



Handbook for NQ External Verifiers

First published: February 2009

Second Publication: December 2009

This Edition: August 2011

Publication code: FA2063

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ
Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

www.sqa.org.uk

The information in this publication may be reproduced in support of SQA qualifications. If it is reproduced, SQA should be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be used for any other purpose, then written permission must be obtained from the Editorial Team at SQA. It must not be reproduced for trade or commercial purposes.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2009, 2010, 2011

For an up-to-date list of prices visit the **Publication Sales and Downloads** section of SQA's website.

This document will be produced in alternative formats, including large type, Braille and community languages. For further details telephone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000.

SQA is committed to using plain English. We will try to make our publications as easy and straightforward to understand as we can, and will try to avoid all unnecessary jargon. If there is any language in this document that you feel is hard to understand, or could be improved, please write to Editor, Editorial Team, at the Glasgow address above or e-mail: editor@sqa.org.uk.

Contents

1	Notes for Senior Verifiers	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	General instructions	1
1.3	Code of Conduct for Verifiers	2
	Introduction	2
	The Code	2
1.4	Senior Verifier's duties	3
	Principal service to be provided	3
1.5	Verifier's duties	4
	Principal service to be provided	4
2	Notes for Verifiers: Standard Grade	6
2.1	General	6
2.2	Verification of assessments	6
2.3	Procedure	8
	a Clerical check	8
	b Assessment check	8
2.4	Liaison with National Qualification Verification and Visiting	
	Examining staff	9
	Provision of samples	9
	Matters of policy	10
2.5	Confidentiality	10
3	Instructions to Visiting Verifiers: National Units	11
3.1	General	11
3.2	Prior verification of assessment scheme	11
3.3	Arranging your verification visit	11
3.4	The visit	12
3.5	Candidate sample	14
3.6	The verification exercise	15
3.7	Result of verification	15
	'Accepted'	15
	'Not Accepted'	16

3.8	Advising the centre and SQA of the results of verification	16
	Assessment review	17
3.9	What to do when Units are 'Not Accepted'	17
a	Your action	17
b	Centre's action	17
c	Option A — what you have to do next	18
3.10	Malpractice	18
3.11	Fees and expenses	19
4	Instructions to Central Verifiers: National Units	21
4.1	General	20
4.2	Prior verification of assessment scheme	20
4.3	SQA booking/travel service	20
4.4	Verification arrangements	21
4.5	The verification process	21
4.6	Candidate sample	22
4.7	The verification exercise	23
4.8	Result of verification	23
	'Accepted'	23
	'Not Accepted'	24
	Assessment review	24
4.9	Malpractice	25
4.10	Fees and expenses	25
4.11	Flowchart: decision-making in verification	26

Introduction

Acknowledgement

At SQA we are totally reliant on the services of Senior Verifiers and Verifiers. We are pleased to acknowledge this dependence, and would like to thank all appointees for their professionalism and co-operation.

Confidentiality

Verification decisions, and the performance of centres and individual candidates, are confidential and must not be discussed with or revealed to anyone not officially involved in the verification procedures in the Course concerned. In particular, details of marks and results must not be made available to unauthorised persons (eg members of other Verification Teams).

1 Notes for Senior Verifiers

1.1 Introduction

This section provides Senior Verifiers with information that will assist them in preparing for and supervising the conduct of central verification events.

1.2 General instructions

You should ensure that all members of the Verification Team are aware of the purpose of the verification procedure, and of how it will be conducted. For a central verification event, a copy of the *Instructions to Central Verifiers* and any subject-specific instructions will be provided for each team member.

For visiting verification, if appropriate, you should organise a training event before verifiers begin to plan their visits. This event will allow you to brief your team on the verification procedure, as well as to conduct standardisation activities. Your National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining (NQVVE) supervisor can help you organise this event.

At the beginning of a central verification event, the team should have the opportunity to discuss standards. A random sample of candidate materials is often used as a means of agreeing appropriate standards.

Verifiers must not verify work from their own centre or exception centres (for example, centres where they have previously worked, or any centre where candidates/staff are known to them).

You will be required to monitor the performance of each Verifier and note his/her suitability for a future appointment as a Verifier. A form will be provided for this purpose.

When verification has been carried out for all the centres selected, you should ensure that the members of the team have signed and dated the Verification Report Forms for National Units/Courses and the Verifier's Worksheet for Standard Grade.

For the 'Not Accepted' centres, you should make sure that:

- ◆ you agree with the Verifier's decision
- ◆ you accept the Verifier's wording on the Report Form/Worksheet, and his/her explanation of what the candidates/centre must do to have the 'Not Accepted' decision lifted
- ◆ you decide with the team and your NQVVE supervisor whether it will be you as the Senior Verifier, or the appropriate Verifier, who will re-verify the material supplied by the centre to have the 'Not Accepted' decision lifted

Then, make sure that:

- ◆ any other relevant issues that have arisen during the verification event have been brought to the attention of the appropriate NQVVE supervisor
- ◆ you have advised the NQVVE supervisor that your event has finished

An Internal Assessment Report for your subject area must be written and submitted to SQA's National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining Team, when requested.

