NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 1

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	SCQF level 5	Administrative Practices
H1YW	SCQF level 5	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY	SCQF level 5	Communication in Administration
H1YY	Higher	Communication in Administration

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. No centres used package 4: the portfolio approach. A growing number of centres used package 3: the combined approach.

Generally, candidate evidence was well presented, tasks clearly labelled, and assessment approaches included. All centres are reminded that they should be using the most up-to-date version of the UASPs and a copy of the UASP must be included along with the candidate evidence.

Assessment judgements

Verifiers found that the majority of evidence submitted was of a good standard, which indicated that centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the national standard and applied these to the marking of unit assessments. However, there are a few important points to remind centres about:

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
SCQF Level 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.

Each of the following would be treated as one error no matter how often it occurs in the task:

♦ incorrect capitalisation
♦ incorrect spacing after punctuation at end of sentence
♦ incorrect spacing for commas, colons, semi-colons, brackets
♦ confusion of hyphen/dash
♦ omission of apostrophe
♦ inconsistent spacing between paragraphs
♦ highlighted punctuation at the end of a heading
♦ missing full stops

All typing, spacing and layout errors must 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
♦ inappropriate punctuation
♦ layout/spacing errors

Centres (ie both the assessor and internal verifier) need to be diligent when checking candidate evidence for errors. All errors must be identified by the assessor and counted up, to ensure the candidate is not over the error tolerance for the task. This will allow the assessor to judge correctly if the candidate has passed or failed the assessment standard.

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.

Marking candidate work

In some cases, assessors had not marked candidate printouts at all, or had just given the whole printout one tick at the bottom of the page. This made it very difficult for both the internal and external verifier to understand where and why a pass or fail had been achieved. Assessors must clearly mark on candidate scripts to indicate where the candidate has or has not actioned instructions, and where the candidate has made any errors.

Administrative practices

Many candidates still have difficulty with Outcome 1, especially where a candidate is expected to outline or describe. Often candidates would identify, rather than outline or describe as required in the assessment standard. If a candidate has not provided the correct level of detail for the command word in the task, then the candidate has not achieved the assessment standard.

Candidate name on evidence

Candidates should add their name and task number to each printout they submit.

E-mail

All e-mails should have a proper e-mail structure: a subject (some modern e-mail systems automatically filter out e-mails which have no subject heading); a proper start, eg 'Hi' or 'Hello'; a sensible, relevant message; a proper close, eg 'Thanks' or 'Regards'.

Many candidates also had inappropriate punctuation in their e-mail, with the use of commas after 'Hi' and 'Regards'. This is to be counted as one error within the error tolerance.

See the layout below:
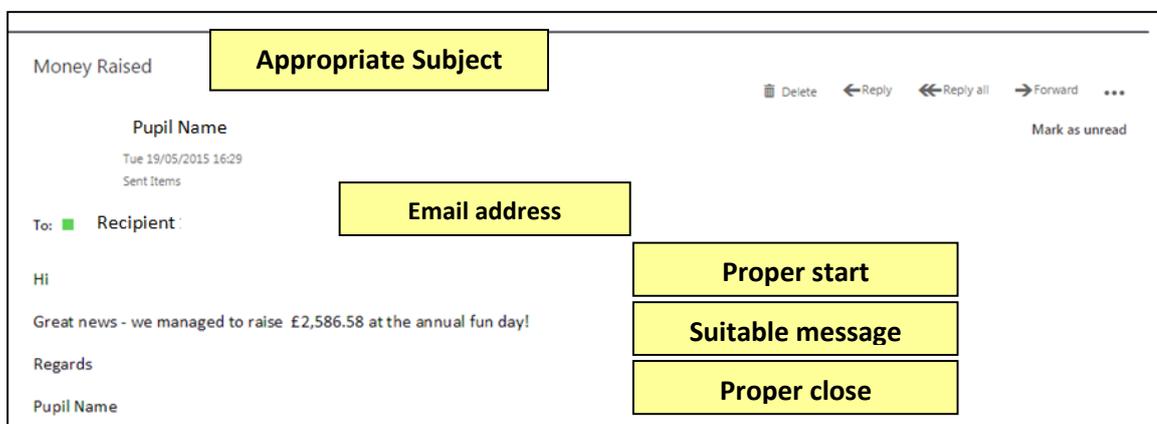
When candidates provide evidence of sending an e-mail they must print evidence that proves the e-mail has actually been sent. With most e-mail systems, printing the e-mail from the candidate's sent folder is sufficient, because most e-mail systems will print with the date and time the candidate sent the e-mail (as seen above). If the centre's e-mail system does not print the date and time the e-mail was sent when printing from the sent folder, then as well as printing the e-mail, an additional screenshot of the e-mail in the sent folder should be provided.

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 and it contains all the information needed for proof that the task meets the assessment standard.

Re-assessment

If a candidate has not achieved an assessment standard they can be re-assessed. The candidate must be given a different assessment task in order to be re-assessed.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

It was clear that many centres had made a concerted effort to ensure the standards had been consistently applied.

We would continue to encourage all centres to read the assessment standards carefully along with the information for judging evidence, and check candidate evidence thoroughly against these standards.

There were many examples of good practice, including the use of candidate summary and feedback sheets.

A large number of centres provided excellent evidence of very thorough internal verification procedures, eg cross-checking, using different coloured pens, or providing a short narrative detailing discussions and clearly highlighting the agreed final outcome, if the original assessor and the internal checker disagreed. There were, however, a few centres that had not made the final assessment judgement clear. It is critical for external verification that the final assessment decision is clear.

A small 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.

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.