



NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	ESOL
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	May 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

Unit code	level	Unit title
H24N	74	ESOL Assignment (AVU*)
C827	75	ESOL Performance — Speaking and Listening (IACCA**)
C727	76	ESOL Performance — Speaking and Listening (IACCA)

*Added Value Unit

**Internally Assessed Component of Course Assessment

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

H24N 74 ESOL Assignment AVU

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment

In line with Curriculum for Excellence aims and principles of personalisation and choice, candidates had been encouraged to choose topics that they were interested in, including recipes from other cultures, and social media.

In one centre the candidate assignment task sheet had been adapted to give further support in creating good PowerPoint slides and also contained a useful

sheet for the candidate to review their own presentation, including thoughts on what could be improved for future presentations.

One centre had supported candidates appropriately in the research stage by providing them with sources to use. Candidates had then been able to work independently to extract the specific information they wanted to use in their presentations.

Where candidates had been recorded on video it was clear that they were familiar with being recorded. The use of video recordings helped candidates focus more on presentation skills, thereby maximising the skills developed while doing the assignment.

Only one of the sources needs to be a written text. In one centre the assessor had used a listening text on the topic in class and had encouraged the candidates to take useful notes to use in their presentations. There were also good examples of the use of appropriate videos from YouTube. Use of sources which involve listening, as well as at least one written text, allow candidates to further develop listening skills and see the usefulness of these for research purposes.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment

Video recording of presentations is good practice, although centres should take care that the recording equipment is well positioned for the audio device and for the best view of the candidate.

The use of PowerPoint presentations should be encouraged. If slides are being used the candidates should refer to their slides when appropriate; they should not just appear in the background.

Assessment judgements

Centres had made judgements that were in line with national standards for each assessment standard.

There were good examples where centres had provided detailed commentary, using the assessment checklist, which was clearly matched against the assessment standards. This showed how assessment judgements had been made.

National 5 ESOL Performance: Speaking and Listening (C827 75)

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment

There were clear video recordings of candidate performances. It was obvious from most of the evidence that candidates were comfortable and familiar with being recorded.

One centre had provided well-presented packs for candidates with a centre cover sheet giving detailed information for candidates on the assessment process and explaining the different bands of the marking instructions.

There were some examples of candidates who had been paired with an interlocutor. Although where possible candidates should be paired with peers, where the interlocutor plays an equal part in the conversation, this can work well. Other centres had paired candidates with a peer who was not an ESOL student. This can also work well when the partner is chosen carefully.

Some centres had adapted the assessment brief to provide topics that fully engaged candidates. This reflects well the Curriculum for Excellence principles of personalisation and choice.

Clear identification at the beginning of the recording of candidates, the level of the assessment, and the topic of the assessment brief facilitated verification.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment

Centres should take care when placing candidates in groups of three, as it is possible for at least one candidate to be disadvantaged by not having sufficient opportunities to fully demonstrate their language skills. Where possible, pairs of candidates are preferable.

In one centre National 5 candidates were paired with Higher candidates. Pairing a National 5 candidate with a Higher candidate could disadvantage both. The Higher candidate could dominate the interaction or not be challenged enough. The National 5 candidate may not be able to show their strengths. Where candidates of the same level can be paired, this option should be chosen, or the centre can explore using another interlocutor.

Centres should not use a Higher speaking assessment brief with National 5 candidates. This could disadvantage the candidates as the level of challenge within the assessment briefs is appropriate for Higher candidates rather than National 5 candidates.

It is good practice to video record conversations. Centres should be careful that the audio equipment is well placed and that candidates are suitably placed opposite each other during the conversation.

Centres should choose a suitable location and time for recording assessments. There should be minimal background noise.

Candidates should be practised in ending the assessment appropriately. The assessor should not suddenly end the conversation. At this level, candidates should be able to round off the conversation appropriately.

Candidates' performances must not be scripted, read out, memorised or rehearsed.

In some centres there was clear evidence of how the marking instructions had been applied, as highlighters/annotations were used to clearly identify the main bands within the detailed marking instructions.

There were good examples of centres providing appropriate comments on the candidate assessment record, which were clearly related to the marking instructions.

Assessment judgements

Overall, centres had allocated marks that were in line with national standards.

