



**National Qualifications 2014  
Internal Assessment Report  
Geography**

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:

- DF3C 10: Geography: Physical Environments (Intermediate 1)
- DF43 10: Geography: Human Environments (Intermediate 1)
- DF44 10: Geography: Environmental Interactions (Intermediate 1)
- DF3C 11: Geography: Physical Environments (Intermediate 2)
- DF43 11: Geography: Human Environments (Intermediate 2)
- DF44 11: Geography: Environmental Interactions (Intermediate 2)
- DF3C 12: Geography: Physical Environments (Higher)
- DF43 12: Geography: Human Environments (Higher)
- DF44 12: Geography: Environmental Interactions (Higher)
- DF49 13: Geographical Issues (Advanced Higher)
- DF4A 13: Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)

## General comments

Verifiers were pleased to confirm that centres have a very clear understanding of the national standard. It was clearly evident those candidates are being presented at the correct level and that teachers are sharing the standard with candidates.

Only one centre was deemed to be 'Not Accepted' — for Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher). This centre, after advice from the verification team, provided the necessary evidence for the centre to be deemed 'Accepted'.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

All centres that were verified used the appropriate assessment item provided through the National Assessment Bank (NAB) to generate evidence to show a candidate had met the national standard.

When using NAB items, centres must ensure that resources such as maps, graphs and statistical information are current.

## Evidence Requirements

Centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for each of the Units verified.

At Advanced Higher, one centre did not submit crucial parts of the candidate evidence for Geographical Methods and Techniques. All candidates omitted to describe how they carried out their human fieldwork technique(s). They also used theoretical ideas as to how the physical fieldwork techniques should be carried out rather than the practical approach as to how they carried out the fieldwork.

GMT NAB 001 Page 5 states the following:

*'The Unit assessment requires candidates to provide evidence of the successful application of these methods and techniques as follows:*

*Skill area — fieldwork survey/measurement and recording techniques'*

The lack of this crucial evidence made it impossible for verifiers to make any judgement about the centre's decisions. To confirm the judgements of centres the verifier requires to see the full evidence for all candidates. This should include:

- ◆ the assessment item, including any maps or diagrams
- ◆ the detailed marking instructions, which are the basis for any assessment judgement
- ◆ a fully marked candidate script clearly indicating where credit for a point has been given and (in the view of the assessor) whether the candidate has passed or failed the assessment

### **Administration of assessments**

The vast majority of centres assessed candidates to the national standard and were consistent in their judgements across the verification sample.

Centres that have followed advice in reports over the years, have adopted a definite approach to marking, suggesting a clear internal verification process is being developed.

It is pleasing to see the growth in the number of centres that have adopted and share their marking/internal verification policy.

### **Areas of good practice**

Based on the evidence submitted to this year's verification event, verifiers are pleased to confirm that centres:

- ◆ have a good grasp of the verification process
- ◆ are using appropriate assessment items and marking instructions
- ◆ are applying the national standard appropriately at each level
- ◆ mark candidate scripts with ticks allocated at the point of credit
- ◆ in the main, explain their assessment decisions in feedback comments to candidates — these comments not only assist the candidate in their future learning but provide insight for the verifier into the application of the national standard
- ◆ are increasingly using pupil feedback sheets
- ◆ are introducing a sampling regime to their internal verification process

Some centres are to be commended on a rigorous internal verification process. A robust internal verification process should pick up inaccuracies with marking. It is advisable to involve all staff in this process as this will assist in ensuring uniformity of standards within the centre. Where there was clear evidence of a robust internal verification process, the external verification was straightforward.

One issue did arise this year that requires to be highlighted to centres. In one centre that used cross-marking there was a very large discrepancy between the two assessors, in one case up to 10 marks. In the judgement of both assessors the candidate achieved the standard but there was no indication how the assessors/centre resolved the wide variation in mark allocation.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

The verification team highlighted the following points for consideration:

Centres should refer to the internal assessment reports that can be found on [SQA's NQ Geography web pages](#) under the heading Internal Assessment Report. These reports contain advice to centres from the past three years.

Centres must submit all the evidence on which a judgement has been made, eg assessment item, Ordnance Survey map, marking scheme and marked candidate response.

Centres are advised to produce and implement an internal verification policy, if they do not already have one in place. Guidance on internal verification can be found in: [Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications](#).

While centres are not directly requested to share this information with the verification team it would allow the verifier to gain insight into the processes, the thinking of the centre, and their decisions. As ever, the inclusion of such additional information is at the discretion of the centre.

Where cross-marking gives a significantly different mark from the original, even if both assessors agree a pass or fail, it would be good practice if the assessors/centre provided evidence of how the discrepancy was resolved.

Centres might consider amending/developing their own assessment items where original OS maps are no longer available, have been lost or are in poor condition. Changing the OS map used in a NAB is seen as a minor change as long as the format of the questions replicates the original questions. Such a change does not require prior verification. SQA is not able to provide centres with OS maps. SQA purchases maps specifically for use in the examination (see update letters of 6 March 2013 and September 2010).

Centres might also consider amending/developing their own assessment items where there is a need to update and keep assessment items current. Examples include:

- ◆ subject-specific language, in line with changes made within the exams as from the 2010 diet, eg changing terms like ELDC to Developing Country and EMDC to Developed Country (see update letter 1 September 2009)
- ◆ statistical information
- ◆ maps
- ◆ graphs

Centres are reminded that SQA's free prior verification service is available if they are making significant amendments to NABs. It is not compulsory to use this service.