1.3 Code of Conduct for Verifiers

Introduction

This sets out the Code of Conduct for all Verifiers appointed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and details the standards of conduct that are expected of you. Its purpose is to provide clear and helpful advice and you should familiarise yourself with the contents.

By accepting this appointment you are agreeing to abide by this code.

The Code

Confidentiality

Observing confidentiality is a fundamental duty of the Verifier. This does not end with the passage of time. Information learned or obtained from centres or from SQA must always be maintained in absolute confidence.

You should **not**:

- ◆ discuss any aspect of a centre's organisation/activity or its SQA provision with anyone not directly concerned with or taking part in this provision unless that centre has given permission to do so
- ◆ duplicate for distribution or make use of materials received from a centre unless that centre has given permission to do so
- ◆ participate or assist in activity which would reveal the identity of stakeholders without their expressed wish or consent
- ◆ discuss any confidential information given by SQA to third parties unless given permission to do so

Conflict of interest

You must always act in the best interest of SQA, its stakeholders and in accordance with the law, professional practice rules and the principles of good professional conduct. You must not permit your own personal interests or those of your profession to influence their behaviour.

Involvement with centre staff during visits and in other oral/written communication should pertain to SQA procedures, products and services.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

To maintain the level of knowledge and skill required to guarantee the quality of SQA provision, and to ensure consistency of approach, Verifiers must attend SQA training courses and seminars. You should also be aware of on-going changes in your area of expertise, and be familiar with improved learning materials and training techniques.

Additional guidelines

If you believe you are being required to act in a way which:

- ◆ is illegal, improper, or unethical
- ◆ may involve possible maladministration
- ◆ is otherwise inconsistent with this Code

you should report the matter to the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining Team Leader. Similarly, if you observe inappropriate activity or behaviour in the normal course of your duties, you should discuss the matter with the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining Team Leader.

1.4 Senior Verifier's duties

Principal service to be provided

Work in close co-operation with the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining Team, Qualifications Managers and Principal Assessor to prepare for and supervise the conduct of the assessment verification procedures of qualifications in the subject areas concerned.

Outline of duties

- 1 Lead central verification events (if applicable), carry out verification visits, participate in postal verification, accompany new Verifiers on visits, and visit centres whose assessments were 'Not Accepted' at central verification events.
- 2 Participate in prior verification of centres' internally-devised instruments of assessment.
- 3 Assist with enquiries from centres, Verifiers and SQA Supervisors.
- 4 Participate in Verifier training events and in the monitoring of Verifier decisions.
- 5 Provide an annual report for assessment panels.
- 6 Act as a Vetter for the National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials in the subject area concerned.
- 7 Carry out approval, post-approval, and development visits (if applicable).
- 8 Participate in events organised by SQA (if applicable).
- 9 Respond to subject-specific enquiries.
- 10 Provide guidance and support to centres.

Declaration of interest

Senior Verifiers are required to say which centres they are currently or have recently been employed at, together with details of any candidates known to them at the current examination diet. If, exceptionally, there is any centre that a Senior Verifier would prefer not to visit, brief details should be provided for SQA's consideration.

Duration of appointment

This invitation relates only to the period specified, and there is no obligation on the part of SQA to renew this appointment for future years. Accordingly, verification work for a subsequent period should not be undertaken until, and unless, an invitation for that specific period is received. Either party may terminate appointments by one month's notice in writing.

Data protection

SQA holds records of your personal and appointment details on a computer database. Personal data held for appointment purposes will not be used or disclosed in any manner that is incompatible with that purpose.

1.5 Verifier's duties

Principal service to be provided

Carry out assessment verification procedures for qualifications in the subject areas concerned.

Outline of duties

- 1 Participate in central verification events, carry out verification visits, and participate in postal verification.
- 2 Visit centres whose assessments were 'Not Accepted' at central verification events.
- 3 Participate in the prior verification of centres' internally-devised instruments of assessment.
- 4 Attend Verifier training events.
- 5 Carry out approval, post-approval and development visits (if applicable).
- 6 If required, assist with vetting of NAB items.
- 7 Respond to subject-specific enquiries.
- 8 Participate in events organised by SQA (if applicable).
- 9 Provide guidance and support to centres.

Declaration of interest

Verifiers are required to indicate which centres they are currently or have recently been employed at, together with details of any candidates known to them at the current

examination diet. If, exceptionally, there is any centre that a Verifier would prefer not to visit, brief details should be provided for SQA's consideration.

Duration of appointment

This invitation relates only to the session specified, and there is no obligation on the part of SQA to renew this appointment for a further year. Accordingly, verification work for a subsequent session should not be undertaken until, and unless, an invitation for that specific period is received. Either party may terminate appointments by one month's notice in writing.

Data protection

SQA holds records of your personal and appointment details on a computer database. Personal data held for appointment purposes will not be used or disclosed in any manner that is incompatible with that purpose.

