



# **National Qualifications 2015 Internal Assessment Report Politics**

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

# National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ Units verified:

Politics (Higher)

DV4R 12 Political Theory NAB001 (2006)

DV4R 12 Political Theory NAB001 V2 (2012)

DV4R 12 Political Theory NAB002 V2 (2012)

DV4T 12 Political Structures NAB001 V2 (2012)

## General comments

Two of the three Units were sampled: Political Theory and Political Structures. The evidence presented indicated that most centres had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standard. Most met the standard of validity and reliability, and were fair and consistent. In most centres the instruments of assessment used were the revised Version 2 (April 2012) NABs and in these cases were therefore current and up to date and ensured that candidate level of attainment satisfied all relevant Outcomes and covered all relevant Performance Criteria. However, one centre used the obsolete 2006 instrument of assessment.

NABs for all three Units were revised for the 2012–13 session in order to create better articulation with the external exam. Each Unit has 20 marks. In the Political Representation NAB, the analyse and evaluate electoral data Outcome 2 question, has six marks and the two essay questions seven marks each. In the Political Structures and Political Theory NABs, there are two questions each worth ten marks (refer to Politics Update Letters dated [5 February 2013](#) and [12 January 2012](#) which can be found on the Politics subject web page.

## Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

The Version 2 National Assessment Bank instruments of assessment used were made up of extended-response questions from across the relevant Units where candidates had to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and analysis/evaluation. This format helps to facilitate their use as end-of-Unit assessments.

Where the Version 2 National Assessment Bank instruments of assessment were used the candidate responses seen by the verification team indicated that in all cases there was adherence to the process. The verification team accepted this as indicating awareness by each centre of the link between the instruments of assessment and the Unit specifications within the Course Arrangements document.

In all Unit assessments, knowledge and understanding are a major element of the tasks required of candidates. The skills of Analysis and Evaluation are assessed to a lesser extent than in the Course content and are applied to familiar contexts which have been dealt with in the learning and teaching process.

### **Evidence Requirements**

Evidence Requirements apply to each Unit as a whole and therefore apply holistically to all Outcomes of each Unit. Verification covered two Units, and candidate written responses (there were no recorded oral responses) to a NAB were used to determine if the centre was robust in determining satisfactory candidate attainment of all Outcomes of the relevant Unit.

The purpose of verification is to confirm that individual centres are interpreting standards correctly, and that they have in place an internal verification system that is used consistently and is both robust and rigorous. Therefore, there needs to be evidence submitted that the relevant Performance Criteria are being interpreted consistently, and that judgements are consistent between candidates — centres need to show that they are assessing their candidates in line with national standards and that all assessors of a Unit are assessing to the same standard. This ensures that national standards are being applied by all centres and allows the verification team to further ensure that consistent and reliable assessment decisions are being made nationally in accordance with standards.

### **Administration of assessments**

All instruments of assessment used were at the appropriate SCQF level 6. Most were relevant, current and covered the Outcomes and Performance Criteria as required (refer to General Comments above).

All centres used cut-off scores, with assessors giving marks to determine whether candidates achieved the Unit pass.

All assessors marked holistically and correctly determined achievement by providing an overall cut-off score for the instrument of assessment and not for each Outcome. All centres also provided marks for each question. When marking holistically, the assessor must ensure that the candidate achieves the cut-off score of 50 per cent to achieve; there is no need to achieve 50 per cent in each Outcome.

All centres appear to be using the instruments of assessment as an end-of-Unit assessment as recommended.

Since verification was carried out centrally, it was accepted that individual assessor and centre professionalism ensured that the assessment was carried out under controlled conditions with evidence being obtained under supervision and administered as an unseen and closed-book assessment, with one hour being allocated for completion thus ensuring reliability and credibility.

## **Areas of good practice**

All centres used cross-marking as standard in their assessment process and this is leading to increased accuracy and consistency within centres and giving less experienced markers more confidence.

Centres have clearly acted on previous advice given by the verification team as there is evidence of an increased number of centres using their own candidate feedback sheets providing detailed written comment on candidate work with areas of strength and next-step advice. Several centres' sheets had a section for student comments.

Some centres included an internal verification sheet with their submitted material. This is an area of particular creativity and is to be commended. There was also evidence of some local internal verification and cross-marking procedures.

These approaches to local internal verification and cross-marking procedures are helping to ensure that:

- ◆ assessment instruments being used are being used correctly and in line with assessment specification
- ◆ assessors of a Unit are assessing to the same standard
- ◆ assessment decisions are reliable
- ◆ relevant Performance Criteria are being interpreted consistently, and judgements are consistent between candidates

## **Specific areas for improvement**

This is the last year of presentation of this Higher Politics. Centres should note the approach to Unit assessment for the [new National Qualifications Higher Politics](#).