



NQ Verification 2017–18

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

Mathematics — National 4, SCQF level 5, Higher and Advanced Higher
Applications of Mathematics — National 3, National 4 and SCQF level 5

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The vast majority of centres used SQA unit assessment support packs. At National 3, National 4 and SCQF level 5 in Mathematics and Applications of Mathematics, a unit-by-unit approach to assessment was favoured. For Higher and Advanced Higher Mathematics, a combined approach was favoured, often making use of questions from SQA unit assessment support packs.

Where centres make amendments to either the assessment or marking guidance and judging evidence table, then these must be submitted along with the candidate evidence.

Where centres have adopted a portfolio approach to gathering evidence during the course of learning and teaching, the following should be noted:

- ◆ A clear description of how evidence for individual assessment standards has been judged is required.
- ◆ Care should be taken that the marks for each question are attributed to the appropriate assessment standard.
- ◆ The instruments of assessment must be secure and not publically available.
- ◆ Assessments must be carried out under controlled conditions and there should be no doubt about the level of support given.

Where centres use SOLAR to assess candidates they should ensure that they are using the appropriate assessment. Evidence can be judged across a whole unit, by outcome and by assessment standard using SOLAR. SOLAR's formative assessments are not valid assessments to judge a pass/fail for any outcome, unit or assessment standard.

In **Mathematics**, thresholds remain the favoured approach rather than judging by individual assessment standard.

Thresholds are set as follows:

- ◆ For Numeracy Unit at National 4 — 60% for outcome 1 and 60% for outcome 2
- ◆ For Mathematics at National 4, SCQF level 5 and Higher — 60% for outcomes 1 and 2 combined
- ◆ For Mathematics at Advanced Higher — 60% for outcome 1

In **Applications of Mathematics**, some centres used pack 2 as the favoured approach with pack 1 being used for resits if necessary. Using a threshold approach was the most popular mechanism of demonstrating whether a candidate achieved a pass for an outcome.

Thresholds are set as follows:

- ◆ For Applications of Mathematics and Numeracy Units — 60% for outcome 1 and 60% for outcome 2

In **Numeracy**, using a threshold approach was the most popular mechanism of demonstrating whether a candidate achieved a pass for an outcome. However, centres must be vigilant, that if a candidate does not reach the threshold for an outcome, then perhaps they could still achieve a pass by assessing the individual assessment standards. When using this approach, only three marks for units can count towards the threshold — one for money, one for time and one for measure.

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres made reliable decisions across the assessments submitted.

Centres are reminded that assessors should refer to the assessment conditions section in the unit assessment support pack when assessing candidates.

03

Section 3: General comments

Assessments which included cover pages which showed the marks available for each assessment standard/outcome and the decisions reached were effective and removed the need for a separate record of achievement. Care needs to be taken when transferring marks from candidates' scripts to judging evidence

tables. In several cases, candidates did not achieve the pass they were entitled to. These tables should also be updated after internal verification has taken place to ensure that the final judgements recorded are accurate and reliable.

Most centres had effective systems of internal verification in place. In some cases, where the assessor and internal verifier disagreed, the final decision was not clear. It should be made clear on the judging evidence table or candidate script what the final decision is. In a few cases the internal verification merely 'rubber-stamped' the initial marking and was not effective.

Straight line at Higher

Candidates will be expected to remove brackets and collect any constant terms as part of their final answer, eg $y - 2 = 4(x - 3)$ should be simplified to $y = 4x - 10$ or equivalent.

Centres are also reminded to read previous 'Key Messages Reports' from [2013–14](#), [2014–15](#), [2015–16](#) and 2016–17 [Round 1](#) and [Round 2](#) and use the [Understanding Standards materials](#) to support the assessment process.

When submitting candidate evidence for verification, centres are reminded that the evidence should be complete for at least a full assessment standard. It should be clear that an assessment judgement has been made by the centre and information on how these judgements were made should also be included. If a centre does not have the evidence required they should contact NQ Verification to discuss how to proceed.