2 Notes for Verifiers: Standard Grade

2.1 General

Verification is the process by which SQA confirms that a centre has carried out the grading procedure correctly according to the published Arrangements and the Grade Related Criteria (GRC) for the Element concerned. Verification is not intended to be a re-grading or double-grading exercise concerned with altering the centre's grading of individual candidates' work.

2.2 Verification of assessments

You will be provided with samples of candidates' work, and Verifiers' Worksheets.

a Requirements

The samples of candidates' work should have been selected on the following basis.

- ◆ The starting point for making the sample selection should be at the **eighth** candidate listed on the form *Standard Grade Estimates and Assessment Grades (SGER00)*.
- ◆ Where the number of candidates in the group is 13 or more, from the eighth candidate the centre should have worked down the Element 3 column and selected the first two grade 1 candidates. They should then have continued to work down the column and selected the next two grade 2 candidates, and so on, until the full sample is made, ie 1–6 inclusive. (Grade 6 should not be included for the Sciences.) If the centre has reached the end of the full list of candidates but has been unable to complete the sample, they should have returned to the **top** of the first page and continued until the sample is complete. **Candidates assessed as grade 7 should not be included in the sample.**
- ◆ Where there are 12 candidates or fewer, the work of **all** candidates should have been submitted.
- ◆ Where there are no candidates or only one candidate at a particular grade, the sample should be made up to 12 by adding, as appropriate, one candidate for each grade (in order of listing on the *Form SGER00*) in the following sequence of grades — 3, 2, 4, 5, 1, 6, with repetition as necessary.

Note: The following subjects have specific requirements.

Accounting and Finance, and Business Management and Administration

A supply of the *Internal Assessment Flyleafs* was issued to centres earlier, along with copies of the Projects at Foundation, General and Credit levels. There

should be a flyleaf for each candidate. The materials to be submitted to SQA for verification must, in addition to the candidates' work, include details of the marking scheme used for the internal assessment of the Projects at each level.

Classical Studies

Evidence for each candidate should comprise work done by the candidate in the Investigating process **and** the candidate's final expression of findings. In the case of three-dimensional works, photographs (not the originals) should be sent. In the case of work of an ephemeral nature, a clear record of details should be submitted by the teacher.

Additional subject-specific requirements

In determining the grade to be entered in any element where all the basic requirements detailed in the Arrangements have not been met, the following subject-specific instructions must be observed.

Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Science

Separate subject-specific instructions will be issued to External Verifiers at the beginning of the central verification event.

Computing Studies

Where there is some evidence of candidate's Practical Abilities, but the evidence is insufficient to meet the requirements as described in paragraphs 6.5.3, 6.5 and 6.5.6 of the Amended Arrangements, grade 7 should be assigned to each component for which the evidence is insufficient.

Graphic Communication

The grade for Illustration and Presentation should be the mean of the grades awarded for each of the 10 sub-elements listed on page 17 of the Arrangements. Where a candidate submits a portfolio that is incomplete in respect of one or more sub-elements, the 'missing' sub-element(s) should be awarded grade 7 and the mean grade calculated thereafter.

b Verifier's worksheet

The Verifier's Worksheet is used to record all working, comments and decisions on the verification of the centre's sample. Any notes on an individual candidate's work should be written on the worksheet provided and **not** on the candidate's Internal Assessment Flyleaf.

c Feedback to centre

Where the centre's assessments are 'Accepted' but you wish to bring some comments to the centre's attention, a *Centre Feedback Form* should be completed.

2.3 Procedure

For each centre, proceed as follows:

a Clerical check

- i Where appropriate, start by checking the sample of work for any arithmetical error on the centre's part in arriving at the overall grades. An arithmetical error is an error that occurs in the process of determining the assessment grade (wrong summation/application of a formula), as distinct from an 'assessment error' (where a wrong grade is awarded prior to the process). You should record any resultant correction on the Internal Assessment Flyleaf **in ink**, and enter the words '**Arithmetical Error**' alongside the amended grades, and on the outside of the envelope containing the sample.
- ii Where an arithmetical error is found in the sample, the centre will be advised on *Form SGER00 (Supplement)* and asked to check its calculation of the grades for candidates who were not included in the sample. Where such action is required, you should tick the 'Arithmetical Error — Not Accepted' box on the Verifier's Worksheet.

This is the only grade change that may be made on the Internal Assessment Flyleaf at this stage.

b Assessment check

Initially you will scrutinise the work of six candidates, one at each of grades 1–6. Where there are 'empty' grades, the sample should be made up to six by adding an appropriate candidate for each grade, following the sequence of selection outlined in 2.2a.

- i You should number the Internal Assessment Flyleaf **in ink** to correspond with the number on the Worksheet against which the candidate's grade is to be entered.

As each candidate's work is assessed, enter the grade you would award, and the grade awarded by the centre, on the Worksheet. The grades should be compared, noting one point for a one-grade discrepancy, two points for a two-grade discrepancy, and so on. Then add these points together and enter the total in Box 1. **Where the points total for all six candidates is no more than three**, the centre's internal assessments as a whole are deemed to be satisfactory and no further scrutiny is necessary. You should indicate on the Worksheet that the centre's internal assessments have been 'Accepted', and should sign the Worksheet.

