



**National Qualifications 2013
Internal Assessment Report
Languages Baccalaureate**

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:

Languages Baccaalaureate: Interdisciplinary Project

General comments

This was the fourth year of delivery of the Interdisciplinary Project Unit. This year external verification was carried out on a sampling basis.

At central verification, evidence from 39 candidates was verified out of a total of 46 entries. There was 82% accuracy in centres' assessment decisions with External Verifiers (EVs) agreeing with centres. Issues were identified with assessment decisions in some centres. The assessment decisions on two candidates were deemed to have been severe and these candidates were upgraded. The assessment decisions on five candidates were deemed to have been lenient and these candidates were downgraded.

The results for the Unit for the verified sample were: 24 Grade A passes, 13 Grade B passes, two Grade C passes, and zero No Awards.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Since the introduction of the Interdisciplinary Project, centres have continued to develop their knowledge and experience of national standards through development visits and events. Many centres now have a well-developed mechanism for assessing and internally verifying Interdisciplinary Projects involving staff from different curricular areas.

The Quality Forum events are generally well attended and praised by centre representatives as being crucial in developing their understanding of how to assess candidate evidence and provide appropriate comments which direct both the internal and external verification process.

Many centres presenting for the first time have gained greater expertise and confidence through networking either with other presenting departments (eg Science) or schools within the same authority. This is evidenced in the accuracy of these centres' assessment decisions and the standard of evidence submitted. The exemplar material on SQA's website continues to be updated with a wide range of examples and supporting EV commentaries. These provide samples of A, B and C grades with the commentaries by an External Verifier explaining the grading of each exemplar.

Evidence Requirements

There is a good understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit within most centres. All centres submitted all the mandatory pieces of evidence and an Assessor Report for each candidate. However, in some cases the Assessor Report was incomplete in terms of what criteria had been met or had very brief assessor comments. This suggests that some centres are unaware of the importance of the Assessor Report and perhaps have an uncertainty of the difference between verification — internal or external — and cross-marking.

In completing the templates, centres need to ensure that candidates remain focused on the process and not the product. Where a candidate's evidence contains more detail about presentations and the way the project was conducted rather than the skills developed through completing the project, it is harder for the candidate to show that they are meeting the grading criteria.

The quality of the Assessor Reports is improving. Many centres are now distinguishing between feedback comments to candidates and comments on the Assessor Report which inform the verification process.

Some centres continue to provide interim reviews, progress logs and in some cases discs containing presentations and reports along with the mandatory evidence. These are not required and are not taken into consideration during central verification. Centres have been advised of this in their EV report where it was relevant.

Administration of assessments

Centres mostly use SQA templates, however some centres submitted evidence using a mix of Languages and Science templates. The templates are identical for all subjects apart from references to the curricular area. Candidates are not disadvantaged by this, but centres should ensure that the correct templates are used.

We continue to see a wide variety of approaches to the internal verification process which is well established in most centres, though for some it is more a system of joint- or cross-marking. These processes also have merit as assessment decisions are not made by one single assessor, however an Internal Verifier, who is unfamiliar with the project, is in a better position to point out where there is no evidence of criteria being met or any weaknesses or inconsistencies in assessor comments which might not be supporting the awarding of criteria.

Areas of good practice

There is strong evidence of close collaboration between departments, between school and between schools and colleges to support both candidates and assessors. These collegial and cross-curricular links are instrumental in allowing candidates to access some of the grade criteria.

In many cases candidate timelines are improving in quality and detail, allowing candidates to better meet the dependencies criteria.

Many candidates are choosing to expand on the broad contexts. Although this is not a requirement, it helps the candidate develop their project along their intended path.

External Verifiers have commented on the range of innovative and challenging projects carried out by candidates. These have led to many interesting links being made by candidates with people in other countries in a wide variety of ways.

Many centres provide excellent support for their candidates and the number of staff with experience of the Interdisciplinary Project continues to grow. Some centres have formed an Interdisciplinary Project team which crosses all subjects and involves both teaching and senior management staff.

Assessor comments are often commended for their quality and insight. These are extremely useful in the verification process.

Specific areas for improvement

Candidates should be encouraged to produce as full a timeline as possible. This increased level of detail means that candidates should find it easier to show the dependencies within their project.

Centres should ensure that candidates sign and date all pieces of evidence, which should be completed prior to the grade submission at the end of March.

Some projects have been submitted which are more research projects. These often do not allow candidates to access all C-grade criteria, and therefore they could potentially fail the Unit. Exemplar material and the Candidate Guide should be used to help candidates ensure that their project has sufficient breadth and depth to allow them to meet as many criteria as possible.

Assessors should encourage candidates who change the focus, or follow additional strands to their plan, to add these to the original plan. They should also include timescales, dependencies and contingencies relevant to these additions.

Where assessors are awarding A-grade criteria, the comments in the Assessor Report should support this.