



# **NQ Verification 2013–14**

## **Key Message Reports**

<b>Verification group name:</b>	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
<b>Levels</b>	N3 to N5
<b>Date published:</b>	July 2014

**This Report combines all Verification Key Messages for the academic session 2013-14.**

# NQ Verification 2013–14

## Key Messages Round 1

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	January 2014

#### National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

National 3, National 4, National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies:  
H263 World Religion; H264 Morality and Belief; H265 Religious and Philosophical Questions

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

The sample showed a variety of assessment approaches used by centres, many of which gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in different ways.

Some centres had developed assessments that covered National 4 and 5 in the same assessment. This approach is to be commended, though centres must take care to ensure that any assessment approach does not disadvantage the candidate by over- or under-assessment.

A few centres had generated assessments that went way beyond the requirements of the Assessments Standards. Centres should be aware that this could mean that candidates are deemed to have failed by the centre when they may actually have passed the relevant Assessment Standards.

Some of the assessments that were sampled did not give candidates clear instructions as to what was expected of them in the assessment. A lack of

'success criteria' meant that candidates were unclear as to what constituted a pass for each Outcome. When developing suitable assessments, centres must seek to develop clear instructions that support candidates in the assessment process.

A few assessments were deemed to be not appropriate for National 4 as they used language at National 5 level. The most common example was the use of 'Explain' rather than 'Describe'. Centres should be aware that certain words are only relevant for certain levels. SQA documentation has many helpful sections on this.

## **Assessment judgements**

In many centres sampled, candidates' work was clearly annotated to show where learning outcomes were being met. This greatly aided the verification procedure and is to be commended.

Several centres produced Marking Instructions which contained very clear detail and in some instances centres had produced an individual candidate evidence sheet which showed where in the evidence the assessment judgements had been made. This was extremely helpful for the verification team and is good practice that other centres should consider adopting.

On some occasions, centres marked candidates' work in a clear and consistent manner and gave helpful comments. Some centres had produced grids which contained these comments in a structured way; these were often based on SQA examples to be found in the Unit assessment support packs.

However, some centres failed to indicate on candidates' work where Assessment Standards had been met, making it almost impossible for the verification team to agree or disagree with the assessment judgement. It would be extremely helpful in future if centres ensured that the Assessment Standards being met were clearly identified on candidates' work, as this would allow the verification process to be easily completed.

A few centres did not supply a marking scheme or a 'judging the evidence' structure by which to make judgements on submitted work. Centres should make sure that these items are included with any candidate evidence sent in for verification.

03

## **Section 3: General comments**

Whilst many centres gave very good evidence of internal verification taking place in their centres, quite a few others need to be reminded that assessment judgements must be internally quality assured by the centre to ensure that they are reliable. Evidence of internal verification must also be provided to SQA as

part of the verification process. Guidelines about internal verification can be found on SQA's website.

It was obvious in some centres that candidates' work had only been checked by one member of staff. Centres should ensure that all work is checked by two members of staff and it would be good practice to have this attested to by using signatures.

There are some issues around the use of correct paperwork that centres need to address. SQA sent all the correct paperwork to each centre selected for verification. Despite this, many centres failed to use the correct flyleaf for Unit evidence and instead used the Course evidence flyleaf. This caused issues as the information on these two forms is different. Other centres failed to send in any pro-formas.

A few centres had stated that their candidates had 'failed' the Unit when in fact they had passed some Assessment Standards but not all of them. As this was 'interim' evidence, the candidate has not failed. If the candidate has still to complete some Assessment Standards (or to resit some) then use of the term 'failed' is inappropriate.

All centres need to ensure that all relevant documentation, candidate work, marking schemes and assessment judgements are included in the materials sent to SQA.



# NQ Verification 2013–14

## Key Messages Round 2

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2014

#### National Courses/Units verified:

National 3, National 4, National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies: H263 World Religion; H264 Morality and Belief; H265 Religious and Philosophical Questions; H266 Added Value Unit

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

A broad variety of assessment approaches was once again displayed in the sample. There was also, for the first time, examples of combined assessments as well as a portfolio approach. This variety is to be encouraged as it helps to give candidates the opportunity to achieve the Assessment Standards in a format that they can comfortably respond to.

A small number of centres did not provide candidates with clear instructions about what they needed to produce to in order to achieve the Assessment Standards. Centres are reminded that candidates need to be supported by clear instructions in all assessments.

Most centres sampled had produced assessments that clearly met the Assessment Standards. However, there were still a few centres that had used assessments that went beyond what the Assessment Standards required. This was often combined with the use of National 5 language in National 4 assessments. Centres are encouraged to review the guidance in the Unit assessment support (UAS) materials before devising their own assessments.

Some centres had used Intermediate NAB material as the basis for their Unit assessments. Whilst Intermediate questions (and indeed Standard Grade questions) can be used in assessments the centre must ensure that they have clearly stated what Assessment Standards the chosen questions actually meet. In general, the 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**

In the vast majority of centres sampled, candidate work had been clearly marked to show where the Assessment Standards had been met. This process is essential for the verification team to complete its work and it is also extremely useful for the candidates.

There were a few centres that had used marks in their assessments. While marks can be applied, centres are reminded that the marks have to correspond to the Assessment Standards. Candidates cannot pass an assessment just because they have achieved a certain amount of marks; they must achieve all elements of the Assessment Standards and marks do not always reflect this.