- ii **Where the points total entered in Box 1 is greater than three**, the work of the remaining six candidates in the sample should be assessed.

Compare the grades for all 12 candidates in the sample, and calculate the discrepancy points as in (i). Enter the total in Box 2. **Where the overall total is no more than six**, the centre's internal assessments as a whole are deemed to be satisfactory and no further scrutiny is necessary. You should indicate on the

Worksheet that the centre's internal assessments have been 'Accepted' and sign the Worksheet.

- iii **Where the points total is greater than six**, the position at each grade should be considered. At this stage it may be helpful to consider any comments entered on the Internal Assessment Flyleaf by the teacher. Where, in the light of these comments, you consider the awards at any particular grade to be satisfactory, all the internal assessments at that grade can be 'Accepted' and confirmed. In such cases, enter the appropriate information in the 'Verifier's Comments' box in Section B of the Worksheet.

For each grade where there is concern, it will be necessary for re-assessment to be carried out by the centre.

- iv Where the sample comprises the work of fewer than six candidates, the following discrepancy points total should be applied.

Sample size	Acceptable discrepancy
5	2
4	2
3	1
2	0
1	0

- v Where you decide that the centre's grades cannot be 'Accepted', give your reasons in the 'Comments' box, and bring the matter to the attention of the Senior Verifier (SV). If your decision is confirmed, the SV will sign the Worksheet and, where appropriate, you should amend the grades awarded to the candidates in the sample on the Internal Assessment Flyleaf using **ink**.

- vi When the verification procedure for a centre has been completed, sign the Worksheet.

2.4 Liaison with National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining staff

Provision of samples

Centres will have previously submitted all the candidate materials that are necessary for the verification exercise. Members of staff from National

Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining will be on hand at each event to provide administrative and general support, where necessary.

Matters of policy

If you require clarification of aspects of policy relating to these instructions, you should initially approach the Qualifications Manager concerned. Where necessary, the Qualifications Manager will raise the matter with the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining Team Leader.

2.5 Confidentiality

The acceptability or otherwise of assessments from centres is **confidential**. It must not be discussed with or revealed to anyone not officially involved with the verification procedures.

3 Instructions to visiting Verifiers: National Units

3.1 General

It is important that both centres and visiting Verifiers make assessment decisions in a consistent manner. Visiting Verifiers should always begin from the premise that the centre has made assessment decisions correctly and that the purpose of the verification exercise is to confirm the centre's decisions. It will be assumed that all candidates entered for the same qualification in a centre are assessed to a common standard.

Verification will take place on completed candidate evidence and will focus on how the NAB materials have been applied, and the reliability of the centre's assessment decisions.

For each Unit selected for verification, SQA will have notified centres on *Form VS00* of the candidates whose work will be sampled. Where a centre has more than 12 candidates entered for a Unit with the same completion date, 12 will be selected at random. Where there are fewer than 12, all candidates will be selected.

3.2 Prior verification of assessment scheme

Any centre that chooses not to use NAB materials, an assessment scheme that has previously been successfully verified, or other SQA-approved assessment schemes (ie Assessment Exemplar Packs), is advised to seek prior verification of that assessment scheme before embarking on the Unit. Verifiers are expected to carry out this procedure as necessary. Prior verification will be carried out by mail, and is free of charge to the centre. Material that has successfully undergone prior verification will be stamped accordingly by SQA.

3.3 Arranging your verification visit

We will provide you with:

- ◆ an itinerary indicating the centres to be visited (including details of the SQA Co-ordinator), the Units to be externally verified, and the timescales within which you should carry out your visits
- ◆ where appropriate, for each Unit, a copy of the *Verification Sample Form* showing the names and entry details of the (12) candidates in the sample to be verified

NB For visits where you will be sampling incomplete evidence, you should negotiate the sample size and content with the centre as no *Verification Sample Form* will have been generated.

- ◆ a supply of:
 - *EV10a and EV10b postcards* to allow you to confirm the date of your visit with the centre and SQA
 - Visit plans
 - *NQ Verifier Report Forms*
 - envelopes and labels
 - *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*
 - *Expenses Claim Form*

You should contact the SQA Co-ordinator in each centre by telephone to agree a suitable date and time for your visit as soon as possible after you receive your itinerary. The visit should take place when the centre staff who are responsible for the Units will be available — this should be within the timescales indicated by SQA. When these details have been agreed with the centre, you should complete an NQ Visit Plan, and send it to the centre's SQA Co-ordinator to confirm your visit. If you have any difficulties in contacting the centre's SQA Co-ordinator, you should contact your NQVVE supervisor or admin support.

When you have arranged each visit, please complete and send the postcards EV10a and EV10b to confirm the dates with the centre and SQA.

If you experience any difficulties in arranging a visit, telephone your NQVVE supervisor contact as soon as possible. Any subsequent alteration to your visit dates must be notified to your NQVVE supervisor.

