

## Moderation Feedback — Central

**Assessment Panel:**

Modern Studies

**Qualification area:**

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

Modern Studies: 12, 11, 10 with reference to 13  
and 9

---

## Central Moderation

### General comments on central moderation activity

The central event took place on 11th April 2003 at Glasgow headquarters. The moderation team was expanded this year to include two new members who are both examiners. The main area of activity was Higher, level 12, with Unit D343.12 evidence called in from most centres. It is appropriate to add that retrospective moderation in the autumn had sampled evidence from colleges. Material was also moderated in January. The nature of Access 3 delivery in centres has necessitated discussion among the social subjects moderators.

There were few issues of reliability at this year's central event since almost all centres had assessed their candidates at or near the appropriate standard. This consistency in Modern Studies has been noted in previous years and reflects the experience of teachers and lecturers in marking overall in the subject. Candidates' answers revealed training in the structure of answers that is necessary to fulfill the performance criteria. There were some issues of validity about the application of the NAB items.

### Specific issues identified

#### Moderation evidence

The function of moderation is to confirm the standard of assessment set by the centre. It is therefore important that an accurate decision be made on every candidate in the sample.

Some centres were able to complete the moderation forms without difficulty. Others required additional data and/or a letter of clarification which was included in the moderation package. This practice is helpful and the moderators have encouraged it. It is an essential part of the moderation process that the NAB items that have been used are identified clearly. This is especially important if items or their marking instructions have received minor modification.

#### Moderator reports

In order to support a centre which submitted weaker than average evidence the moderators offered advice and sometimes suggested recall. This is not to be confused with non-acceptance procedures. In past years the moderators have given minimum feedback where centres are assessing at the national standard. In order to reassure colleagues that their work is acceptable or of quality the moderating team added comments to that effect, this year. Some reports are typed and some hand-written. The presentation is not significant and depends on a number of factors such as time, location and moderator preference. Those reports that were completed at the central event were written by hand.

The 'not accepted' decision requires specific advice. Its accompanying report is detailed and always typed.

### **National Assessment Bank Items (The NABs)**

Most centres had no difficulty implementing the reduced evidence requirements. There were a few that displayed difficulties and needed some guidance in Higher Units 1 and 3 where evidence of LO1 and LO2 achievement is required across two study themes.

In the evidence submitted during the year on Social Issues in the United Kingdom (D344.12), the Decision Making Exercise, was assessed in the usual manner, which is a safe course of action. It is implicit in the Unit regulations that the candidate ought to have substantial knowledge of their chosen study theme. In order to prepare the candidate for the external examination clearly there must be the acquisition and evidence of knowledge. This is simply good practice. The construction of the DME requires the candidate to analyse although the prime function of the device is to test evaluation. The reduction in evidence means that centres are not required to produce discrete LO1 and LO2 items for moderation.

It is important to emphasise that centres must balance the use of 'split' NABs against the practice and evidence needed for the external examination. It is also important for centres to observe the time allocation precisely in order to ensure that candidates are placed at the appropriate level.

Centres were advised to contact the SQA should they have any questions on the application of the NAB items. It was emphasised to practitioners that NAB items are made available only to presenting centres and confidentiality is a condition of their use.

### **Updating the NABs**

Centres were alerted last year to the probability that marking instructions would have to be updated in some topics. Modification of questions is also acceptable to the moderators providing it is minor and the original NAB item can be identified clearly. In order to assist centres it should be noted that the many of the original support materials are available online in IT Scotland latent files. A fresh issue of Intermediate 2 NABs is anticipated this year.

### **Visiting moderation**

Modern Studies evidence was completed by postal, random, retrospective and/or central moderation. It remains unusual for Modern Studies moderators to visit centres. Development visits have taken place and it is anticipated that there may be an increase in this activity in the future. It is important for practitioners to keep abreast of changes and those who are unaware, or who have not been made aware, that any are taking place are unable to prepare their candidates satisfactorily. There are many ways in which teachers and lecturers can stay in tune or catch up with developments. It must also be remembered that moderation can apply to five levels within the subject. The members of the moderation team in association with the Qualifications Manager can be contacted by practitioners for advice and support.

### **Prior moderation**

There have been some requests for prior moderation and it is encouraging that the material submitted is of a high standard.

## Feedback to centres

- ◆ The standard of assessment in almost all cases was near or at the required standard. The moderators were encouraged to note that there is a consistency across the subject.
- ◆ Few centres had difficulty implementing the reduced evidence requirements. There is some residual confusion in the Higher Units 1 and 3 where evidence of LO1 and LO2 achievement is required across two study themes.
- ◆ Centres which send in evidence for moderation should identify unambiguously the items that have been applied.
- ◆ Centres should seek advice from the moderation unit if clarification of instructions is required.
- ◆ Centres should be mindful of the conditions under which assessments are administered in terms of timing and confidentiality.
- ◆ Proportionate timing must apply to the delivery of 'split' NAB items.
- ◆ Retrospective moderation takes place in early autumn.
- ◆ Moderation now has taken place across all five levels.
- ◆ Development visits have taken place and it is anticipated that there will be an increase in this activity in the future.
- ◆ Centres should be alert to the fact that some NAB items require to be updated and some new material will be added to the National Assessment Bank for Modern Studies this year.