



NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

- Modern Studies — National 3
- Modern Studies — National 4
- Modern Studies — SCQF level 5
- Modern Studies — Higher
- Modern Studies — Advanced Higher

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The most common assessment approach used by centres was SQA-generated unit assessment support packages. Some centres did submit adapted or centre-generated assessments which corresponded to the appropriate assessment standards for the specific level being assessed. Centres are reminded that if they are producing their own assessment approaches they can have them prior verified by SQA. This would ensure that they fully correspond to the appropriate assessment standards for the level being assessed.

For National 3 and National 4 assessments, there was evidence of personalisation and choice within centres in terms of topics/issues chosen to cover the outcomes being assessed.

For Higher and Advanced Higher assessments, some centres used naturally occurring evidence such as class essays and written work, for example, past paper question responses to assess candidate progress and performance.

Centres clearly understand the demands of the specific assessment standards in terms of question structure and prompts. This was also apparent in terms of the number and complexity of sources used for the skills assessment standards (1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

Most of the evidence submitted was in the form of written responses to assessment questions. Centres are reminded that naturally occurring evidence is also a valid way of assessing candidate performance and progress, provided the candidate evidence corresponds with and meets the appropriate assessment standard(s).

Some centres are over-inflating the assessment standards for some of the outcomes. Centres are reminded that they should follow the specific assessment standards and that it is these standards that the candidate should be judged against in terms of outcomes.

Assessment judgements

Centres are continuing to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidates' evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and outcomes. These judgements are also being correctly verified as part of the centres' internal verification procedures. This indicates that centres are applying and correctly interpreting the unit support documentation.

There was evidence from centres that the SQA documentation (assessment and judging evidence table) was being applied effectively. In some cases, centres were successfully adapting the judging evidence table to meet the specific demands of the assessment task. This personalisation should ensure that consistent assessment judgements are being made in centres.

Centres used the judging evidence table very effectively in articulating the assessment standard to markers and verifiers. The judging evidence table should be used by centres to ensure the consistency of assessment judgements.

There was evidence of centres continuing to use annotation effectively on scripts at the section of candidate submissions where they have achieved the relevant assessment standard. This is considered to be a good and effective practice as it can facilitate consistent judgements between colleagues and across candidates. There was also evidence of cross-marking and random sampling of candidate evidence tied to robust and consistent internal verification policies and procedures. These measures ensure assessment judgement consistency across all candidates, as well as between the marker and the centre's assessment judgement verifier.

There was strong evidence of continuing professional dialogue taking place in centres in relation to the judging of assessment standards, in line with a robust internal verification process and procedure. Some centres produced and made good use of workbooks/logbooks to effectively support candidates in achieving the assessment standards. These approaches highlighted the high level of dialogue and discussion occurring between colleagues and candidates, particularly where remediation was necessary to allow specific candidates to achieve assessment standards and overall outcomes.

There was strong evidence of the candidate assessment record being used very effectively when recording candidate progress and achievements. The candidate assessment record was used very well when recording verbal follow-ups of candidates who just fell short of the assessment standard. Centres appear to be more familiar and confident in using verbal remediation when re-assessing candidates. Centres should note that when this is the case, they should still follow their own internal verification processes and ensure that the candidate's verbal response is noted, assessed, and the assessment judgement is agreed by the centre's verifier.

Within single person departments, there was strong evidence of partner-based approaches being undertaken and applied between the centre and other centres in order to share and maintain assessment standards. There was also evidence of local authority subject networks being used to moderate and verify candidate performance and to maintain assessment standards across colleagues and between candidates.

Where past paper questions and naturally occurring evidence are being used to assess candidate performance, centres are reminded that it is the specific assessment standards that should be used to judge candidate performance and not the marking instructions from the specific past paper question. There is a danger that if the marking instructions are used that centres over-inflate the assessment standard and candidates may not achieve the outcome that they deserve. This is particularly pertinent for evidence generated at Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

Centres are also reminded that the threshold approach for re-assessing candidates which was introduced for session 2016–17 is still valid for session 2017–18 and should be applied where relevant.

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Section 3: General comments

Overall, the standard and quality of centre submissions was high. Centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards and there was clear evidence of consistent application of these standards between colleagues. There was also evidence of a partner-based approach between colleagues and centres in sharing and maintaining assessment standards.

There was evidence of thorough internal assessment and verification procedures. These procedures were robust with evidence of cross-marking and annotation of candidate scripts by both marker and internal verifier. Centres appear to be having detailed discussions regarding candidate performance and the consistent application of assessment standards. Centres are effectively recording candidate performance and progress through detailed and specific candidate assessment records.