

Moderation Feedback — Central

Assessment Panel:

English and Communication

Qualification area:

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

NQ English:
Access 3 to Advanced Higher

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

Units moderated were:

D8VH: Language Study (Access 3 to Higher)

D8VK: Personal Study (written response) (Access 3 to Higher)

D217: Literature (Advanced Higher)

D222: Textual Analysis (Advanced Higher)

With one exception, centres' submissions were complete. Relevant forms were, on the whole, accurate, with little sign of earlier confusion over entry level codes.

Overall, assessment was in accordance with national standards. The priority of the Moderation team was to concur with a centre's judgements where possible. In the cases of borderline decisions, comment was made to that effect in the report to the centre.

Specific issues identified

In D8VH Language Study, Close Reading was, in most cases, marked accurately. Lenient interpretation of marking guidelines was less common than severity. Centres using older NABs had not appreciated that the requirement to pass on each of *understanding*, *analysis*, *evaluation* applies in that material.

Writing was at its most impressive in centres where it was thoroughly explored rather than simply rushed towards the minimal point at which the Outcome could be achieved.

In D8VK Personal Study (written response), many candidates attempted tasks unlikely to elicit clear demonstration of understanding, analysis and evaluation.

In D217 Literature, assessments were secure. Instruments of assessment were frequently more demanding than necessary.

In D217 and D222 Textual Analysis, some centres were unclear about the submissions required for moderation.

Feedback to centres

Central Moderation in 2003 focused on four Units:

D8VH Language Study (Access 3 to Higher)

D8VK Personal Study (written response) (Access 3 to Higher)

D217 Literature (Advanced Higher)

D222 Textual Analysis (Advanced Higher)

There was no Visiting Moderation for the above levels in session 2002–2003, it being felt that moderation of performance in Personal Study (spoken response) would have been unfair at this stage.

Moderation is a means by which SQA transmits understanding of national standards to the profession. In Central Moderation, the emphasis is on *confirmation* of the centre's judgements unless there is good reason for disagreement. The basic principle of moderation is that familiarisation with national standards has already been achieved; moderation checks the reliability and consistency of the department's application of the criteria.

Application of the criteria requires that the criteria, assessment guidelines or grids in use are the most up-to-date. Some centres moderated this year were using inapplicable guidelines. Procedures for internal moderation should include a regular check on recent changes.

NABs for Close Reading should preferably be selected from the most recent, revised range (dating from mid 2000), introduced to reduce workload in marking. It should be noted that the original conditions continue to apply on earlier NABs for which a pass in each of *understanding*, *analysis*, *evaluation* was required.

In Close Reading and in Writing, the use of cross-marking had proved helpful in many centres. It was particularly useful in the assessment of Writing, where there was evidence of overly lenient assessment. Moderators were particularly impressed by centres offering a structured Writing course rather than just the minimal requirement for the Unit assessment to be passed.

In Personal Study, tasks were often too narrow in focus or too vague. The resulting essays were generally narrative-driven or attempted to cover too much in too little detail. A common problem was the setting of a task unlikely to elicit a response across the performance criteria, all of which, it should be remembered, are core requirements.

In Advanced Higher, submissions showed strong understanding of published standards. Candidates' responses in both Units were generally impressive, and assessments were fair and reliable.

A small number of centres sent in submissions after the required date. In the event of an unsuccessful moderation, difficulties could arise for the centre in re-submitting.

SQA is keen to promote understanding of standards. The duties of the moderating team include development visits to centres or authorities to help with the internal assessment of Units. Visits, which incur a charge, can be arranged by the moderation staff in Glasgow.