



**National Qualifications 2011  
Internal Assessment Report  
Social Subjects**

**Access 3**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

# National Courses

## Titles/levels of National Courses verified

D526 09 Social Subjects Access 3 (Deciding)

D527 09 Social Subjects Access 3 (Contrasting)

### General comments

The general standard of work was appropriate to Access 3 and there were several excellent examples of candidates working independently and providing a very satisfactory standard of response.

In most cases, presenting centres had applied national standards appropriately and the results were able to be Accepted, albeit after re-submission in a significant number of instances (see below).

### Arrangements

Most presenting centres were clearly familiar with the Arrangements and presented their evidence appropriately. A significant number, however, had either misunderstood or failed to consult the Arrangements and, consequently, could not be accorded an Accepted grading.

Most of the submissions which were Not Accepted reflected a failure to observe the Course structure or to submit sufficient evidence of Course completion, rather than a failure by candidates to demonstrate sufficient attainment.

The failure to submit Course evidence reflects, in part at least, confusion over the guidelines given in the current Arrangements document. One centre considered the completed NAB template to be the Course evidence. It should be clear that the 'Candidate folio' (see p.21 of the Arrangements) refers to the work undertaken by the candidate during the Course and is distinct from the assessment end-product.

It may also be that some centres are still using the original Arrangements document and consequently are using Key Ideas (eg 'Evidence') which are no longer listed. 'Democracy', 'Resources' and 'Ecosystems' are further examples of invalid Key Ideas that were supplied. Centres should consult SQA's website to ensure that the Arrangements which they are following are current.

### Evidence Requirements

It is apparent that some centres are not sufficiently familiar with the Conditions and Arrangements. These were revised in 2005 and a revised NAB template issued.

Teachers should ensure that the NAB templates are signed as appropriate — verification cannot be concluded without the teacher's signature and the submission has to be referred back to the presenting centre.

Not all centres appreciated that it was necessary to submit a folio of evidence of coursework as well as the NAB assessment.

## **Administration of assessments**

There was no instance this year of the old NAB template being used. This is an improvement on previous years.

Sometimes it is not easy for the Verifier to identify from the coursework exactly where the coverage of the required concepts lies, or perhaps where the 'Contrasts' are being made. Some centres included a Course outline, identifying this for the Verifier. This is much appreciated and commended.

There was a welcome drop in the incidence of identical pupil responses and a concomitant increase in responses which had clearly been formulated by the candidates, even when they were dealing with very similar territory. Generally, the more background or comment given by the teacher in charge, the easier it is to confirm the centre's judgement. Especially in cases where submissions are very similar, it is useful to include some background information, as the Verifier will be looking for evidence of some kind of independent working from the candidate. It may be that the teacher in charge has had to tightly structure a decision-making exercise, perhaps with multiple-choice options, which has led to identical responses. A commentary on this and perhaps the inclusion of the exercise which produced the identical responses would be advantageous and would obviate any suspicion that the candidates were simply copying out conclusions given by the teacher.

In the best submissions, it is clear that candidates have been encouraged to formulate their submissions in their own words, as far as possible, avoiding wholesale 'lifts' from sources.

The more information that presenting centres provide about the Course, the circumstances of the NAB, the materials provided for the pupils, the reasons for candidates failing to gain a pass etc, the easier it is for the Verifier to give an Accepted grading.

Many centres were meticulous in the detail they provided and this is welcomed and commended. Centres which provided inadequate information found that their final results were delayed and that they had to provide the additional information before verification could proceed. This could affect some candidates' chances of passing (see 'Delayed verification' below).

(See also comments on identically-worded submissions in Reports from 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010.)

## **Areas of good practice/areas for improvement**

### **Non-paper submissions**

The Unit specifications allow for a wide variety of mediums to be used in the presentation of the candidates' conclusions. In previous years, there have been submissions in the form of video, which was perfectly acceptable, but which did raise problems of organisation and candidate identity (see 2005 Report). With the increasing sophistication in IT skills, Access 3 candidates are able to use a class PowerPoint presentation as their submission. This is perfectly acceptable and would be seen as an example of good practice. It might be useful to include both printed sheets and a disk or memory stick, which would enable the Verifier to see the presentation in its original form and still have the individual candidate's work separately contained in the submission folder.

## **Internal moderation**

It was clear from some submissions that cross-marking had taken place prior to forwarding for verification. This is good practice and is to be commended.

## **Supplementary information**

Comment has already been made on the helpfulness of additional background or information from staff. The photographs of the group wall-display submitted by one centre exemplify this.

## **Identifying sources**

This is another area where improvement continues to be noted. The issue of identifying sources has been problematic (see Reports from 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009) and the improvement noted last year has been maintained. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile repeating the advice given in previous reports, ‘...problems did arise when there was insufficient evidence that the candidate was drawing from at least four sources in coming to their decision. For example, where “video, notes and teacher” are given as the sources, there is a problem in deciding if that indicates two or three sources, but it is certainly not four. If the videos (plural) are named and appropriate detail given on the distinction between the notes and the teacher input, there may not be a problem.’

In general, all sources should be separately identified by name. Where this is not clear, presenting centres will find that, at the very least, verification will have to be delayed until this information is provided.

Verifiers should also expect to be able to recognise from the presentation that the given sources have been drawn on for information. The Arrangements state that the candidate responses should ‘demonstrate that the candidate is able to use four key ideas, consult four sources of information and organise the information clearly in a plan for presentation.’ In some instances, four sources may be listed, but the presentation clearly draws from only one source. Again, additional comment from the teacher could obviate problems at this stage.

## **Delayed verification**

Any delay in the verification process can result in failure for some candidates, even if the majority eventually pass, subsequent to re-submission of the evidence. This can occur where the candidates themselves are required to make amendments to the submission. As the exam season approaches, or gets underway, many Access 3 candidates can be elusive. If the Access 3 presentation group is small, as is often the case, a handful of absent candidates in a resubmitted bundle, left as a Pass by the presenting centre, could provoke an unacceptable degree of discrepancy between the centre results and the Verifier, resulting in a Not Accepted decision for the whole group. In these circumstances, the wisest course is to withdraw the absent candidates prior to re-submission.

Verification is timetabled to allow for a return of materials to presenting centres for amendment and re-submission where necessary whilst pupils are still in school. (This year’s central verification took place on 7 April). Late submissions which miss central verification will inevitably be subject to delay, which may make it very difficult for centres to gather additional evidence or make amendments. This emphasises the need for the teacher in charge to ensure that he/she is familiar with the demands of the Course and that all the necessary evidence is supplied for verification at the first time of asking. (Likewise, this applies to the inclusion of pro-formas and staff signatures).