



National Qualifications 2008

Internal Assessment Report

Subject: Geography 122

Assessment Panel: Geography

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification which has taken place within National Qualifications in this subject.

NATIONAL UNITS

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS VERIFIED

Insert detail:

DF3C 09	Geography: Physical Environments (Access3)
DF3C 11	Geography: Physical Environments (Intermediate 2)
DF44 11	Geography: Environmental Interactions (Intermediate 2)
DF43 12	Geography: Human Environments (Higher)
DF44 12	Geography: Environmental Interactions (Higher)
DF48 13	Geographical Study (AH)
DF49 13	Geographical Issues (AH)

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

Insert details relating to specific guidance which should be offered to centres based on the verification of centres.

Include:

- *General comments*
- *Areas of good practice*
- *Areas for further development*

General comments:

The event was scheduled to last for two days but was completed in one day though additional hours had to be included. The size of the team was sufficient to complete all the necessary tasks for the event. There was one new member of the team this year who was paired with an experienced verifier. All other verifiers are experienced in SQA procedures but as ever provided each other with mutual support throughout the event. Verifiers again commented positively on the use of electronic reporting.

As in previous years the verifiers felt that the central event provided many positive benefits over postal or visiting verification by:

- allowing cross referencing with colleagues.
- confirming and maintaining the standard for verification.
- providing immediate and supportive advice from the Senior Verifier.
- ensuring a speedy and accurate conclusion to the verification process.

All the verifiers had received and read the Handbook for NQ Verifiers sent by SQA. This meant the pre-training by the Senior Verifier was facilitated. During this initial session the senior verifier provided exemplars of verifier report forms following the feedback format the team has worked towards establishing over the last few years. This format meets the needs of the verification process, provides centres with support and advice, as required, and recognises the excellent level of work produced by centres and candidates. The team felt that these exemplars provided particular support for themselves in the writing of the verifier report forms.

The request by SQA, as in previous years, for centres to include the NAB item(s) and marking scheme(s) greatly assisted the team in their duties.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Candidate performance was good and few of those sampled had failed the units. The team felt that the standard of candidates' response and teacher marking and advice had continued to improve as in previous years.

The team was able to report, again, that in this year's sample centres were applying marking schemes well and were clearly indicating where marks were being awarded on candidate evidence.

Some centres when marking include annotated comments which help the verifier to understand more clearly the marking of candidates work.

Again some centres use (d) for description or (e) for explanation etc...which also aids the verification process.

The number of centres using cross- marking as part of their internal verification process grows with each year. Where evident this process was commended in the verifier's report form that is sent back to centres. For centres where cross-marking was not evident the verifiers included a request for the centre to consider this approach in the future.

Again it was pleasing to see an increasing number of centres taking ownership of the NAB items by adding their own departmental covers which provides for all, candidates, parents, teachers and verifiers very clear information about the candidate, source of the assessment item and marking. This clearly indicates a centre that has planned and integrated the NAB items into their teaching and learning programme. As with cross-marking this approach is to be encouraged and commended.

The completion of the Verification Sample Form for some centres still causes difficulty. A number of centres, though fewer each year, include marks and other information rather than the symbols P (pass) , F (fail) or W(withdrawn) as per instructions supplied by SQA.

Out of a total of 39 centres verified all were deemed 'accepted'. This is the first time since moderation/verification was introduced that this has happened. However some centres are still making elementary/minor errors as outlined below.

Only one centre was selected this year at Access 3. The centre selected provided good evidence of their procedures and candidates performance.

Intermediate 2, evidence like last year, caused little concern. However despite repeated reminders a few centres are still using out of date NAB items, pre October 2007, as evident from:

- the date of publication stamped on the NAB item submitted with the verification material.
- the use of half marks on candidates scripts.

The latter happens in questions asking for the identification of features where previously candidates were awarded ½ mark for each correct feature. With the move to full marks the instructions for the allocation of marks has changed.

Included below, for exemplification purposes, are some examples that demonstrate the new instruction for markers:

- **3 marks** Award 1 mark for every two correctly matched rivers. Only one correct match will receive no marks.
- **3 marks** Four correct – 3 marks, two or three correct – 2 marks, one correct – 1 mark.

All other centres used the appropriate arrangements, NAB items and marking instructions.

Evidence is growing of the use of cross marking and annotation of scripts to allow candidates to improve. Wherever this appears centres are commended.

NB Centres are reminded that only full marks are now used in NAB items.

At Higher level verifiers' remarked on the following points:

1. Accurate and consistent marking and annotation of candidates' work to assist candidates to improve.
2. The quality of the candidates' evidence as supplied by centres.
3. The growing use of cross-marking to ensure the quality of internal assessments.
4. There was no evidence of any issues relating to the move to full marks.

