



**National Qualifications 2017
Internal Assessment Report
Scottish Studies**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Qualifications Units

Titles/levels of NQ units verified:

HY3P 44 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 4)

HY3P 45 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 5)

HY3P 46 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF level 6)

General comments

Verification visits were made to nine centres during March/April 2017. The majority of these centres had a clear understanding of the national standard. One of the centres was accepted after review; this centre was willing to re-assess candidates after work was done to support candidates to reach the required standard. All verification samples included candidate evidence from SCQF levels 4 and 5; often further encouragement within centres could have allowed achievement at SCQF level 6.

Visiting verification enhances the verification process; dialogue with centre staff was productive and allowed assessment decisions to be discussed and supported. A variety of activities were presented; centres were advised to ensure that the strengths of individual candidates were considered in the choice of activity. Candidates were, in the main, presented at the correct level; centres were able to use verification visits to seek advice where there was debate.

Centres were also advised to use and record dialogue with candidates during the process to support assessment decisions and to remember that the main purpose of the Scotland in Focus unit is to broaden knowledge of Scotland

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In general, centres were using a full range of appropriate SQA documentation to support candidates to reach the national standard.

Evidence requirements

Evidence requirements were clearly understood by most centres. Use of the candidate and assessor checklists is crucial to document assessment decisions. Comments added to assessor checklists proved to be particularly helpful to verifiers; these are not mandatory but significantly add to our understanding of the assessment of individual candidate evidence.

Administration of assessments

Centres had judged candidate evidence to the national standard effectively in most cases. Visiting verification appeared to be helpful in terms of confirming that the correct decisions had been taken, as well as allowing centre staff to adjust levels, in some cases, following discussion. Evidence of internal verification was

generally in place; some centres provided evidence of robust quality assurance procedures specific to the Scotland in Focus unit.

Areas of good practice

Based on evidence seen during visiting verification this year, we are pleased to confirm that:

- ◆ most centres were using published, or amended, candidate and assessor checklists with detailed comments; this was enhanced by dialogue with staff during visits by adding clarity to reasons behind assessment decisions
- ◆ some centres were using assessor checklists and logbooks effectively to record candidate progress through the unit; this served to document where analysis/evaluation had been evident, often through dialogue with candidates
- ◆ most centres used either a candidate brief or an introductory set of lessons to ensure candidates knew what was expected of them; in addition, centres were often using dialogue with candidates to tailor the activity to their specific skills
- ◆ candidates had generally achieved to a higher standard where they had been motivated through a focus on their personal interests/skills in terms of topic and activity
- ◆ most centres embraced use of a holistic approach to assessment so that candidates were not adversely penalised for requiring some level of support during completion of the Scotland in Focus unit
- ◆ dialogue between staff involved in assessing/verifying often revealed that detailed debate/discussion had helped in assessment judgements; use of the 'read across' *Overview* document had in many cases aided the assessment process
- ◆ the practice of interviewing/questioning candidates was often used to demonstrate that knowledge of Scotland had been broadened; centres need to be more aware that reflection, analysis and evaluation can also become apparent using this means and that comments on assessor checklists can be used to document this
- ◆ centres are encouraged to continue to prompt candidates to allow assessment at a higher level; candidates should undertake additional analysis, reflection or generation of further evidence on what has been learned about Scotland
- ◆ centres were keen to use verification visits to ask advice and gain confidence in their assessment judgements; often this extended to discussion of plans to expand use of the award with larger/more varied groups of candidates

Specific areas for improvement

The verification team highlighted the following points for consideration:

- ◆ centres continue to be advised to use candidate and assessor checklists; the level of support given to candidates, and evidence of interviews with candidates to determine analysis/evaluation, should be clearly documented

- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to undertake different activities to match to their individual skills; whilst written reports are entirely acceptable, other forms of product, eg artwork, electronic presentation, talk to peers, interview, group debate, drama production are also valid
- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to revisit and amend aims in light of their initial findings; these should be clearly stated
- ◆ centres should check that candidates are researching using a variety of sources to broaden their knowledge of Scotland, rather than using knowledge already gained through previous study
- ◆ use of a variety of types of specific sources is preferred; candidates could be encouraged to use books, TV documentaries, interviews and surveys etc as well as internet sources (not search engines)
- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to ensure that specific sources are clearly identified either in a logbook or in a detailed bibliography; evaluation of sources should also be encouraged at all levels
- ◆ for levels 4 (and above) candidates research and express their learning in some detail; more basic information and sources can only be assessed at level 3
- ◆ analysis in some form (can be oral/through debate or written) is essential for candidates to be able to achieve at level 5
- ◆ for level 6 it is important that candidates fulfil assessment standard 2.3; this must include reflection on the process and the effectiveness of their chosen activity
- ◆ at level 6 it is important that candidates fully analyse material in order to meet assessment standards; it is recommended that detailed analysis/evaluation is included throughout their method of communication
- ◆ presentation to peers could initiate debate/discussion; this may be used to demonstrate analysis and simply require comment on the assessor checklist
- ◆ graphics and illustrative materials should be encouraged as methods of processing information; if integrated/used effectively within the product these can enhance candidate work in terms of analysis
- ◆ centres must clearly instruct candidates to express information in their own words, and that material should not be lifted directly from source unless acknowledged; centres are advised to enact a stringent approach to avoid plagiarism
- ◆ evidence of the internal verification process can be demonstrated through discussion at the verification visit
- ◆ as units no longer need to be assessed as part of national courses, it is important that communication take place between teachers responsible for the Scottish Studies award and teachers delivering National Courses where the subject-specific (Scottish context) units are required for achievement of Scottish Studies. Subject-specific teachers should be encouraged to assess candidates against these units.