



**National Qualifications 2014
Internal Assessment Report
Social Sciences Bacalaureate**

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:

Social Sciences: Interdisciplinary Project

General comments

In the second year of delivery of the Interdisciplinary Project Unit in Social Sciences, 21 candidates undertook the Interdisciplinary Project from 11 centres. All presenting centres were subject to external verification. At central verification, External Verifiers judged centre assessment decisions for 20 candidates to be in line with the national standard. This represents an accuracy level of 95%. Issues were identified with one assessment decision in one centre where the grading of a candidate was deemed to have been lenient and a lower grade was recommended.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Out of the 11 presenting centres, only three had not previously presented candidates for an Interdisciplinary Project. This means that most centres already have a sound knowledge and experience of the national standards. Many centres already have a well-developed and robust mechanism for assessing and internally verifying Interdisciplinary Projects as shown by the very high number of grading decisions agreed during external verification.

Centres presenting candidates for the Interdisciplinary Project Unit for the first time were praised for the accuracy of their assessment decisions and the standard of evidence submitted. Within these centres there is evidence of a collegiate approach to assessing and mentoring candidates through their project. This is commended in External Verifier reports, where relevant.

Some centres were not represented at the Quality Forum event, but it was apparent that those attending had a clear understanding of 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. As the Quality Forum event also provides centre representatives an opportunity to explain assessment procedures within their centre and discuss these with the External Verifier, centres should encourage assessors to attend.

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

There is a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit within many centres. All centres submitted all the mandatory pieces of evidence and an Assessor Report for each candidate. Any additional charts or sheets referring to timelines were all included and External Verifiers commented on the creative ways in which some candidates had adapted the templates to show their timescales.

All centres submitted an Assessor Report for each candidate. These were completed in full, though the quality of the comments varied. Most comments were directed for verification purposes and explained the awarding of criteria. These comments are very useful during central verification, and External Verifiers gave feedback commending centres on the helpfulness of these comments in understanding how grading decisions had been reached. However some centres continue to submit Assessor Reports with comments directed at the candidate which are not so helpful for verification purposes — centres have been advised in their external verification report where this is the case.

One centre submitted the project along with the mandatory evidence. No additional material eg interim review, progress log, is required and they are not taken into consideration during central verification. Centres have been advised of this in their external verification report where it is relevant.

Administration of assessments

External Verifiers have commented that candidates have carried out a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects, many on topical issues.

With eight centres having previously presented candidates for an Interdisciplinary Project Unit there is a strong understanding of the requirements of internal verification, though some centres continue to confuse joint-assessing with internal verification. In centres presenting across all four subject areas 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.

At the Quality Forum event, centre representatives gave full accounts of their internal verification processes and where no representative was been present, External Verifiers have commented on the lack of information on the internal verification process. This information is vital to help judge the robustness of the assessment process.

Areas of good practice

Centres have been commended for supporting candidates through a wide variety of interesting projects. Project themes included development of Advanced Higher topics but also current and original topics — for example, the independence referendum and projects with an emphasis on local history or issues. This has helped motivated candidates to successfully complete their project. Some

centres have also been commended for supporting ASN candidates to successful completion.

Timescales are being shown in creative but functional ways. Detailed timelines also allow candidates to show dependencies and, where they have considered other demands on their time, make it easier for them to keep on track of their progress.

Centres continue to encourage candidates to foster links with external agencies and include them in the assessment process.

Feedback to candidates in general is excellent, providing positive, motivational comments on their work and methodologies. It is clear from submitted evidence though that not all candidates take this feedback on board.

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

Specific areas for improvement

Centres should ensure that the dates of signatures correspond to the time of signing and not time of printing.

Some candidates choose topics which are quite narrow in their scope. To allow full access to all grading criteria, candidates should be encouraged to have several strands to their project. This also helps when one particular strand proves difficult to pursue.

Centres should advise candidates that the Evaluation of the Interdisciplinary Project should comment on their strengths, weaknesses and learning points within each stage of their project rather than evaluating how their project progressed. Candidates should follow the prompts in this section (and indeed in all sections) which will help in its completion.

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.