



NQ Verification 2016–17 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Practical Technologies
Verification event/visiting information	Visiting
Date published:	June 2017

National Courses/Units verified:

H25T 74 National 4 Making a Finished Product from Metal (Added Value Unit)
H25Y 74 National 4 Making a Finished Product from Wood (Added Value Unit)

C761 75 National 5 Practical Metalworking: Practical Activity (IACCA*)
C762 75 National 5 Practical Woodworking: Practical Activity (IACCA)

*Internally-assessed component of course assessment

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres are to be praised for their diligence in taking on board the 2015–16 key messages. There is absolute confidence that centres will again make sure they read and follow the advice given below, regarding approaches to assessment when taking part in assessment activities for both the National 5 internally-assessed component of course assessment (IACCA) and the National 4 added value unit (AVU), whilst also keeping up to date with any National Qualifications developments.

The National 5 IACCA and the National 4 AVU assessment demonstrate that the courses are more than simply the sum of their constituent units. At National 5, all approved centres must make use of the course assessments from the secure area of the SQA website (without alteration) unless explicitly agreed with SQA. Any centre that does have permission to alter the assessment tasks, must provide the verifier with confirmation of this prior to visiting verification taking place and should provide the verifier with the specific amendments made to the course assessment.

At National 4, centres have the option of developing their own added value unit assessments. Please note that this is not a requirement and centres can continue to use the SQA-produced added value unit assessments. Most SQA-produced added value unit assessments already allow considerable flexibility in the choice of a context for the assessment, while some provide a context that you can change. If you choose to develop your own added value unit assessment, we strongly advise submitting it to SQA for prior verification before using it with candidates. Further information on this can be found on our [Using SQA unit assessments web page](#).

Within the Practical Woodworking course, some centres had ensured that candidates had the opportunity to demonstrate practical creativity in the shaping of both the turned parts and/or the sides of the coat rack/vanity mirror carcass if desired. The majority of centres had retained templates and/or working drawings in this case — retention of templates and/or working drawings is essential to applying the marking instructions and to verification procedures, as marks from section 1 'Reading from working drawings, marking out, cutting and shaping component parts appropriately using correct tools and equipment' cannot be applied in these areas without them; this would result in candidates losing marks in section 1.

The majority of centres had correctly used the most up-to-date version of the practical activity task and this is to be commended as it is clearly part of an embedded internal verification. However, a minority of centres had used outdated versions; most of the centres in this case did not have an effective internal verification policy in place. This situation highlights the need for internal verification procedures to be carried out from pre-delivery stage through to moderation of candidates' work.

Centres are reminded that the use of power and machine tools is limited to those detailed in the course assessment specification (CAS) document. It was clear that in a minority of centres a bandsaw or equivalent had been used to cut woodworking joints. This is not consistent with a valid assessment approach which ensures validity of assessment at a national level, and will result in candidates either losing marks at National 5 or not passing assessment standards at National 4.

The vast majority of centres have used a suitable finish for the candidates' completed products and this is to be praised as it enabled valid and reliable assessment and verification decisions to be made throughout the assessment of the candidates' work.

Assessment judgements

Across both Practical Metalworking and Practical Woodworking courses (at National 4 and National 5), the majority of centres are making fair and accurate assessment judgements. The majority of centres have confidence in judging the evidence and correctly applying the marking instructions to the correct areas of

the candidate evidence. The majority of centres are making valid and reliable assessment judgements, which is absolutely essential to the credibility of both subjects. Furthermore, it allows all of the candidates to attain the grades they have earned after concluding their work on the course.

In a number of centres, extremely good practice was evident with regard to the process of applying the marking instructions, and they had followed the procedures highlighted below:

Assessors should allocate a mark out of 20 for each of the four sections, by following the instructions given below. This mark should be recorded on the candidate's assessment record, with a comment justifying why each mark was awarded.

For each of the sections, the marker should select the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence presented. Once the best fit has been decided then:

- ◆ *where the evidence almost matches the level above, the highest available mark from the range should be awarded*
- ◆ *where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from the range should be awarded*
- ◆ *otherwise an appropriate mark from the middle of the range should be awarded*
- ◆ *where the evidence completely matches the highest level band descriptor for any section, and has been produced by the candidate working independently, 20 marks should be awarded for that section*
- ◆ *zero (0) marks should be awarded for any section where no evidence has been produced by the candidate*

It is absolutely essential that assessors identify (through their marking comments) both candidate adherence to following recognised procedures and safe working practices at all times and the level of assistance given to the candidates. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much aid. If any candidate requires more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

The practical activity is an end-of-course assessment that must be attempted in its entirety as a single assessment event, and cannot be interrupted by periods of learning and teaching. There will, however, be instances where candidates are unable to complete their work (eg serious illness) with the rest of their class group and will not be assessed on time — in these situations, centres must contact SQA's Assessment Arrangements Team to determine whether an extension of time is permitted to allow for the work to be completed and assessed.

Centres are reminded that once assessed, work for the National 5 IACCA cannot be returned to candidates to be improved or redone.

Section 3: General comments

The majority of centres were very well prepared for visiting verification procedures and had all necessary evidence prepared, such as: the approach to assessment (ie assessment information for candidates from course practical activity documentation), product working drawings, candidate assessment record (assessor comments — any format), the completed product, record of progress (log or diary — any format), jigs or templates used by candidate, any other evidence of candidates meeting the assessment standards, the centre-completed visiting verification sample form and the centre internal verification policy with completed internal verification work.

The majority of centres verified had effective internal verification policies in place and were using them to ensure that both approaches to assessment and assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

The majority of centres ensured that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place and this is to be praised.

The facilities, accommodation and resources for candidates across the country have all been positively commented upon by the verification team. This is very reassuring, as it shows that the infrastructure is in place to give candidates the best opportunity to demonstrate their skills (and, likewise, the best opportunity for deliverers to make valid and consistent assessment judgements).

Finally, centres are reminded that from session 2017–18 onwards, a revised marking instruction will be used for the assessment of the National 5 practical activity.