



NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 2

01 Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	German
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

C734 75 National 5 Performance–talking (IACCA*)

C734 76 Higher Performance–talking (IACCA*)

*Internally-assessed component of course assessment

02 Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

National 5 and Higher Performance–talking (IACCA)

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

A few presentations were significantly long or short, and this affected the candidates' performances. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of time the presentation 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*.

Specifics in relation to the conversation

It was 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 this 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.

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).

Assessment judgements

National 5 and Higher Performance–talking (IACCA)

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. In the ‘sustaining the conversation’ element, some centres appropriately awarded the new ‘pegged mark 1’.

Specifics in relation to the sustaining the conversation 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 this 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 (i.e. not a suite 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 comment to describe how the candidate showed by non-verbal means that they had understood 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 (e.g. *‘wie bitte? kannst du / können Sie die Frage bitte wiederholen?’*)

This is not an exhaustive list and one example from the above list on its own may not be sufficient for the performance to be awarded full marks in the sustaining the conversation element.

Section 3: General comments

National 5 and Higher Performance—talking (IACCA)

Centres submitted candidates’ performances on CDs and memory sticks. It is recommended that centres check the sound quality of the CDs and MP3/4 files that are submitted for verification. In the case of CDs, it is essential that they can

be played on a range of devices, and not solely on the device used for recordings. We recommend that memory sticks and similar storage devices are put into a separate envelope within the large brown envelope and that this is sealed and labelled.

All centres clearly labelled candidate evidence, which is necessary for the verification team to proceed with the verification process.

Centres should leave blank the 'Nominee Review Result' section on the Verification Sample Form (VSF), as this will only be completed by the nominee verifiers if marks for the course assessment are changed.

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 be entered on the VSF. It is essential that the marks awarded in the centre commentary correlate with those on the VSF.