All rail/air travel arrangements and hotel accommodation should be booked directly by SQA. Please complete and send the TARE form to SQA travel booking service. If you have any enquiries, please call 0345 213 6707 or e-mail **assessment.planning@sqa.org.uk**. Tickets and/or hotel reservation confirmation will be forwarded to your home address.

When contacting SQA or a centre by telephone, you must keep a note of all calls. These should be detailed on your *Expenses Claim Form* (see 'Fees and expenses' section 3.11 on page 19).

3.4 The visit

All visits should be undertaken in accordance with SQA's Code of Conduct for Verifiers. Please see page 2 for details.

If for any reason you are unable to carry out a scheduled visit, you should contact the centre to try to reschedule the visit (within the given timescales). Where this is

not possible you should inform your NQVVE supervisor, who will attempt to re-arrange the visit using another Verifier.

On arrival at the centre you should make contact with the SQA Co-ordinator. You should be directed to the department where the evidence for the sample candidates will be available. Where a sample form is used, each sample should be accompanied by the centre's completed copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*, which will indicate the centre's result for each of the candidates in the sample.

Centres must record one of the following results against each candidate in column A of the centre's result section:

P Pass

F Fail, ie this result should be recorded where the candidate has completed the Unit but has failed to demonstrate achievement adequately at the point of assessment.

W Withdrawn, ie the candidate has withdrawn from the Unit.

Enter your results in column 'Ver'.

For levelled National Units, centres will enter 'pass', 'fail' or 'withdrawn' in column A. Column B should only be completed where a candidate has changed level since entry.

The full range of level codes available is as follows:

Level	Level Code
Access 1	07
Access 2	08
Access 3	09
Intermediate 1	10
Intermediate 2	11
Higher	12
Advanced Higher	13

Centres that have not used NAB or AEP materials have been asked to supply you with a copy of the assessment scheme used. The NAB or AEP details should be recorded on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. Centres using their own assessment schemes should indicate on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* whether or not the assessment scheme has been used in a previously successful

verification exercise. 'Accepted' prior verified material will have been stamped accordingly by SQA.

3.5 Candidate sample

You should first check to ensure that the evidence provided for scrutiny is that of the candidates listed. Each candidate's work should be presented along with a Flyleaf, which will show the candidate's name and entry details.

If evidence is missing, or there have been substitutions, check that sufficient evidence is available for verification by following this table:

Sample	Missing evidence	Action required
Full sample of 12 (ie 12 or more candidates entered for Unit)	Evidence for one or two candidates is missing.	The centre should provide an adequate explanation and, where possible, provide substitute evidence.
	Evidence for between three and six candidates is missing.	The centre should provide an adequate explanation and, where possible, provide substitute evidence. Note the number of omissions and/or substitutions on the <i>Verifier Report Form</i> .
	In each of the above cases, you should continue to verify the Unit using the candidate evidence that is available.	
	Evidence for more than six candidates in the sample is unavailable.	Due to the lack of suitable candidate evidence for this Unit, verification should not proceed and you should complete the <i>Verifier Report Form</i> to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit must be 'Not Accepted' (see 3.7 'Result of verification').
Fewer than 12 candidates (ie fewer than 12 candidates entered by centre)	Evidence for a significant number of candidates (notionally, more than half of the total) listed on the <i>Verification Sample Form</i> is missing.	The verification exercise for this Unit should not proceed and you should complete the <i>Verifier Report Form</i> to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit must be 'Not Accepted' (see 3.7 'Result of verification').

3.6 The verification exercise

Where a suitable sample of evidence is available, you should proceed to verify the sample. Follow the verification decision-making flow chart (see page 26) and take notes.

During the verification visit you should be aware that, in certain Units/Outcomes, assessment can be made on a holistic basis. Where this is the case, you should check to ensure that both the approach and any cut-off score are appropriate. Conversely, where holistic assessment is appropriate and the centre has not used this approach, it is worth bringing this to the centre's attention by noting it on the *Verifier Report Form*. However, centres should not be penalised for making their assessments on the basis of Performance Criteria (ie using a PC-by-PC approach).

If, at an early stage, you identify an issue with the instrument of assessment or the marking guidelines, and this (according to the flow chart, page 26) warrants a 'Not Accepted' result, you should continue to scrutinise the candidate evidence, where possible, to make optimum use of your time at the centre. This may identify additional issues which you can usefully include in your report to the centre.

3.7 Result of verification

The verification result for each Unit will be either '**Accepted**' or '**Not Accepted**'.

The result must be indicated on a *Verifier Report Form*. This is also the means of providing formal written feedback to the centre. It should be clear, concise and constructive.