In questions where candidates are asked to provide a named example a few centres are crediting candidates with a mark for such a named example. This goes against the convention used both in the internal and external assessments.

Included below, for exemplification purposes, are some examples that demonstrate the instruction for markers:

- **12 marks.** Will depend on the city chosen. If no named city mark out of a maximum of 10.
- **8 marks.** If no country is named mark out of a maximum of 6 marks.

Where candidates give specific named locations they are entitled to credit as shown in the instructions to markers below:

- **10 marks.** Answers will depend on the choice of old industrial area, but must be authentic for the chosen area. Award up to one mark for specific named locations eg Rhondda Valley, Cardiff docks etc.

In this case the candidate would have received no marks for just naming South Wales.

Centres should ensure that all teaching staff are fully aware of the arrangements for using and marking NAB items.

At Advanced Higher the quality of the work was very good with a number of centres/candidates presenting some excellent work. It is evident that centres have a clear understanding of what is required and are providing good support mechanisms for candidates. Centres that cross mark and annotate scripts to allow candidates to improve provide the best evidence in support of their evaluations of candidate work. Wherever this appears centres are highly commended.

Feedback to centres

General comments:

Many centres submitted evidence that had been carefully marked and presented. Ticks on scripts showed exactly where marks were being awarded and this was very helpful to the verification team. Verifiers commented on the number of centres in which scripts were annotated by the markers and this provided good feedback for candidates.

Centres which had obviously adopted a policy of cross marking / internal verification procedures are to be particularly commended. Such centres presented few, if any problems, for the verifiers as they had already identified and acted upon any inconsistencies or ambiguity, if there were any, in the marking of individual members of staff.

Centres that have single person departments might think about linking up with a neighbouring centre to facilitate cross marking.

Centres are recommended to carry out an audit of all NAB items used across National Units to ensure that only the most up to date items are being used. Furthermore, centres should ensure that all teaching staff are fully aware of the arrangements for using and marking NAB items as outlined in the introductory pages of the NAB packs.

Centres are advised to destroy all old NAB items at every level to prevent any future confusion.

Centres might consider following the example of the increasing number of centres which are “taking ownership” of the NAB items by including a departmental front cover which can include all the relevant information for verification.

Across all levels Access 3, Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher the internal assessment seems to be well understood and used by centres appropriately. Overall the quality of candidates’ performance exemplifies the high standard of professional support from teachers/lecturers given to candidates in centres. The following advice has been included in recent reports. This is repeated as a support to centres.

The verifiers are looking for a number of items to ensure a smooth and successful verification experience for centres.

These items are as follows:

1. The candidate evidence matches with the list of names on the Verification Sample Form VS00 as supplied by SQA.
2. The centre has used an approved NAB item as supplied by SQA or similar item approved prior to the verification event.
3. There is a clear and definite approach to marking suggesting a clear policy being followed by the centre and illustrated by the following:
 - a. Ticks on candidates work are useful and help to identify where the assessor is giving credit. This follows the marking practice advocated by SQA.
 - b. Additional written comments on the candidate work in support of the assessment. This is highly valuable both for the candidate in how to improve their performance and for verifiers to ensure a candidate/centre meet the requirements of the unit.
 - c. Detailed and accurate comments avoiding the use of subjective terms which might lead to confusion. Clear and unambiguous comments allow the verification team to quickly identify where a centre is being too lenient or too harsh on the candidate.
 - d. Cross marking of candidates work which is valuable evidence of internal verification of the centre’s work. Where staffing does not allow centres to cross mark internally then centres may think of pairing up with a nearby centre for mutual support. This happens in both geography and other subject areas.
 - e. Detailed the comments written by the assessor. These meant that their judgement will be understood and accepted by the verifier.
 - f. Evidence that reassessment has taken place where necessary.

Comments on moderator performance

All the verifiers showed a professional attitude to the work at hand during the event.

The verification team worked well together offering each other support and guidance and were necessary conferring and confirming with the Senior Verifier. The overall impression from verifiers was that they enjoyed the experience, felt highly valued by SQA, and that this year's event was well organised and professionally run.

The team commentated positively on the support provided by SQA staff and the catering facilities. However they felt that the accommodation was rather cramped and poorly ventilated.

The team are totally comfortable with the use of electronic reporting and acknowledged their preference for this approach. Verifiers also confirmed the positive aspects of central events as opposed to postal verification.

After reviewing the verifiers report forms for the completion of the senior verifiers' report it is clear that the level and detail of feedback to centres is very good. The team has again used the agreed feedback style that meets the needs of the verification process, provides centres with support and advice, as required, and recognises the excellent level of work produced by centres and candidates.