In a few centres marking was lenient and there was a lack of attention to detail in terms of use of structure to communicate. Assessors should keep in mind that, to be allocated marks in the top band, candidates must use a wide range of structures, including some detailed structures, with a level of accuracy that clearly communicates the message.

A few centres had used a unit judging evidence table from the unit assessment support packs to mark the ESOL performance. This results in inaccurate and unreliable marks which have not addressed all aspects of the performance. Centres must only use the ESOL Performance: Speaking and Listening marking instructions which are contained in the National 5 Course Specification.

Assessors and internal verifiers should refer to the National 5 ESOL Performance Understanding Standards packs on the SQA secure site. These contain marked examples of recordings with detailed commentaries on how the marks have been allocated.

New or inexperienced ESOL assessors must be supported by an internal verifier who is familiar with NQ ESOL assessment approaches and how marks are allocated to candidates.

Higher ESOL Performance: Speaking and Listening (C727 76)

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment

The majority of the candidates had a good understanding of the assessment brief and showed a good knowledge of the broad topic area. They had used the 15 minutes preparation time effectively on their own, and produced spontaneous and interesting discussions.

A few centres had used assessment briefs which had been prior verified as part of a unit assessment support pack. These assessment briefs took account of personalisation and choice, had an appropriate level of challenge, supportive scaffolding, and allowed candidates to demonstrate their language skills.

It was clear that in some centres the broad topic area had been covered during learning and teaching and candidates had also done research on this. These candidates produced interesting, well-informed discussions and were able to show a wide range of general and topic-specific vocabulary.

Some centres had detailed comments on the candidate assessment record, giving supportive feedback to candidates. The comments reflected why marks had been allocated and were clearly related to the detailed marking instructions.

Most candidates were well-paired and comfortable discussing topics with their partner.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment

Some candidates did not seem to be aware of what they needed to do to achieve a good mark.

Candidates should be familiar with the detailed marking instructions and the different bands. These can be used throughout the year by teachers and lecturers to provide feedback on the speaking and interactive listening skills. This will support candidates in understanding which aspects of their skills are well developed and which aspects they should focus on further developing.

There were examples of good discussions in terms of initiating and turn taking but some candidates showed a lack of a wide range of detailed and complex structures. This resulted in a higher mark being allocated than is in line with national standards.

The Illustrative Language Tables in the Higher Course Support Notes can support teachers and lecturers in having a good understanding of the level of discussion required.

There were also some examples of discussions where candidates did not have enough detailed and complex topic-specific vocabulary to develop the discussion. Ensuring good coverage of the broad topic area during the course should help to address this.

Centres need to provide clear evidence and documentation of why marks have been awarded. The evidence should be clearly related to the marking instructions.

Candidates' performances must not be scripted, read out, memorised or rehearsed.

If a candidate has been disadvantaged by a pairing or grouping and has not fully demonstrated their language skills, they should have the opportunity to be re-assessed using a different assessment brief.

Assessment judgements

Overall, centres had awarded marks that were in line with national standards. The majority of centres had followed guidance and identified the appropriate band and mark.

In a few cases, centres had been lenient and awarded a higher mark than was in line with national standards, particularly for the aspect which addresses accuracy and use of structures, including complex structures, to communicate. Assessors should pay close attention to the detail in the bands for this aspect.

There were good examples where centres had provided detailed commentary, which was related to the marking instructions and showed clearly how marks had been allocated.

Assessors and internal verifiers should refer to the Higher ESOL Performance Understanding Standards packs on the SQA secure site. These contain marked examples of recordings with detailed commentaries on how the marks have been allocated.

New or inexperienced ESOL assessors must be supported by an internal verifier who is familiar with NQ ESOL assessment approaches and how marks are allocated to candidates.

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Section 3: General comments

Overall the evidence submitted was well labelled, with recordings clearly identifiable.

Centres do not need to submit unit evidence when the ESOL Performance: Speaking and Listening is selected for external verification.

In centres where there are many assessors there needs to be a standardisation of internal verification procedures.

Centres should hold regular standardisation sessions for their ESOL assessors. The Understanding Standards packs on the SQA secure site could be used.

There have been comments from centres on the positive impact on centres of candidates achieving Higher and National 5 ESOL qualifications.