'Accepted'

Where you have decided that the centre is 'Accepted' and **no issues** have been identified with either the validity or the reliability of its assessments, you should complete:

- ◆ the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
- ◆ a *Verifier Report Form*, giving positive feedback and drawing attention to good practice, where this is appropriate

Where you have identified **minor issues** with either the validity or the reliability of the centre's assessments, but these do not warrant a 'Not Accepted' result, you must judge the centre to be 'Accepted' and complete:

- ◆ the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
- ◆ a *Verifier Report Form*, indicating the minor issues and providing appropriate guidance

‘Not Accepted’

Where you have decided that the centre is ‘Not Accepted’ as issues have been identified with the validity or the reliability (or both) of the centre’s Unit assessments, you should:

- ◆ complete the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the ‘Not Accepted’ box
- ◆ provide information and reasons for your decision on a *Verifier Report Form (Not Accepted)*, including specific advice on how the centre can resolve the identified issues and what action you expect the centre to take, eg assessment review
- ◆ where you disagree with the centre’s assessment decisions for specific candidates, on the *Verification Sample Form*, under the ‘Ver result’ column heading, enter your verified candidate results in column A and, where appropriate, the revised class (ie level for levelled National Units) in column B

3.8 Advising the centre and SQA of the results of verification

When you have completed the verification exercise for all Units, you should contact the centre’s SQA Co-ordinator (or nominated member of staff) to inform him/her of the result of external verification and provide verbal feedback on the visit.

If all externally-verified Units were ‘**Accepted**’ you must:

- ◆ send the following to SQA within five days of the visit:
 - a copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*
 - a copy of the *Verifier Report Form* (electronically)
 - a completed *Expenses Claim Form* — please ensure that your National Insurance number is shown on this copy
 - *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*

If any Unit is ‘**Not Accepted**’ you must discuss the specific issues and any action the centre will be required to undertake to have the ‘**Not Accepted**’ decision lifted. If any issues can be resolved during the visit, eg with the provision of additional candidate evidence (**Note:** for the sample candidates only), this may enable you to overturn a ‘Not Accepted’ result on the day.

When you have completed the verification exercise for all Units, you should contact the centre’s SQA Co-ordinator (or nominated member of staff) to inform him or her of the result of external verification and provide verbal feedback on the visit.

Where externally-verified Units are ‘**Not Accepted**’ you must:

- ◆ leave the following with the centre:
 - a copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*
- ◆ send the following to SQA within five days of the visit:
 - the *Verification Sample Form VS00*
 - a copy of the *Verifier Report Form (Not Accepted)* (electronically)
 - a completed *Expenses Claim Form* — please ensure that your National Insurance number is shown on this copy
 - *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*

Assessment review

On receipt of the *Verifier Report Form (Not Accepted)*, SQA will send the centre an *Assessment Review Form* and a formal 'Not Accepted' letter. The centre will be required to undertake an assessment review for each 'Not Accepted' Unit. The form of review and your subsequent involvement will depend on the issues encountered and the centre's subsequent action.

3.9 What to do when Units are 'Not Accepted'

a Your action

If issues are identified with the **validity** of the instrument of assessment (IA) and/or the marking guidelines, you must advise the centre to:

- ◆ make the appropriate changes to the IA/marketing guidelines as instructed by the *Verifier Report Form*
- ◆ re-assess **all** candidates where these IAs/marketing guidelines have been used and indicate any revised results on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* (instructions given to the centre will advise the centre to mark revised results in **red ink**)
- ◆ where appropriate, advise the centre to send the re-assessment material to SQA's National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining team

Where there are issues with the **reliability** of the centre's judgements, you must advise the centre to:

- ◆ review the assessments of **all** candidates (or those specifically identified, eg if an issue is identified which affects Intermediate 2 candidates only) in line with your comments/recommendations
- ◆ where appropriate, advise the centres to send the re-assessment material to the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining team in SQA

b Centre's action

Once the centre has taken action in response to your recommendations, a member of the centre's senior management will be required to sign the

declaration in part 1 of the *Assessment Review Form* to confirm that the assessment review has been carried out, and to indicate whether:

Option A The centre completes part 1 of the *Assessment Review Form* to confirm that the re-assessment/review has been undertaken. The candidate evidence and supporting documentation will be sent first to the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining team in SQA and then on to the Verifier for further scrutiny.

or

Option B The review requires a change to candidate results. Revised results, in line with the visiting Verifier's changes to the marks for the sampled candidates, will be produced for submission to SQA.

Your involvement will continue only where the centre has elected to use Option A.

c **Option A — what you have to do next**

The *Assessment Review Form* will be returned to you by SQA along with the assessment scheme, the *Verification Sample Form VS00* (which will have been annotated with the centre's revised results in **red ink**), and the candidate evidence. You should proceed to evaluate this material.

If the assessments are now 'Accepted':

- ◆ tick the 'accepted after Assessment Review' box on part 2 of *Assessment Review Form*, providing comments where appropriate
- ◆ return a copy of the *Assessment Review Form* along with the candidate evidence to SQA, who will note their records and return the materials with the decision to the centre
- ◆ retain a copy of the *Assessment Review Form*

If there are still issues with the assessments that you cannot readily resolve with the centre, all documentation and evidence should be sent immediately to the NQVVE supervisor. At this stage a further visit is often suggested.

3.10 **Malpractice**

If, in the course of your duties, you suspect any form of malpractice, verification should be completed as normal. In this situation **you must not inform the centre of your concerns**. Send the *Verification Sample Form VS00*, and your report listing specific areas of concern relating to malpractice, to your NQVVE supervisor. You will then be asked to complete an *Evidence Requiring Further Explanation Form* (ERFE) with full details of your concerns. SQA will then communicate this to the centre.