The majority of centres produced and used their own commentaries on making assessment judgements, which clearly demonstrated what was expected from candidates, by using the four-column system that is demonstrated in the 'judging evidence' tables in the UAS packs. Centres are encouraged to use this format as it helps to ensure that candidate responses are actually meeting the Assessment Standards.

A small number of centres changed the requirements given in column three of the 'judging evidence' tables from 'candidate will make *two* relevant points' to 'candidate will make *one* developed point'. This was done on the basis of comparing Units against each other. This is not acceptable; centres cannot change the content of column three of the 'judging evidence' table as this is linked to achieving the Assessment Standards.

The centres that used Intermediate NABs also followed the Intermediate marking scheme without relating it to the Outcomes, Assessment Standards or 'judging evidence' tables. If Intermediate questions are used then centres must match up the marking scheme to the Assessment Standards to be accepted at verification.

Some centres that used a portfolio approach or combined approach did not always make it clear, on the candidate evidence, what Outcome/Assessment Standard from a Unit was being met and where it was being met. This meant that the verification team could not easily complete the verification process.

A few centres sent in evidence for the Added Value Unit and, while this was mostly interim evidence, it was obvious that centres have been developing materials (usually in the form of a candidate booklet) to usefully support candidates throughout the Added Value Unit process.

The majority of centres made good use of forms based on examples found in the UAS packs to record what candidates had achieved and this helped the verification team to clearly identify which Outcomes and Assessment Standards had been met by the candidate evidence.

03

## Section 3: General comments

Several centres demonstrated excellent evidence of their internal verification process and this is to be commended. The majority of centres clearly demonstrated that cross marking had taken place. Several centres have developed easy-to-follow procedures for their internal verification and they are encouraged to share this good practice.

There were, however, several centres that submitted minimal evidence of their internal verification procedures. A few centres stated a process was followed but they did not send in evidence to demonstrate this. As well as actually carrying out internal verification in the centre it is good practice to send evidence of internal verification to SQA as part of the verification process.

The use of correct SQA verification paperwork was much more evident in this round of verification and centres are to be commended for this. Centres are reminded that the correct paperwork is sent to their SQA Co-ordinator when the centre is selected for verification.

Centres are reminded that if interim evidence is submitted then the candidate has not 'failed' the Unit, since they have not yet completed all of the Outcomes.

Centres presenting the religion and conflict option of the *Morality and Belief* Unit did not always appear to be selecting a question that allowed for the moral aspect of the issue to be addressed. The candidates were not being directed, through the question, to explore this aspect which is crucial to success in this Unit. Centres should take note of this comment for future verification.

Centres are reminded that if they have any queries or if they wish to make any statements about their situation then these should be directed to SQA in advance of the verification event to allow them to be resolved.



# NQ Verification 2013–14

## Key Messages Round 3

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Central verification
Date published:	June 2014

#### National Courses/Units verified:

H266 74: RMPS Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Most centres had followed the guidance provided in the Unit assessment support pack (UASP) effectively.

Instructions to candidates were clear and straightforward in the majority of centres and this helped support candidates in the process and production of their assignments.

A few centres did not show any evidence of giving candidates clear enough instructions regarding what was expected of them in relation to the assignment, even though these instructions are included in Appendix 1 (pages 13–16) of the Added Value UASP.

Some centres had produced a research booklet that clearly stated what the candidates were required to do for the assignment. As well as being a good resource for the candidates it also helped provide the verification team with good evidence to support any assessment judgements.

Most candidates had produced either a written response or a series of slides that were the basis of a presentation. These approaches seemed to be the ones that candidates felt most comfortable with and the final product was of a good standard.

## **Assessment judgements**

Most centres applied the assessment standards in a consistent way and clearly demonstrated where each of the standards were achieved.

Centres are reminded that the assessment standards cannot be changed. For the Added Value Unit, the six standards are clearly stated in the 'judging evidence' table in the UASP along with the 'making assessment judgements' guidance. This is the only basis for judging candidates' work. Most centres had taken time to organise the submission of the candidate evidence in such a way that it was clear where Assessment Standards were being met and also clear which piece of evidence matched up to the relevant Assessment Standard. Centres are to be commended for this systematic approach.

However, some centres stated that candidates had achieved certain assessment standards but the verification team found it difficult to agree with these claims as the actual evidence submitted did not appear to support the centres' judgements. In some instances this may have been due to standards being incorrectly attributed, therefore it was not clear where the assessment judgement was being made.

03

## **Section 3: General comments**

A wide variety of topics/issues were chosen by candidates though the majority dealt with moral issues. (Evil and Suffering, Life after Death, The Death Penalty, Gay Marriage, Surrogacy, Gene Therapy, Treatment of Men v Treatment of Women in Society, Euthanasia, and War were some of the topics covered in the assignments submitted for verification.)

Centres need to make it clearer to candidates what constitutes proof of having collected evidence from at least two sources of information, including at least one religious viewpoint. Evidence from sources should state where the information comes from. For example, a quote from the Bible could be written: 'Genesis chapter 1, verse 3'. This structured approach with regard to sources will help candidates in the future as they do other assignments or coursework. Some centres provided Unit evidence even though Round 3 verification was focusing on the National 4 RMPS assignment. There was also some evidence of incorrect paperwork being sent in. Before submitting evidence, centres should ensure that they have referred to the verification guidance documentation to ensure the correct materials are supplied for verification purposes. The vast majority of centres demonstrated a good system of internal verification which helps to ensure that all candidates are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently to national standards. This also benefits the verification process as all relevant materials and decisions were clearly prepared for the verification event.