate an understanding of the instruments of assessment and the application of national standards.

All centres had made good use of the exemplar material. The exemplar material on SQA's website continues to be updated with new examples. These provide samples of A, B and C grades with supporting commentaries by an External Verifier explaining the grading of each exemplar.

### **Evidence Requirements**

All centres submitted the required evidence for each candidate. Assessors also provided an Assessor Report for each candidate. These were completed correctly and mostly contained specific comments relating to the awarding of criteria. The nature of these comments was most useful during central verification and External Verifiers gave feedback commending centres on the helpfulness of these comments in understanding how grading decisions had been reached.

All evidence relating to timelines was included in submissions.

### **Administration of assessments**

Many centres have developed good external links with, for example, businesses, colleges or universities, in some cases forming strong partnerships. These links have allowed candidates to access facilities and expertise, and have provided them with opportunities to access less familiar learning environments. Some centres have also involved staff from these organisations as joint assessors. In this capacity they can provide an additional dimension and point of view to assessor comments, as often they attend presentations and are part of the internal verification process as well as supporting candidates through some strands of their project. This strengthens the robustness of the process.

In general, centres have a good understanding of the requirements of internal verification. Mostly, Expressive Arts candidates have been part of processes already set up in centres, as all centres have previously presented candidates for Science and/or Language Interdisciplinary Projects. There are some excellent examples of co-operative working between departments, or between centres within the same local authority. This approach has provided excellent support to staff within centres in understanding and applying national standards, as well as providing robust internal verification.

### **Areas of good practice**

Candidates made good connections across disciplines, linking with a wide range of subjects. Also, external agencies were accessed imaginatively and usefully.

Strong internal verification processes meant that external verification was straight forward. This was also aided by the richness of assessor comments directing

External Verifiers and giving insight to the assessor's thoughts in the grading process.

External Verifiers commented on the high quality, topical nature and relevance of many projects. Having a project grounded in current issues makes the project more realistic for the candidate and can help with motivation.

Some centres have very robust internal verification procedures led by the local education authority, with collegiality across all disciplines. While this is to be commended, there are many other equally valid internal verification methods.

Centres are providing excellent support and encouragement to candidates. This is resulting in candidates having a rewarding experience in completing their Interdisciplinary Project and developing their generic skills. There is also evidence of some centres encouraging candidates to carry out an initial skills evaluation to facilitate assessment of progress in developing skills.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

Centres should encourage candidates to provide as much detail as possible in timelines as this frequently allows dependencies to be seen more clearly.

Centres should ensure that dates of signatures correspond to the time of signing and not time of printing.

Candidates should be encouraged, where projects have developed along lines different from the original proposal and plan, to include timelines, contingencies and dependencies for any new strands of the project.