



NQ Verification 2014–15 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2015

National Courses/Units verified:

H263 73 National 3 RMPS: World Religion
H264 73 National 3 RMPS: Morality and Belief
H265 73 National 3 RMPS: Religious and Philosophical Questions

H263 74 National 4 RMPS: World Religion
H264 74 National 4 RMPS: Morality and Belief
H265 74 National 4 RMPS: Religious and Philosophical Questions

H263 75 National 5 RMPS: World Religion
H264 75 National 5 Morality and Belief
H265 75 National 5 Religious and Philosophical Questions

H263 76 New Higher RMPS: World Religion
H264 76 New Higher RMPS: Morality and Belief
H265 76 New Higher RMPS: Religious and Philosophical Questions

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

Many centres had made positive use of the Unit assessment support packs as the basis for their own assessments and had produced assessment materials of a high standard for candidates.

Some centres had positively 'broken down' the assessment prompts from the Unit assessment support packs to provide more manageable tasks for candidates.

There were some interesting and varied approaches, providing candidates with personalisation and choice in the completion of their assessments.

The portfolio approach was used by a few centres to good effect. Outcomes had been divided into activities and these had been completed over time through naturally occurring evidence. This approach helped many candidates to produce in depth information, comfortably meeting the Assessment Standards.

Many centres had developed a system of supportive comments which helped candidates to see exactly what was expected from them in their responses to the assessment prompts.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

Centres should be aware that as a feature of CfE assessment, candidates should be given opportunities for personalisation and choice in how they provide evidence to meet the Assessment Standards.

Some centres used assessment approaches that placed demands on candidates that went beyond the requirements of the Assessment Standards. This should be especially noted where centres are seeking to produce assessments that combine different Assessment Standards in order that candidates are not disadvantaged.

A few centres used National 4 assessments for their National 3 and National 5 candidates. Centres are reminded that assessment prompts should be appropriate to the level that is being assessed. Using one assessment task to gather assessment evidence for National 3, 4 and 5 candidates may lead to language being either too complex for candidates or too simplistic. It may also mean that they do not achieve the Assessment Standard applicable to the level.

Centres are reminded that the assessment prompt 'Describe' should not be used in National 5 assessments. The correct prompt should be 'Explain'. Likewise in National 4 assessments the prompt 'Describe' should be used, not the prompt 'Explain'.

Some centres did not include a copy of their amended judging evidence table from the Unit assessment support pack and this made it difficult for the verification team to assess the centres' judgements.

A small number of centres had sought to use old NAB questions as the basis of their Unit assessment prompts. In general, the old NAB questions do not all address the new Assessment Standards at each level and centres are advised to state clearly which question meets which criteria to ensure that Assessment Standards are being met effectively.

Assessment judgements

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

There was good practice regarding the clarity of decision-making processes in terms of annotation of scripts and where Assessment Standards had been achieved. This was very helpful for verifiers in understanding the process that centres had carried out.

Many centres clearly marked on candidates' scripts exactly where the Assessment Standard was being met. This was done through a combination of ticks, colours, highlighting, brackets round points, and writing the number of the Assessment Standard (1.1, 1.2, etc.) being met at the place in the candidate response that the standard was met.

Some centres used highlighting to show where 'developed' points were being made or where 'abstract' ideas were included. Use of codes such as (d) for developed, (r) for relevant and (a) for abstract were all found in the evidence that the verifiers sampled. All these approaches make the verification process much more straightforward.

There was good evidence of centres having clear internal verification policies, which were applied. This was demonstrated in several examples of excellent cross-marking systems and record completion.

Some centres had developed feedback sheets for candidates, which helped candidates to see clearly what they had completed or what they still had to do to achieve the Assessment Standard. These sheets were also very helpful for the verification team as they supported the assessment judgements that had been made. This approach is to be commended.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

A small number of centres submitted candidate materials with no evidence of any form of marking on the candidate work. This meant it was impossible for the verifier to verify the centre's assessment judgements.

A few centres had submitted candidate evidence with ticks at the end of paragraphs or indeed multiple ticks throughout the submitted work. Whilst ticks are useful, centres must ensure that their marking clearly shows which part of each Assessment Standard is being met and exactly where in the candidate work it is being met. Clear marking helps the verification team to agree with the assessment judgements of the centre.

Some centres had overestimated the evidence required to meet the Assessment Standard. This means centres are sometimes expecting to see more evidence than that required to achieve an Assessment Standard. Centres must ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of each Assessment Standard.

Centres should keep in mind that it may be possible to find evidence of meeting Assessment Standards across the whole Unit assessment, not just one assessment prompt.

Some centres were not applying the Assessment Standards accurately and this needs to be addressed through internal verification in the first instance.

Some centres did not appear to have a rigorous internal verification process in place and this allowed issues over assessment judgments to be missed by the centre.

03 Section 3: General comments

Administration

Each centre selected for verification should submit evidence for a sample of 12 candidates. The centre can choose which Unit (or Units, in a combined approach) to select for each level.

The sample submitted should comprise candidates of all levels that the centre is presenting. When completing the Verification Sample Form, it would be helpful if candidates were entered in this order.

The centre must choose the same Unit for all candidates at any one level, but can choose different Units for different levels.

The vast majority of centres submitted appropriately adapted judging evidence tables from the Unit assessment support packs and this was a tremendous support to the verification team.

Most centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard. This was especially pleasing for the materials submitted for the new Higher.

Many centres had obviously taken advantage of the prior verification facility and this approach is to be commended to all centres.

A few centres did not submit any evidence of an internal verification policy. Centres are reminded that all centres offering SQA qualifications must have an effective internal quality assurance system in place which ensures that all candidates are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently to national standards. Centres seeking guidance on internal verification should refer to www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit

Centres are again reminded that if they are selected for verification they should ensure that they have complete copies of the following information:

- ◆ the assessment task
- ◆ the judging evidence table

- ◆ specific quality assurance processes for internal verification documentation
- ◆ candidates' evidence of meeting the Assessment Standards, including assessor decisions
- ◆ evidence (and comments where applicable) of the work done by the internal verifier

Centres and local authorities will find it very helpful to enlist the help of RMPS nominees in their area for support and guidance. Their expertise will be invaluable for centres seeking to develop their approaches to assessment and the reliability and consistency of assessment decisions.