



NQ Verification 2017–18

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Drama
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

Unit code	Level	Unit title
H231 73	National 3	Drama Skills
H231 74	National 4	Drama Skills
H231 75	SCQF level 5	Drama Skills
H231 76	Higher	Drama Skills
H231 77	Advanced Higher	Drama Skills
H232 74	National 4 Drama	Production Skills
H232 76	Higher Drama	Production Skills

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres continue to use assessment approaches from the SQA unit assessment support packs, or approaches to assessment derived from these.

For verification purposes, the unit assessment support pack used should be clearly indicated on/with the submitted materials — for example, ‘Unit Assessment Support Package 1: unit-by-unit approach’. Some centres continue to indicate that the evidence submitted was ‘centre devised’, when in fact only minor changes had been made in terms of stimuli presented to candidates. This would not be considered a significant change to the assessment task; assessors should therefore state which SQA unit assessment pack was used, and detail what the minor change was.

There was evidence of some centres tending to over-assess and therefore generating a significant volume of evidence. We would encourage centres to identify opportunities for integrating assessment approaches which may help to streamline the process of gathering evidence for assessment standards.

There was evidence that centres are opting to submit a greater amount of digital evidence to assessment for verification and this is acceptable. However, centres are reminded that, within the digital evidence submitted, it must be clear which content is the approach generated by the centre, and which evidence has been generated by the candidate. In some instances, the format used has made it difficult to differentiate between the centre approach and the candidate response.

Drama Skills units — outcome 1

For the National 4 to Higher Drama Skills units, outcome 1, assessment standard 1.1, candidates are required to respond to a range of stimuli (SCQF level 5 and above must include text) before they select and develop ideas.

Some centres are presenting imaginative and creative approaches to generating this evidence; centres are encouraged to select a range of appropriate and challenging stimuli, considering the level of the unit. Centres are reminded to include the stimuli presented to candidates with the evidence. This will allow verifiers to confirm that the responses/evidence generated directly relates to the stimulus selected.

For assessment standard 1.1, it was sometimes not possible to identify candidates' individual responses. This information should be clearly identifiable.

Drama Skills units — outcome 2

For the National 4 and SCQF level 5 Drama Skills unit, outcome 2, assessment standard 2.3, candidates are required to show exploration of form, structure, genre, or style and this should be a practical exploration. Some centres are generating the required evidence very clearly, while others are only providing evidence of decisions candidates have made in relation to developing their drama, many of which are only discussing conventions. Those centres are advised to refer to Understanding Standards materials published on SQA's secure website for support in developing a more robust approach.

This also applies to Higher Drama Skills assessment standard 1.2.

Where a centre has opted to submit a summative evaluation/extended written response as evidence for verification — for example, National 4 Drama Skills, assessment standards 1.4 and 2.4 — best practice would see this evidence being supported/ accompanied by evidence generated to meet other assessment standards; for example, and the approaches and candidates judged prior to the reflective task.

Assessment judgements

Verification requires the centre to make clear assessment judgements on the candidate evidence submitted. The verification process allows SQA to confirm that a centre is making consistent and reliable assessment judgements on candidate evidence submitted.

Verifiers reported that almost all centres were making sound assessment judgements in line with national standards. However, there is evidence of centre assessors making judgements that were not consistent across the full cohort of evidence submitted for verification. In some cases, for some candidates, assessment judgements have been severe or lenient. Moreover, those centres that submitted evidence with unreliable assessment judgements also often lacked clarity in their approach to evidence gathering.

Centre assessors are reminded that commentaries on their observations, along with detailed evidence of conversations with learners, are acceptable evidence to support assessment judgements. Indeed, these can prove extremely helpful in supporting candidates with additional support needs, where written approaches to assessment may prevent the candidate from demonstrating the required skills.

Some centres continue to use the external course assessment criteria for performance to assess unit assessment standards. Centres are reminded that unit assessment in Drama should be judged holistically, identifying where a candidate has met the requirements of an assessment standard. Some centres are assigning a mark to responses; this is not appropriate for unit assessment.

Centres are encouraged to submit evidence of the internal quality assurance procedures used by their centre/faculty/department. Centres should be aware of the following document: *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications* (February 2011).

While the submission of a centre's departmental/faculty verification policy is welcomed, it is important to evidence how this is being applied to approaches to assessment and assessment judgements. Centres may wish to refer to the Internal Verification Toolkit at: www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

Section 3: General comments

Candidates undertaking SCQF level 5 units, Higher, and Advanced Higher Drama are expected to demonstrate an understanding of subject-specific terminology commensurate with the level of the award. Centres are encouraged to refer to the Drama lexicons; these contain an extensive, though not exclusive, list of relevant terms for SCQF level 5 units and Higher Drama. This is particularly important in relation to the use of appropriate voice and movement vocabulary.

Assessors are encouraged to embed drama vocabulary from one level to the next in their delivery of the units.

In summary, centres are encouraged to:

- ◆ identify the instrument of assessment when completing the flyleaf for the candidates being sampled (eg Unit Assessment Support Pack Drama Skills Package 1: unit-by-unit approach; or Drama Package 3: combined approach)
- ◆ if a centre has devised their own assessment then it is recommended that it be submitted for prior verification and must be submitted with candidate evidence for verification
- ◆ directly label evidence with the assessment standard(s) it relates to
- ◆ consider the format of evidence. Although photographs can be submitted, candidates can often look considerably different in performance. Please ensure that all candidates are clearly identifiable
- ◆ refer to the judging evidence table when using an SQA unit assessment support pack — this contextualises the assessment task and gives advice on what a successful response would look like to meet the competency for each assessment standard
- ◆ ensure that they are using the most recent version of the unit assessment support packs

If a candidate requires re-assessment, assessors must make this clear on the evidence. The new candidate evidence must then be re-assessed and the judgement made clear. Judgements must be based on demonstrated attainment.