



**National Qualifications 2013  
Internal Assessment Report**

**Geology**

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:

## **Intermediate 1**

D243 Geology: The Study of the Earth: Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

## **Higher**

D8XK: Minerals and Rocks: Outcomes 1 and 2

D250: Earth Physics, Structural Geology and Plate Tectonics: Outcome 3  
Fieldwork Reports

## **General comments**

Four centres submitted assessment materials for verification (one at Intermediate 1; one at Higher for 'Minerals and Rocks'; and two at Higher for Fieldwork Reports). Sample sizes varied because total candidates were: four at Intermediate 1; six for Higher 'Minerals and Rocks'; and one and 13 for Higher Fieldwork Reports.

Fortunately, small sample sizes caused no problems during verification. All centres provided the evidence (conditional on restricted sample sizes) to allow external verification to be successfully carried out. All centres had a perfectly good understanding of the requirements of national standards and all centres were Accepted.

Outcomes 1 and 2 were assessed by means of SQA-published NAB tests. In both centres, the marking instructions were carefully and accurately applied.

Outcome 3 was again assessed by means of SQA-published guidelines. On occasions, these guidelines could have been applied with more rigour.

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

All centres used SQA-published assessment materials and guidelines and all had a good understanding of Unit specifications and were perfectly familiar with instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

## **Evidence Requirements**

All centres showed a clear understanding of Evidence Requirements for the Units.

## **Administration of assessments**

All centre assessments were at the appropriate level. Internal verification was carried out at only one centre because only this centre had two teachers of Geology.

## **Areas of good practice**

The management and assessment of fieldwork reports for Outcome 3 of the Higher Unit 'Earth Physics, Structural Geology and Plate Tectonics' gave great scope for good practice.

In one centre:

- ◆ For each candidate, the teacher provided a detailed explanation of how the mark awarded had been attained.
- ◆ A highly detailed checklist relating geological features at the field sites to the marking instructions was provided. This allowed the teacher to make an accurate assessment for each part of the marking instructions.
- ◆ The centre used internal verification. Marking was carried out by two teachers. Thus, marking was carefully checked and discussed. This procedure has aided accurate assessment.
- ◆ A mnemonic was used to make sure that the candidate carried out a systematic and ordered study of each field locale.
- ◆ For their study, the centre selected a field area which shows an excellent range of geological features.

In the other centre:

- ◆ The teacher provided a detailed explanation of how the mark awarded had been attained.
- ◆ The centre selected field areas which show a superb range of geological features.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

There were no problems with the assessment of Outcomes 1 and 2 at Higher and Intermediate 1. The detailed marking instructions of the NABs permit accurate assessment with little room for error.

In Outcome 3 there are places where comments and corrections could have been made. For example:

Intermediate 1: All candidates found 'gypson' in conglomerate and two candidates found iron in basalt. One candidate said that bivalves live on land and another said that a graptolite was a leaf. These statements elicited no comments from the teacher.

Higher Fieldwork Reports: Sometimes maps were not informative. Field sites were occasionally misidentified so details of one site actually applied to another. Fault types were sometimes wrongly identified and brachiopods were sometimes called bivalves.