



**National Qualifications 2014
Internal Assessment Report
Scottish Studies**

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:

HY3P 43: Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 3)

HY3P 44: Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 4)

HY3P 45: Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 5)

General comments

Verifiers were pleased to confirm that the majority of centres had a clear understanding of the national standard, particularly since this Unit is part of a new SQA Award. Verification samples included candidate evidence from SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5. Verifiers were also pleased to see a variety of activities including written reports, film, drama production, artwork, posters and electronic presentations. In most cases, candidates were presented at the correct level; on occasions, verifiers were able to suggest that candidates be re-assessed at a higher level.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Centres used a range of appropriate assessment items to generate evidence to show that candidates had met the national standard. This demonstrated that, in most cases, centres were familiar with Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

Evidence Requirements

Evidence requirements were clearly understood by most centres. It is particularly important that centres note the need to provide evidence for the appropriate number of aims and sources used by candidates as well as the level of support given.

Administration of assessments

Most centres assessed candidates to the national standard and were, in the main, consistent in judgements across the verifications samples. There was evidence of internal verification in submissions from some centres. It is advised that this should be specific and match with the internal verification process of the centre.

Areas of good practice

The following points are based on the evidence submitted to this year's verification event:

- ◆ Verifiers were able to judge standards most effectively where centres used published, or amended, candidate and assessor checklists. Comments on these checklists are not mandatory but proved particularly helpful to the verification process. Detailed comments on assessor checklists regarding the level of independence/amount of support required by candidates were welcomed.
- ◆ Use of language from the Assessment Standards helped with judging exactly how candidates met the relevant standard.
- ◆ Candidates were able to clearly indicate aim(s), sources, resources and activity through use of candidate checklists.
- ◆ Using tick boxes on an assessor checklist helps to confirm achievement of each Assessment Standard.
- ◆ Many centres included the instrument of assessment and candidate brief with candidate evidence.
- ◆ Use of a guidance document for tutors to assist with delivery and assessment is to be commended.
- ◆ A logbook approach proved helpful in confirming assessment judgements.
- ◆ Provision of a range of candidate evidence — photos, notes, etc — leading towards the activity gave extra weight to candidate evidence. Inclusion of basic notes used when researching a topic is to be commended.
- ◆ Where candidates had worked through a Unit of work, the full evidence supplied clearly demonstrated that knowledge of Scotland had been broadened through the process rather than just the activity. Candidate responses showed differing levels of understanding of the Scottish Focus and this was reflected in centre judgements.
- ◆ Where candidate activity was a class talk/presentation, inclusion of a centre-drafted assessment grid with teacher comment on observation was helpful.
- ◆ Where internal verification procedures had been applied to candidate evidence, specific comments were particularly useful. This often gave verifiers a clear indication that cross-marking had been effectively used to judge candidate evidence.
- ◆ Centres had provided photographic evidence where evidence was physically large or difficult to package; this encouraged creativity in terms of possible activities.
- ◆ The same aims can be successfully used by all candidates during a group activity as long as it is clear that the aims are arrived at through discussion.
- ◆ The provision of a clear plan of action for a group activity can set a clear context as well as demonstrating broadening of knowledge for the chosen Scottish Focus. Examples of mind maps demonstrated evidence of both group and individual planning and discussion.
- ◆ Where drama or film production is chosen as the group activity, assessment based on participation as well as individual candidate reflection on their achievement of their aims is to be commended.

Specific areas for improvement

The verification team highlighted the following points for consideration:

- ◆ Centres should ensure that complete evidence is submitted for verification. Interim evidence is not appropriate for the Scotland in Focus Unit as all Assessment Standards must be covered.
- ◆ Centres are advised to use and submit candidate and assessor checklists. An indication of the level of support given to candidates should be clearly documented in an assessor checklist wherever possible.
- ◆ Candidate work should clearly highlight the chosen Scottish Focus and this should be apparent in the candidate evidence.
- ◆ Aims should always be clearly stated — either in the finished product or on the candidate checklist. It may be worth checking if the original aim(s) need to be adjusted following the activity.
- ◆ Supporting candidates at SCQF level 4 by requesting that they select aims from a list or by providing sample aims helps to ensure that aims are appropriate.
- ◆ Candidate evidence must be specific to the stated aim(s). If the activity is an event then evidence should clearly show what the candidate has learned about their Scottish Focus rather than about their personal development through organising an event.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are clear on the difference between sources and resources.
- ◆ Care should be taken to ensure that the approach taken to lead candidates through research towards the activity is not too restrictive and allows candidates to make individual decisions where appropriate.
- ◆ Candidates should ideally be given a choice of activity — even after a Unit of work done as a class — to allow them to benefit from their individual strengths.
- ◆ Assessors are advised to be alert to evidence of candidate plagiarism where additional evidence/re-assessment may be required.
- ◆ Support provided by centres to candidates to move assessment to an upper level is to be encouraged through additional analysis or reflection on what has been learned about the Scottish Focus.
- ◆ It may be acceptable to request that candidates generate extra/further evidence to allow a higher level to be achieved; alternatively, to avoid a fail, it may be appropriate to award at the lower level.
- ◆ Evidence of the internal verification process should be clearly indicated to ensure that centres have a rigorous approach to the assessment process.
- ◆ Consider noting evidence of tutor observations where presentations are given by candidates — or indeed through the research process.
- ◆ Centres might consider developing assessment items which can be prior verified and published.