NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 2

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Administration and IT
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H201 74   Administration and IT Assignment (National 4) added value unit

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The approaches used by all centres verified were valid. All centres accurately and consistently used SQA unit assessment support (UAS) packs.

Across the centres sampled, all three packs were used: *Island Secondary School*, *Youth Beat* and *Eagle Eye*. *Youth Beat* was used significantly more than the others, followed by *Island Secondary School* and then *Eagle Eye*.

Some centres had also used the UAS packs for re-assessment. Where a candidate had been unsuccessful at their first attempt to achieve an assessment standard, they had been re-assessed using the relevant tasks from another pack.

Generally candidate evidence was well presented, tasks were clearly labelled, and assessment approaches were included. All centres are reminded to include the actual instrument of assessment (assessment tasks) and corresponding judging evidence table along with their candidate evidence.

Assessment judgements

There was a big improvement in the accuracy of the assessment judgements this year compared to last year. It was clear that the main issues leading to inaccurate assessment judgements highlighted in last year's Key Messages Round 2 Report had been taken on board.

There are, however, still a few issues:

Error tolerance

Assessors should underline every keyboarding or spacing error within a task. These must be counted. The candidate should only be awarded a pass if the number of errors is within the tolerance for that task. The error tolerance for National 4 is one error for every 15 words. It was quite common to see candidate evidence where the assessor had not identified any or all of the keyboarding errors.

Errors can appear anywhere in the task. Errors that are included within the tolerance are: typos, minor layout errors (eg reference and date in wrong place) and spacing errors (eg one return between paragraphs, inconsistent spacing in a report). There is flexibility over layouts but a sensible business layout should be used.

Keyboarding errors were most commonly missed on word processing, desktop publishing and e-mail tasks. Common errors not identified by assessors were:

♦ inconsistent date formats within a task (see 'Date format' section below)
♦ inappropriate/inconsistent time formats within a task (see 'Time format' section below)
♦ formatting punctuation
♦ inappropriate punctuation
♦ confusion between a dash and a hyphen (this counts as one error across the task)
♦ inconsistent capitalisation (this counts as one error across the task)
♦ no space after a colon (this counts as one error across the task)
♦ task numbers included, eg as the database report title

It is crucial that assessors identify all errors to ensure they can correctly judge if the candidate is within the error tolerance.

Time format

The table below lists the various time formats that are acceptable:

1000 hours	1000hrs	10 am	10am
10:00 hours	10.00 hrs	10.00 am	10.00am
Do not accept 'a.m.' or 'p.m.'			

Consistency within a document is essential. If candidates have more than one time format within a document, this must be underlined and counted as one keyboarding error.

If an e-file given to a candidate has a time stated, candidates should continue to use the same time format, otherwise the time format is inconsistent and is counted as one keyboarding error.

Date format

If a task requires a date, candidates must always include the year. Acceptable date formats are listed below:

7 May 2016	07/05/2016
7th May 2016	May 7 2016
7/5/16	
Do not accept 'the 7th of May 2016'	

Consistency within a document is essential. If candidates have more than one date format within a document, this must be underlined and counted as one keyboarding error.

If an e-file given to a candidate has a date stated, candidates should continue to use the same date format, otherwise the date format is inconsistent and is counted as one keyboarding error.

E-diary entries

If the printout of the view requested in the task truncates recorded event(s), then extra printouts of the event(s) must be provided, so that keyboarding and exact times can be checked. A screenshot is acceptable as long as it is clear from the screenshot that an e-diary has been used.

For an all-day event, candidates must use the 'all-day' facility in their e-diary. Recording the event from 8 am to 5 pm is not correct for an all-day event. If candidates do not use the 'all-day' facility, they cannot pass the corresponding assessment standard.

Formatting

A few centres were too harsh in their marking of two or more formats. If a task requires the candidate to apply two or more formats, any of the formatting options listed below should be accepted (as long as they are not already present in the original e-file):

Size	Bold
Underline	Italics
Shading	Colour
Font change*	Right alignment
Centring	Justification
Borders	Bullet points
Word Art	
* unless change of font is asked for separately	

Spreadsheet formulae

Some candidates are still incorrectly using the SUM function and this is being accepted by some assessors. The SUM function should only be used to add a cell range. If a candidate uses the SUM function incorrectly, eg =sum(B10-B9) this should not be accepted and the candidate has therefore not achieved the corresponding assessment standard for that task.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Assessors should read the assessment standards carefully, check evidence thoroughly against these standards and take on board the key messages given to them in this report.

Verification documentation

All centres are reminded that the column for pass or fail on the Candidate Sample Form should be completed with their assessment judgement. There are only two options for this column — 'pass' or 'fail'. This column is to record the overall final assessment judgement for the evidence that has been included for each candidate. It is not a final judgement on their passing or failing the whole unit. Recording 'interim' in this column is not an option.

Centres are reminded to include the UAS pack used along with the candidate evidence.

Internal verification — internal quality assurance

It was clear that most centres had cross-checked candidate evidence using different coloured pens and most provided a short narrative detailing assessment judgement discussions between the assessor and internal verifier, clearly highlighting the agreed final outcome, if there was disagreement. However, a number of centres had not included their internal verification policy. It is an SQA

requirement that all centres submit their internal verification/moderation/quality assurance policy when selected for external verification.

There was also a common theme that both the assessor and the internal verifier missed keyboarding and instruction errors. It is essential that any internal verification procedure is as effective as possible. Our advice to both parties is to be extremely diligent when checking candidate evidence.

SQA has produced an Internal Verification Toolkit which provides great advice and support on designing and implementing the best model and approach to internal verification depending on your subject, centre and candidate needs. It can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

Local authority nominee(s)

All centres are encouraged to contact their local authority nominee(s) for extra help, advice and support. Nominees have received extensive Understanding Standards training and are a valuable resource in your authority.