



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Photography
Verification event/visiting information	Visiting
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H4KT 76 Photography: Image Making
H4KV 76 Photography: Contextual Imagery

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Both Image Making and Contextual Imagery Units were presented for external verification by an equal number of centres.

The following Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) were used by centres:

- ◆ Package 1: Unit by Unit approach
- ◆ Package 2: Combined approach
- ◆ Package 3: Portfolio approach

Most centres used Package 1: Unit by Unit approach, however significantly more centres made use of Package 2: Combined approach and Package 3: Portfolio approach than last year.

Centres used UASPs effectively to assess Units. Most centres used SQA-devised assessment tasks to assess candidates' understanding. Where these SQA-generated assessment tasks were altered, this was generally done successfully and provided a similar level of challenge.

All centres demonstrated that they had applied and implemented CfE principles in their approach to assessment. It is clear from the external verification reports that centres have developed assessment task materials which offer personalisation and choice at an appropriate level of challenge for candidates. This supported candidates and enabled them to successfully generate evidence to meet the Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards successfully.

Overall, candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of Image Making Outcome 2 in the production of photographic images. Candidates presented work using a wide variety of subject matter which linked to their chosen photographers from Image Making Outcome 1. In some cases the link between Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 was a little ambiguous.

A good range of photographers were investigated for Image Making Outcome 1 which allowed opportunities for personalisation and choice.

Most centres provided ample opportunity for personalisation and choice with regard to candidates' selection of photographic styles and genres within the context of the assessment tasks used. Some centres, however, encouraged candidates to explore styles and genres which were not appropriate for the assessment task.

In some cases the UASP could be used more effectively to adopt a more concise and consistent approach to assessment for all candidates. This would still allow candidates to meet each Assessment Standard but would help to give them a more realistic time frame in which to complete the task.

The quality of candidate responses highlights the effectiveness of learning and teaching taking place prior to the commencement of the Unit assessment.

Overall, candidates demonstrated a good understanding of Contextual Imagery Outcome 1 by producing a creative series of images in response to the My World assessment task.

Generally, image manipulation software was used effectively to edit images in post-production. In some cases, however, images were inappropriately edited which actually weakened their quality. Centres are reminded that post-production manipulation should be carried out with care and in line with the styles and genres that have been selected.

UASP Package 1: Unit by Unit approach was used effectively by centres and encouraged breadth and depth in the assessment tasks. This approach was adopted by many centres who were delivering the Course for the first time.

UASP Package 2: Combined approach was used effectively to minimise cross-overs in producing evidence for Assessment Standards. This approach allowed for greater depth within the assessment task and allowed centres to plan their time more effectively.

UASP Package 3: Portfolio approach was used much less than the other two. Centres that used this approach to assessment produced much more evidence than is needed to meet each Assessment Standard.

Images created within the style of high key, pictorialism and romanticism were generally of a lesser standard and usually involved the inappropriate use of post-production manipulation to achieve the desired style.

Although candidates are encouraged to experiment with different papers and printing techniques, centres are reminded that candidates' work must remain photographic in nature as opposed to crossing over into an art or design context.

Assessment judgements

Most centres demonstrated confidence in making consistent and reliable assessment judgements across all Outcomes and Assessment Standards for each Unit.

Assessment judgements were recorded clearly using either the SQA-devised Candidate Assessment Record or an appropriately adapted version to suit an individual centre's approach.

The majority of centres demonstrated clear evidence of effective internal verification procedures.

Some centres that were new to presenting candidates for this Course made use of colleagues from other centres to assist in the internal verification process and assist them with their own assessment judgements.

Centres currently without an internal verification procedure are reminded that all centres offering SQA qualifications should have an effective internal quality assurance procedure in place.

Assessment judgements in some centres were inconsistent or lenient for some Assessment Standards. Centres are reminded to make use of judging evidence tables to ensure their judgements are accurate and in line with the national standard.

Some centres adopted colour coding to reference assessment judgements back to individual Assessment Standards. This visual approach was clear and demonstrated good practice in making assessment judgements.

Assessment judgements were carried out in a variety of summative and formative activities. Assessor comments were supportive and were referred to by candidates to improve their practice. Candidates benefited greatly from outlined next steps or areas for development.

A detailed assessment commentary was useful for verification purposes as it outlined the assessor's reasoning behind their judgements.

Centres are advised to revisit candidate evidence periodically to ensure their judgements reflect the most up-to-date work for each candidate.

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Section 3: General comments

Centre staff engaged well with external verification and found the process to be supportive and transparent.

Generally, candidate evidence and details of departmental learning and teaching were presented in a coherent manner, allowing the verification process to run smoothly.

Recent nominee training and Understanding Standards events were well-attended. Information from these events has helped to support centres in the delivery of the Units. Some local authorities have adopted their own means of sharing good practice between centres.

There was strong evidence of candidate engagement and a high level of skill present in both Units.

Centre staff should be commended for developing effective resources to support learning and teaching. The following ideas, techniques, strategies, policies and processes are examples of good practice which were observed in centres' delivery of both Units:

- ◆ Candidates were encouraged to develop their own stimulating learning environment which is useful to showcase their understanding of photography and technical skill.
- ◆ Overall quality of candidate responses indicates the effectiveness of the learning and teaching taking place prior to the commencement of the Unit assessments.
- ◆ Candidates are provided with excellent resources in the form of centre-devised course handbooks, tutorials and workshops that support their understanding of the subject both creatively and technically.
- ◆ Centres have fostered links with local photographers to encourage candidate engagement with the subject and provide staff opportunities for continual professional development.
- ◆ Some centres provide candidates with a list of photographers to investigate for Image Making Outcome 1. This approach supports candidates in meeting this Outcome successfully by vetting the photographers that they choose.
- ◆ Centres have made use of a variety of digital formats to present candidate Unit work. This effective approach to assessment can reduce course costs without compromising the candidates' experience.