



# NQ Verification 2014–15

## Key Messages Round 2

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Sociology
Verification event/visiting information	Postal verification
Date published:	June 2015

#### National Courses/Units verified:

National 5 and Higher Human Society, Social Issues, and Culture and Identity

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Centre-devised assessments that were derived from Unit assessment support pack (UASP) assessment approaches were valid, but those that deviated markedly from the UASPs were highly likely to miss out Assessment Standards.

Evidence of good practice was found where assessments flagged up the Assessment Standard next to each question and encouraged their candidates to do the same in their answers. This made it very easy for verifiers to find evidence. Attaching the Candidate Assessment Record to the front of each candidate's assessment also made evidence clear for candidates, assessors and verifiers.

Centres were aware of the requirement to submit an indication of the internal verification procedures used by the department. It was extremely helpful to have a clear context in which assessment judgements had been made. Centres should be aware of *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications* (February 2011). However it was often difficult to see where sampling of candidates' work had taken place.

#### Action points

- ◆ Centres are reminded that they need to use the most up to date version of the UASP. For example, the Higher Human Society UASP is currently at version

1.1. This has seen a significant change since the first version. It is the centre's responsibility to keep up-to-date with published changes.

- ◆ The National 5 and Higher Sociology Courses give rise to a variety of integrated delivery of Units and integrated assessment approaches, partly due to the need to cover Social Issues or Culture and Identity with Human Society for the assignment deadline. Centres might find it helpful to review Unit assessment support packs 2 and 3 in order to explore the combined/portfolio approach as a means to reducing the overall assessment burden for candidates.
- ◆ Centres should continue to flag assessment standards in centre-devised assessments, continue to use the Candidate Assessment Record top sheet, and continue to send in evidence of internal verification and sampling of candidates' work.

## **Assessment judgements**

Centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard and were correctly entering candidates for the appropriate level. Assessors are understanding that marks are not appropriate for summative assessment, but can be used for formative assessment.

There was good practice regarding the clarity of decision-making processes in terms of annotation of scripts at Higher where Assessment Standards had been achieved. This was very helpful for verifiers in understanding the process that centres had carried out. However, less feedback was provided at National 5. Some centres provided very little written feedback to candidates and did not indicate if it was given verbally instead.

All centres provided a record of internal verification, but there was less evidence of good practice in checking assessment judgements, eg blind-marking and cross-marking and sampling of scripts.

There was evidence of good practice in giving feedback, where assessors used developmental language to suggest ways to pass Assessment Standards. For example: 'Can you develop this point further?' Or 'Can you re-visit this and expand on your answer'. This was much more encouraging to candidates than focusing on a failure to meet the standard.

There continued to be some confusion about Higher Human Society Outcome 2.

- ◆ 2.1 reads: 'Explaining features, strengths and weaknesses of structural and action perspectives'
- ◆ 2.2 reads: 'Applying structural and action perspectives and theories to explain relationships amongst individuals, groups and institutions'

Candidates first have to explain the features, strengths and weakness of structure and action theory in general, and only need to apply them to a topic for 2.2. They do not need to evaluate the theories on the topic.

### **Action points**

- ◆ Remove marks and time restrictions. Some centres need to develop a more secure understanding of the differences between Unit assessment and Course assessment; the purpose of Unit assessment being to assess skills at minimum competence without the use of marks, whereas Course assessment aims to assess content and skills. Each Unit Specification clearly states that time limits are not a feature of Unit assessments.
- ◆ Allow personalisation and choice. Only one centre allowed candidates to choose their method of assessment. Centres should review their assessment tasks to ensure that candidates are being offered personalisation and choice in how they provide evidence to meet the Assessment Standards.
- ◆ Record remediation. The current Candidate Assessment Record attached to the UASP has no column for recording remediation. A cover sheet with a remediation column would be excellent practice so a teacher, candidate and verifier can track changes.
- ◆ Ensure that assessors and candidates are clear about the requirements for Higher Human Society 2.1 and 2.2.

03

## **Section 3: General comments**

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 six candidates per level at the two different levels (National 5 and Higher).

When completing the Verification Sample Form, it would be helpful if candidates were entered in this order.

If the centre does not have candidates (or sufficient candidates) at one level then further candidates should be added to the levels they do present at to ensure there is still a sample of 12 candidates. The centre must choose the same Unit for all candidates at any one level, but can choose different Units for different levels.

Ideally the sample should include a variety of candidate performances covering both pass and fail categories.

Centres should take care when transcribing details onto the Verification Sample Form that pass/fail indications match, and that Unit codes are entered correctly. On this form, 'interim evidence' relates only to where one Outcome from a Unit is submitted.

### **Action point**

- ◆ All centre staff are reminded that all assessments must be checked to ensure their validity before they are taken by candidates. Internal quality assurance procedures must ensure that all assessors have a common understanding of the standards required. Meetings between assessors to discuss the planned

assessment will help to standardise interpretation and understanding of Assessment Standards. Whilst we appreciate that this might take some time to do, it is likely to save more time later in the assessment process.