



**National Qualifications 2014
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: Interdisciplinary Project

General comments

This is the second year of delivery of the Interdisciplinary Project Unit in Expressive Arts. Evidence was submitted from seven candidates undertaking the Interdisciplinary Project from five centres. All presenting centres were subject to external verification. Central verification confirmed the evidence submitted from three centres to be in line with national standards. Issues were identified with assessment decisions in two centres. The assessment decisions from one centre were deemed to have been severe and a higher grade was recommended for two candidates. The assessment decisions from another centre were deemed to have been lenient and a lower grade was recommended for two candidates.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Some centres presenting in Expressive Arts already have a well-developed mechanism for assessing and internally verifying Interdisciplinary Projects in other subject areas, and this has been extended to include Expressive Arts. There is evidence from some centres of cross-curricular working which allows staff and candidates to support each other across the subject areas and enhances the interdisciplinary nature of the Unit.

Not all centres were represented at the Quality Forum event, but those attending 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 representatives from other centres to further develop their knowledge. The Quality Forum event also provided centre representatives with the opportunity to see and discuss candidate evidence from other centres. This helps develop and consolidate an understanding of the instruments of assessment and the application of national standards, and centres should encourage assessors to attend.

Some centres presented candidates for the Baccalaureate for the first time and were praised for the accuracy of their assessment decisions and the standard of evidence submitted. Within these centres, there is evidence of a team approach to assessing and mentoring candidates through their project. This is commended in External Verifier reports, where relevant.

Exemplar material available on SQA's website had been accessed by most candidates, and centre representatives commented on the usefulness of this material for both themselves and their candidates.

Evidence Requirements

In general, all centres have a good understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit. All mandatory pieces of evidence, including additional timeline sheets, and a completed Assessor Report were submitted for each candidate. All centres used SQA templates. For most candidates, assessor comments were full and detailed, showing clearly how grading decisions had been reached.

Some centres included additional evidence, for example Interim Reviews and Progress Logs, 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 External Verifier report where it is relevant.

Administration of assessments

Mostly centres have a sound understanding of the requirements of internal verification. In three centres, Expressive Arts candidates have been part of existing processes, as these centres have previously presented candidates for Interdisciplinary Projects. There are some excellent examples of co-operative working between departments and this approach has provided excellent support to staff within centres in understanding and applying national standards. In these centres there is also a well-established, robust internal verification process.

In general, across presenting centres, there is a variety of approaches to the internal verification process and at the Quality Forum event centre representatives gave full accounts of their internal verification mechanism. Where no representative has been present, External Verifiers are unable to judge the thoroughness of the internal verification process, and they have commented on this lack of information in their report.

There is evidence of some centres forming extensive links with other agencies and industries. These links have allowed candidates to access facilities and expertise, and have provided them with opportunities to access less familiar learning environments. Where candidates have made links with universities and other outside agencies, some have often included them in the audience for presentations. Input from these external links helps provide a robustness to assessment of the presentation and their inclusion is welcome.

Most Assessor Reports contained high quality comments which were very helpful to the external verification process. However, centres should ensure that comments within the Assessor Report are directed at verifiers — both internal and external — and not to the candidate.

Areas of good practice

External Verifiers have commented on the creativeness and originality of projects being carried out by candidates. Several projects explored the role and impact of the expressive arts in health and wellbeing and, in one, the transition from primary to secondary school. These projects had strong citizenship themes.

Projects grounded in current trends and candidates' areas of interest help to motivate candidates to complete their projects.

Candidates are making good use of external links, with close collaboration between centres and external agencies in mentoring and supporting candidates. These collegial links are instrumental in allowing candidates to access some grading criteria. The impressive use of some of these links has been commented on by External Verifiers in their reports to relevant centres.

External Verifiers have commended the feedback given to candidates by assessors. Clear, comprehensive and positive feedback from assessors helps to make the Interdisciplinary Project a rewarding experience for candidates, and in the initial stages of the project helps their motivation. The quality and insightfulness of assessor comments also contribute to the verification process.

Specific areas for improvement

Candidates should be encouraged to have sufficient strands to their project to allow them to access all grading criteria. Some projects are too narrow in their scope and can therefore make it difficult for the candidate to access all grading criteria.

Centres presenting for the first time should view the Quality Forum as an opportunity to develop their understanding of standards and encourage a representative of the centre to attend.

Some candidates are over-relying on e-mail communication which can restrict access to some grading criteria. For some there may be practical difficulties with external visits, but candidates need to be creative in using IT to help overcome problems.

Centres need to distinguish between joint-assessing or cross-marking and internal verification. An Internal Verifier should have no prior knowledge of the candidates' work and should be verifying the assessment decision.