

NQ Verification 2016–17

Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	English
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2017

National Courses/Units verified:

H23Y 74 National 4 English Assignment - Added Value Unit

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres provided highly stimulating, innovative and creative approaches which offered personalisation and choice. Where centres were most successful they allowed candidates to choose their topics and take an independent approach to research, and allowed candidates the freedom to select their own texts. There was evidence of candidates using texts such as news articles, match reports, films, poems, novels, documentaries, film posters and advertisements. Such a diverse range of texts being chosen was very encouraging and, in these centres, it was evident that there was a high level of engagement from the candidates.

There were also effective examples of centres using combined approaches where candidates had linked their ideas to English/Literacy/Scottish Studies and had completed their Added Value assessment as part of a wider study.

There were a small number of centres, however, who took approaches that did not allow candidates to achieve some of the Assessment Standards (mainly 1.1 and 1.4). This was largely evident where centres had misinterpreted the Added Value Unit or had linked the work of the Added Value Unit heavily to Unit Assessment (Creation and Production/Analysis and Evaluation). This made it difficult for candidates to demonstrate personalisation and choice, to research their own ideas or evaluate their texts. Successful centres tended to follow the

approach set out in in the Added Value Unit Assessment Support Pack where candidates used the 'learning log'. This approach is recommended as it allows all Assessment Standards to be achieved.

There were also instances where there was no evidence in the assessment approach that Assessment Standard 1.4 (Responding to oral questions relevant to the topic) had been assessed. Centres are reminded that candidates must be assessed, and evidence provided, on their ability to respond to oral questions orally or in writing.

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres provided accurate assessment judgements which were in line with the requirements of the Assessment Standards. There was evidence of good practice in centres where detailed comments had been provided explaining how assessment judgements had been made. Centres were particularly successful in providing accurate assessment judgements for Assessment Standard 1.2 (Selecting relevant information from the texts) and Assessment Standard 1.3 (Presenting findings on the topic). The quality of written evidence for both Assessment Standards was very high, and the ideas presented were clear, well-structured and had genuine input from candidates.

For Assessment Standard 1.1 (Understanding and evaluating straightforward texts), although most centres had made accurate assessment judgements, a small number of centres were presenting candidates as having achieved this Assessment Standard without sufficient evaluation of the texts chosen. Centres are reminded that candidates should show evidence of their ability to 'evaluate at least two straightforward texts using appropriate critical terminology'. The guidance provided in relation to the level of evaluation is that, 'Candidates will evaluate the texts by commenting on how successful the texts are in terms of these chosen aspects. Aspects which are appropriate to the purpose of the texts should be chosen. For example, a candidate might comment on the successful format, style and layout of an informational webpage or on the unconvincing portrayal of a fictional character.' Centres should use this guidance to inform their assessment judgements.

There were also a small number of centres which demonstrated assessment judgements that were too severe. Some centres placed additional requirements on candidates, such as requiring them to compare texts or stating a preference. Such requirements are not necessary to achieve the Assessment Standard and should, therefore, not be included as they can act as a barrier to candidates achieving the Assessment Standard.

Furthermore, there were a small number of centres which passed candidates who did not 'use appropriate critical terminology' when evaluating the texts. Guidance given in relation to the critical terminology a candidate could use is that 'a candidate might use terms such as "style" or "slang" when discussing the

language of journalism or terms such as “theme” or “setting” if commenting on a short story.’ Centres should use this guidance to inform their assessment judgements.

Assessment Standard 1.4 (Responding to oral questions relevant to the topic) caused the majority of issues for centres. This was largely due to the fact that a detailed checklist had not been provided by centres with comments explaining where candidates had achieved the Assessment Standard. Although some centres were providing a result for this Assessment Standard, which suggested that it was being assessed, there was often no evidence to support the assessment judgments. Centres are reminded that for Assessment Standard 1.4 there must be ‘appropriate recording documentation and other relevant supporting evidence that shows clearly the basis on which Assessment Judgements have been made.’ Evidence of the candidates’ responses to questions should take the form of:

- ◆ written or oral response(s) from the candidate

Oral evidence could include:

- ◆ a recording of a candidate’s oral response(s)
or
- ◆ a detailed checklist of a candidate’s oral response(s)
or
- ◆ detailed observation notes

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Section 3: General comments

Most centres provided a variety of imaginative and personalised approaches which allowed candidates to demonstrate their language skills through the investigation of their chosen topic. The different contexts used established that centres were both engaged and comfortable with the assessment approach and the Assessment Standards.

For the most part, centres were using very effective systems of internal verification, and excellent practice was evident in the form of cross marking and exemplification of work to ensure standardised assessment approaches and judgements.