NQ Verification 2016–17 Key Messages Round 1

01 Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Administration and IT
Verification event/visiting information	Event
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National Courses/Units verified:

Unit code	Level	Unit title
H27Y	National 3	Administration in Action
H1YW	National 3	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	National 3	Communication in Administration
H1YV	National 4	Administrative Practices
H1YW	National 4	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	National 4	Communication in Administration
H1YV	National 5	Administrative Practices
H1YW	National 5	IT Solutions for Administrators
H4KB	Higher	Administrative Theory and Practice
H1YW	Higher	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	Higher	Communication in Administration

02 Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The approaches used by all centres verified were deemed valid. All centres used SQA unit assessment support packs (UASPs) accurately and consistently. The vast majority of centres used packages 1, 2 and 3, with one centre using package 4, the portfolio approach.

Generally, candidate evidence was well presented, tasks were clearly labelled, and assessment approaches included. All centres used the most up-to-date version of the UASPs.

Assessment judgements

Most centres generally made assessment judgements in line with national standards. However, there are a few points to highlight.

Check candidate evidence thoroughly for keyboarding errors

The error tolerance for each level is:

National 3:   1 error for every 10 words
National 4:   1 error for every 15 words
National 5:   1 error for every 20 words
Higher: 1 error for every 25 words

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

If there is a keyboarding error in a key piece of information which results in the document not being fit for purpose, the candidate has not achieved the assessment standard. For example, if the cost of the trip in the task was £49, but the candidate keyed in £94, although this is a typing error, it does in fact communicate inaccurate information, and results in the document not being fit for purpose.

All typing, spacing or layout errors should be identified by the assessor on the candidate's printout.

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

♦ inconsistent capitalisation (this counts as one error across the task)
♦ inappropriate punctuation
♦ layout/spacing errors

Centres need to be diligent in checking candidate evidence for errors. All errors must be identified by the assessor and counted to ensure the candidate is not over the error tolerance for the task. This will allow the assessor to correctly judge if the candidate has correctly passed or failed the assessment standard.

National 5 Administrative Practices Unit

Many candidates still have difficulty with outcome 1 (the theory outcome) especially where a candidate is expected to describe. Often candidates would identify rather than describe as required in the assessment standard. If a candidate has not described when the assessment standard specifically requires a description, then the candidate has not achieved the assessment standard.

Assessment standard 1.1

The table illustrates candidate responses for assessment standard 1.1 — describing duties and skills/qualities. The first column illustrates responses that are basic identification and therefore should not be accepted as contributing towards the achievement of the assessment standard. The second column illustrates responses that would be accepted as descriptions and therefore would contribute towards the achievement of the assessment standard.

Tasks/duties	
Identify	*Describe*
Answering the phone	An administrative assistant will answer the phone politely at all times and dealing with any enquiries.
Using databases	An administrative assistant will create and update databases containing records about employees, customers or even suppliers.

Skills/qualities	
Good communication skills	An administrative assistant must have good communication skills meaning they can communicate appropriately with people on a daily basis, in person, through e-mail and over the phone.
Well organised	An administrative assistant will need to be organised meaning they plan their activities and file work correctly so that they can find it again at a later date.

Assessment standards 1.3 and 1.4

For assessment standards 1.3 and 1.4, again candidates are expected to describe, this time describing the responsibilities of the organisation.

The table on the next page illustrates responses for assessment standard 1.4, addressing the organisation's responsibilities for keeping property secure. The first column illustrates responses that are basic identification and therefore not accepted as contributing towards the achievement of assessment standard 1.4. The second column illustrates responses that would be accepted as descriptions and therefore would contribute towards the achievement of assessment standard 1.4.

Identify	Describe
Lockers for employees	The organisation should provide lockers or lockable drawers for employees to keep their personal items in.
Lock doors at the end of the day	The organisation should have a policy that staff should lock their offices at the end of the day or employ security staff to check all rooms are locked at night.

Please note that if a candidate describes CCTV for the security of property and also for the security of people, it can only be accepted once — the second use is a repeat point and is not be counted as contributing towards the achievement of assessment standard 1.4.

Also, when candidates were using package 2, a small number of candidates provided descriptions for security in the e-file that did not match the slide title eg when a slide title was 'Security of Property' the candidate would give a responsibility of the organisation for the security of information. This would therefore not be correct and therefore cannot contribute towards the achievement of the assessment standard.

Assessment standards 1.3 and 1.4 are specifically different at National 5 compared to National 4. At National 4, the responsibilities candidates are required to outline are the responsibilities of the employee whereas at National 5 the responsibilities are they are to describe are the responsibilities of the organisation.

Creating leaflets

For desktop publishing assessment standards, some of the tasks require candidates to create a leaflet. Some of the evidence submitted could be described as resembling a poster. Candidates should be encouraged to use appropriate templates in the software which best fits the requirements of the task.

Creating presentations

Graphics should be placed in an appropriate place on presentations eg not clipped or covering any text on slides. Action buttons should be the same size and location on every slide.

Candidate evidence

Candidates should be adding their name and task number to each printout they submit. Candidates should be selecting an appropriate place for this information eg not in the middle of a business card, not in a form header, not in a report header.

Section 3: General comments

Internal verification/quality assurance

The vast majority of centres used good practice in checking assessment judgements, eg cross-checking, using different coloured pens, providing a short narrative detailing discussions and clearly highlighting the agreed final outcome if the original assessor and the internal checker disagreed.

The 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 using the following web address: www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

Local authority nominee(s)

All centres are encouraged to get in contact with their local authority nominee(s) for extra help, advice and support. Nominees have been well trained by Understanding Standards and are a valuable resource in your authority for you to use.