3.11 Fees and expenses

When we receive your *Verifier Report Form* and *Expenses Claim Form*, your payment will be processed.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses necessarily incurred in the course of verification duties (eg postage, telephone calls, travelling) should be made on your *Expenses Claim Form*. Receipts must be attached for all expenditure.

Release compensation must be claimed by your main employer, using a *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*.

You must submit your expenses and TR2 forms within four weeks of your visit.

4 Instructions to Central Verifiers: National Units

4.1 General

It is important that both centres and Verifiers make assessment decisions in a consistent manner. Verifiers should always begin from the premise that the centre has made assessment decisions correctly and that the purpose of the verification exercise is to confirm the centre's decisions. It will be assumed that all candidates entered for the same qualification in a centre are assessed to a common standard.

Verification will take place on completed candidate evidence and will focus on the validity of the assessment instruments, how they are applied, and the reliability of the centre's assessment decisions.

For each Unit selected for verification, SQA will have selected and notified centres of the candidates whose work will be sampled. Where a centre has more than 12 candidates entered for a Unit, with the same completion date, 12 will be selected at random. Where there are fewer than 12, all candidates will be selected.

4.2 Prior verification of assessment scheme

Any centre that chooses not to use NAB materials, an assessment scheme that has previously been successfully verified, or other SQA approved assessment schemes, (ie Assessment Exemplar Packs (AEPs)), is advised to seek prior verification of that assessment scheme before embarking on the Unit. Prior verification will be carried out by mail, and you will be asked to carry out this procedure as necessary. Material that undergoes prior verification successfully is stamped accordingly by SQA.

4.3 SQA booking/travel service

All rail/air travel arrangements and hotel accommodation should be booked directly by SQA. Please complete and send the TARE form to SQA travel booking service. If you have any enquiries, please call 0345 213 6707 or e-mail assessment.planning@sqa.org.uk. Tickets and/or hotel reservation confirmation will be forwarded to your home address.

4.4 Verification arrangements

Central verification events will take place in SQA's offices in December/January and April/May on dates set by SQA. You may also be expected to undertake postal verification duties.

At the verification event the following will be provided:

- ◆ envelopes containing candidate evidence, copies of the assessment and marking scheme used and the *Verification Sample Form VS00* which shows the names and entry details of the candidates in the sample to be verified
- ◆ Verifier's Worksheets to record all working notes, comments and decisions in connection with the verification of each centre/Unit
- ◆ *Verifier Report Forms* (electronic versions are available)

4.5 The verification process

You should first check to ensure that the evidence provided for scrutiny is that of the candidates listed on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* and that the form has been completed to indicate the centre's result for each of the listed candidates.

Centres must record, against each candidate, one of the following results in column A of the centre's result section:

P Pass.

F Fail, ie this result should be recorded where the candidate has completed the Unit but has failed to demonstrate competence at the point of assessment.

W Withdrawn, ie the candidate has withdrawn from the Unit.

Enter your results in column 'Ver'.

For levelled National Units, centres will enter 'pass', 'fail' or 'withdrawn' in column A. Column B should only be completed where a candidate has changed level since entry. The following levels/codes are available:

Level	Level Code
Access 1	07
Access 2	08
Access 3	09
Intermediate 1	10

Intermediate 2	11
Higher	12
Advanced Higher	13

Each candidate's work should be presented inside a clear-face bag along with a Flyleaf which will show the candidate's name and entry details.

Details of the NAB pack or AEP **must be recorded on the *Verification Sample Form VS00***. Centres making alterations to NAB materials have been instructed to send annotated copies along with their candidate evidence.

If non-NAB/AEP materials have been used, centres have been instructed to provide a copy of the assessment scheme. 'Accepted' prior verified material will be stamped accordingly by SQA.

4.6 Candidate sample

To check that sufficient evidence is available for verification, follow this table:

Sample	Missing evidence	Action required
Full sample of 12 (ie 12 or more candidates entered for Unit)	Evidence for between one and six candidates in the sample is missing.	The centre must, where possible, provide substitute evidence. You must note the number of omissions/substitutions on the <i>Verifier Report Form</i> . You should continue to verify the Unit using the available candidate evidence.
	Evidence for more than six candidates in the sample is missing.	Due to the lack of suitable candidate evidence the verification exercise should not proceed, and you should complete the Verifier's Worksheet and <i>Verifier Report Form</i> to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit must be 'Not Accepted' (see 4.8 'Result of verification').
Fewer than 12 candidates (ie fewer than 12 candidates entered for	Evidence for a significant number of candidates (notionally, more than half of the total) listed on the <i>Verification Sample</i>	The verification exercise for this Unit should not proceed. Complete the Verifier's Worksheet, and the <i>Verifier Report Form</i> to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit must be 'Not Accepted' (see 4.8 'Result of verification').

