



Qualification Verification Summary Report

NQ Verification 2018–19

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	German
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2019

National Courses verified:

C734 75 National 5 German: performance — talking (IACCA*)
C734 76 Higher German: performance — talking (IACCA*)

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All the centres verified in this round used the SQA guidelines for the internally assessed component of course assessment — *National 5/Higher Modern Languages: performance — talking assessment task*.

The quality of the performances was generally good across both levels.

Candidates must use detailed language at National 5 and detailed and complex language at Higher in the performance. At these levels, long lists of more than two or three items (eg places in town, school subjects) or repetitions of straightforward descriptions (eg hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary to access the higher pegged marks.

Specifics in relation to the presentation at National 5 level

Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length (one to two minutes) of time the presentation should last. Candidates should not be automatically penalised for presentations which are on the shorter side within the recommended length.

Specifics in relation to the conversation at National 5 level

It was again very pleasing to note that all assessors referred to a second context in the course of the conversation at National 5 level in line with the changes made to the course assessment last session.

Interlocutors should make a natural link between the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation and the beginning of the conversation. Starting the conversation with a question unrelated to the presentation does not aid the natural flow of the performance.

Specifics in relation to the discussion at Higher level

There was much evidence of interlocutors asking questions which are appropriate to Higher level. For many centres there was a clear difference in the kind of questions asked at Higher level compared to National 5. However, for some centres this difference was not clear.

Comments in relation to both National 5 and Higher levels

Interlocutors should try to avoid asking closed questions, especially for more able candidates.

For the most part, interlocutors were supportive, especially with nervous candidates. Where interlocutors were aware of candidates' interests, this helped to produce more natural/spontaneous conversations.

A few conversations were unnecessarily prolonged or significantly short and this affected the candidates' performances. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of time the conversation should last, so that candidates are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the demands of National 5/Higher as provided in the document *Modern Languages: performance — talking, General assessment information*.

Some centres were overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation. Conversations should be as spontaneous as possible for the level assessed. A small number of conversations appeared to be excessively rehearsed. It is recommended that centres ask a range of questions adapted to the responses of each candidate rather than asking the same questions to the whole cohort. A wider variety of questions in the conversation can aid candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected (in line with Appendix 1 of the *Modern Languages: performance — talking, General assessment information* which is available from SQA's website).

At times, there was evidence of the interlocutor talking too much in the course of the discussion with the candidate. Assessors should be aware of this and not go into lengthy answers if asked a question by the candidate.

Assessment judgements

National 5 and Higher: performance — talking (Internally Assessed Component of Course Assessment)

It is pleasing to report that the majority of centres have applied the marking instructions for the performance in talking accurately and in line with national standards. However, there was some inconsistency in awarding marks. Some centres were too severe and some too generous.

All centres verified used the most up-to-date Marking Information Grid for the talking performance at National 5/Higher, in conjunction with the National 5/Higher Grammar Grid to make their assessment judgements.

At Higher level when making assessment judgements, centres are reminded of the opening instructions of the **detailed marking instructions** on page 22 of the *Higher Course Specification* document published in June 2018:

'...first select the row from the following tables in which the descriptors most closely match the candidate's performance.

Once that row is identified:

- ◆ where the evidence largely matches the descriptors across all of the aspects of the performance, award the higher of the two available marks
- ◆ where the evidence largely matches the descriptors across most of the aspects of the performance, award the lower of the two available marks
- ◆ if there is doubt about which of two adjacent rows to select: select the upper row and award the lower pegged mark in that row'

Specifics in relation to the conversation/discussion element:

- ◆ In some cases, candidates paused, briefly, during the conversation to think about their answers. This is a natural part of a conversation. Assessors should give candidates appropriate time to think and respond. However, if candidates struggle to answer certain questions, assessors should try to support the candidate by rephrasing, asking another question or changing the topic.
- ◆ Some conversations sounded more natural as candidates answered with a mixture of longer and shorter answers and it was clear it was **not scripted**. Using scripted conversations may not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the top pegged marks in the performance, but, above all, it does not prepare candidates for the demands at Advanced Higher or in real life situations. Instead, candidates could prepare for their conversation thinking about the type of questions the assessor is likely to ask on their chosen topic and thinking about what key words the interlocutor is likely to use in his/her questions.
- ◆ Examples of how candidates could demonstrate their ability to sustain the conversation include the following:
 - a mixture of extended and shorter answers (ie not a series of short presentations/monologues)

- appropriate thinking time
- natural interjections (*'also / na ja / hmmm*)
- acknowledgement that they have understood the question (*'das ist eine gute Frage / darüber habe ich noch nie nachgedacht / da bin ich mir nicht sicher'*). Some centres included a brief commentary to describe how the candidate showed how they had understood through non-verbal means the question/response from the interlocutor
- asking questions that are **relevant** to the conversation and at **relevant** times
- sustaining the conversation, asking for repetition or clarification (eg *'wie bitte? kannst du / können Sie die Frage bitte wiederholen?'*)

03

Section 3: General comments

National 5 and Higher: performance — talking (Internally Assessed Component of Course Assessment):

Many centres took part in the pilot of digitally uploading candidate evidence. This is to be commended. For the vast majority of candidates, the correct candidate evidence was uploaded and audio tracks were clearly audible. In a minority of audio files, the interlocutor was very clear, while it was difficult to hear the candidate. Centres should be aware that it is vital for the candidate to be heard clearly throughout the performance.

Many of the centres verified provided evidence of highly effective internal verification procedures. This is to be commended. Some centres provided documentation relating to the discussion which had taken place between the assessor and the internal verifier. This is very good practice.

At National 5 level, centres must include a breakdown of the marks (presentation + conversation + sustaining the conversation) for each candidate in the centre commentary on the performance. Only the total mark needs to be entered on the verification sample form. It is essential that the marks awarded in the centre commentary correlate with those on the VSF.

Where centres had provided a commentary on a candidate's performance relating to the marking instructions in terms of content, accuracy and language resource, this was extremely helpful for nominee verifiers.