



**National Qualifications 2014  
Internal Assessment Report  
Core Skills: Communication**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

# National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Communication F3GB 08 (40 hours):

- ◆ F3GM 08 (Listening, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GN 08 (Reading, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GP 08, (Speaking, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GR 08 (Writing, 10 hours)

Communication F3GB 09 (40 hours):

- ◆ F3GM 09 (Listening, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GN 09 (Reading, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GP 09, (Speaking, 10 hours)
- ◆ F3GR 09 (Writing, 10 hours)

Communication F3GB 10 (40 hours)

Communication F3GB 11 (40 hours)

Communication F3GB 12 (40 hours)

## General comments

Centres appear to have a good understanding of the requirements of the national standards in NQ Core Skill Communication.

Most centres have been confident in developing their own materials based on the 2009 SQA assessment support packs (ASPs). The ASP checklists have proved effective in ensuring assessment is matched to specification requirements.

Some centres (usually community based) are making use of the 'bite-sized' units of Communication to develop skills and build confidence. This is associated with high-quality, individualised practice.

Increasingly, centres are incorporating Communication assessment with other Core Skills, in particular Core Skill ICT. There is also extensive evidence of effective contextualisation.

Where learners were interviewed, they confirmed their awareness of the usefulness and relevance of Core Skills. They were clearly appreciative of contextualised approaches.

## Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Most centres are familiar with current Unit specifications and ASP exemplification. The assessment checklists from the ASPs are widely in use, or used as templates to accompany centre-devised materials and approaches.

## **Evidence Requirements**

Methods of providing appropriate evidence for Writing and Reading tasks are widely practised and understood. Spoken tasks continue to be less well evidenced. If evidence is in the form of an observer checklist, this should be completed in detail, with close reference to the general and specific skills being assessed. The duration of Speaking/Listening events must be noted, together with brief description of context, eg 'short presentation on workplace experience'. A detailed observation checklist completed by the assessor is a minimum requirement. Ideally, a sample of spoken work will be recorded and/or witnessed and documented by more than one assessor as part of standard internal verification practice.

## **Administration of assessments**

Internal verification procedures appear to be effective, even in large centres operating across several locations where such procedures are complex and challenging. Increasingly, centres are holding online master folders, to which all assessors have access. This helps to ensure consistency of materials and approaches. Systems of recording internal verifier feedback are usually clear and effective, though it is sometimes less clear how and when actions have been implemented.

## **Areas of good practice**

Many aspects of good practice were identified. These included:

- ◆ electronic master folders accessible to all assessors containing all essential documents, such as SQA update information, external verification reports, specifications, ASPs, instruments of assessment and marking schemes
- ◆ well-documented internal verification systems, often operating successfully across several locations
- ◆ documented evidence of standardisation discussion between assessors, with key points highlighted and actions recorded
- ◆ integrative approaches, across two or more Core Skills, or across Core Skills and vocational Units, sometimes using a project-based approach
- ◆ centre-devised assessment instruments based on the approach and assessment checklists used in the ASPs but geared to the personal, social, educational or vocational interests of the learner
- ◆ detailed assessor observation comments on spoken tasks, with some interactions audio- or video-recorded for purposes of internal verification
- ◆ assessment based on material 'naturally' generated during the learning experience
- ◆ comprehensive induction and training materials for new assessors and verifiers

## Specific areas for improvement

- ◆ Action points noted by internal verifiers should include dates for completion. Once action has been implemented, this should be documented and signed off by the internal verifier.
- ◆ Records of standardisation discussion, both naturally occurring and as a result of formal meetings, could be improved. These records could take the form of completed meetings templates, or a brief diary record.
- ◆ Centres should feel confident in developing their own Communication tasks suited to the personal, social, educational or vocational needs of their learners. The exemplars in the ASPs can provide a model and exemplify the level. SQA prior verification of assessment tasks is optional.
- ◆ All instruments of assessment for Reading at levels 3–6 should include a brief marking scheme similar to those exemplified in the ASPs. All assessors should be consistent in their adherence to the marking scheme.
- ◆ The evaluative element of Reading tasks should be carefully checked to ensure genuinely evaluative points, backed-up by evidence, have been made.
- ◆ Careful consideration should be given to methods of evidencing and internally verifying Speaking/Listening tasks. Unless a recording has been made, assessors must complete observation checklists in detail, matching comment to specific skills. Ideally, a sample will be recorded to support internal verification and standardisation discussion. Duration of tasks should be noted and comply with the minimum requirement.
- ◆ Writing tasks should have a clear purpose and audience. The word length should be noted and comply with minimum requirements. Retaining a formative draft is helpful to support authentication.
- ◆ In large or newly merged centres, assessors should continue to work towards consistency in their approaches.
- ◆ Centres should not over-assess learners by expecting summative evidence of more than one task for each of the general skills.
- ◆ An annual review of learning materials, master folder contents, SQA updates, accommodation and equipment could be helpful.