Unit)	<i>Form is missing.</i>	
-------	-------------------------	--

Note: The total number of candidates entered for the Unit/completion date is shown at the top of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. This will indicate whether or not the centre is in a position to provide substitutes. Use this to inform your decision.

4.7 The verification exercise

Where a suitable sample of evidence is available, you should proceed to verify the sample, following the verification decision-making flowchart (see page 26), taking notes on the Verifier's Worksheet as you work.

If, at an early stage, you identify an issue with the instrument of assessment or the marking guidelines which (according to the flowchart) warrants a 'Not Accepted' result, you should draw this to the attention of the Senior Verifier. Where possible, scrutiny of the candidate evidence should continue as this may show up additional issues which can usefully be included in the report to the centre.

You should be aware that, in certain Units and Outcomes, assessment can take place on a holistic basis. Where this is the case you should check to ensure that both the approach and any cut-off score is appropriate. Conversely, where holistic assessment is appropriate and the centre has not used this approach, it is worth bringing this to the centre's attention by noting it on the *Verifier Report Form*. Centres should not, though, be penalised for making their assessments on the basis of Performance Criteria (ie a PC-by-PC approach).

4.8 Result of verification

The verification result for each Unit will be either '**Accepted**' or '**Not Accepted**'.

This result must be indicated on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* and on the *Verifier Report Form*. The Verifier Report Form is also the means of providing feedback to the centre, and it is important that any comments you make or guidance you give are clear, concise and constructive.

'Accepted'

Where you have decided that the centre is 'Accepted' and **no issues** have been identified with either the validity or the reliability of its assessments, you must complete:

- ◆ the verification result section of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* by ticking the 'Accepted' box

- ◆ the *Verifier Report Form*, giving positive feedback and drawing attention to good practice, where this is appropriate

Where you have identified **minor issues** with either the validity or the reliability of the centre's assessments, but these do not warrant a 'Not Accepted' result, you must complete:

- ◆ the verification result section of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
- ◆ the *Verifier Report Form*, detailing the issues and providing appropriate guidance

In each of these cases, the documentation intimating the 'Accepted' result will be sent back to the centre along with the candidate evidence.

'Not Accepted'

Where you identify issues with the validity and/or the reliability of the centre's Unit assessments, you must complete the Verifier's Worksheet accordingly and bring this to the attention of the Senior Verifier. Once your judgement has been agreed with the Senior Verifier, please:

- ◆ complete the verification result section of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* by ticking the 'Not Accepted' box
- ◆ provide information and reasons for the decision on the *Verifier Report Form (Not Accepted)* including specific advice on how the centre can resolve the identified issues and what action the centre will be expected to take — eg assessment review
- ◆ ask the Senior Verifier to countersign the 'Not Accepted' report, where appropriate

Where there is disagreement with the centre's assessment decisions for specific candidates, these must be annotated on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. The verified candidate result(s) should be shown under the 'Ver result' column. For levelled National Units centres will enter 'pass', 'fail' or 'withdrawn' in column A. Column B should only be completed where a candidate has changed level since entry. Enter your results in column 'Ver'.

A copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* and the *Verifier Report Form* will be sent back to the centre along with the candidate evidence and an *Assessment Review Form*.

Assessment review

If there is a large number of 'Not Accepted' results in your verification area, you may be required to carry out verification on reviewed materials. At the beginning of the verification event the Senior Verifier and Verifiers should jointly decide who will re-verify 'Not Accepted' centres.

The material will be sent from SQA to the Verifier's home for scrutiny and evaluation. It will include:

- ◆ reviewed evidence (in line with feedback) for the candidates in the sample
- ◆ where required, the revised instrument of assessment/marketing guidelines (in line with feedback)
- ◆ the *Assessment Review Form* with part 1 completed
- ◆ the *Verification Sample Form VS00* indicating the centre's reviewed result (in red ink)

If the assessments are now 'Accepted' you must:

- ◆ tick the 'accepted after Assessment Review' box on part 2 of the *Assessment Review Form* and provide comments where appropriate
- ◆ return a copy of the *Assessment Review Form* along with the candidate evidence to SQA, who will note the amended assessment decision and return the materials to the centre

If issues with the assessment are not resolved with the centre, all documentation and evidence should be sent immediately to the National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining team with a short note of explanation.

4.9 Malpractice

If in the course of your duties you suspect any form of malpractice, you must inform the Senior Verifier of your concerns. The Senior Verifier will complete an *Evidence Requiring Further Explanation Form* (ERFE). SQA will then communicate this to the centre.

Verification should be completed as normal, and the centre concerned must **not** be contacted in this connection. The National Qualification Verification and Visiting Examining team will contact the appropriate team within SQA.

4.10 Fees and expenses

Your payment will be processed on completion of the verification event.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses necessarily incurred in the course of verification duties (eg postage, telephone calls, travel) should be made on your *Expenses Claim Form*. All claims must be covered by a receipt.

Release compensation must be claimed by your main employer completing and returning the *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*.

You must submit your expenses and TR2 forms within four weeks of the date of the verification activity.

4.11 Flowchart: decision-making in verification

