

NQ Verification 2017–18

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Photography
Verification event/visiting information	Visiting
Date published:	March 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

H4KT 76	Higher	Image Making
H4KV 76	Higher	Contextual Imagery

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The team of visiting verifiers observed a range of good practice across all centres that participated in the external verification process. Observations and good practice are outlined in the comments below.

All centres demonstrated that they had applied and implemented CfE principles in their approach to assessment. It is clear from the external verification reports that centres have developed resources and materials which offer personalisation and choice at an appropriate level of challenge for candidates. These resources helped to support candidates and enabled them to successfully generate evidence to meet the unit outcomes and assessment standards.

Both Image Making and Contextual Imagery units were presented for external verification by an equal number of centres.

The following unit assessment support packs were used by centres:

- ◆ Package 1: Unit by unit approach
- ◆ Package 2: Combined approach
- ◆ Package 3: Portfolio approach

Most centres used Package 2: Combined approach, to assess the work of their candidates.

Most centres used the unit assessment support packs effectively to assess the units, however some centres used outdated unit assessment support packs from 2014 or assessment documentation from the PBNC Higher course. Centres are reminded that only the most recent version of the unit assessment support packs must be used. The most recent versions were published in August 2016 and can be accessed via the SQA secure site.

Some centres chose to adapt SQA-generated assessment tasks to personalise them for their candidates. While this is to be encouraged, centres are reminded that they must ensure that the rigour of the assessment remains consistent and that amended assessment tasks should go through the prior verification process.

[Information on prior verification](#)

Candidate assessment evidence was generally very well-structured demonstrating that centres have made appropriate use of Understanding Standards materials and exemplar unit assessments that were published by SQA.

Image Making — outcome 1

Evidence produced by candidates for assessment standards 1.1 and 1.2 was inconsistent. While some centres that were involved in the external verification process encouraged candidates to produce evidence that reflected the national standard, it was clear that many centres had misinterpreted the requirements of these assessment standards.

Many candidates failed to produce relevant research work for assessment standard 1.1. Candidates are required to identify a minimum of one **relevant** social, cultural, historical or scientific influence on each photographer. Some centres have adopted the use of a shortlist of suitable photographers which allows their candidates to select influential image makers. However, in several cases the photographers that were on the shortlist lacked the research sources to allow candidates to achieve assessment standard 1.1.

In many instances, the assessment evidence produced by candidates for assessment standard 1.2 did not meet the national standard. This assessment standard requires candidates to discuss the specific impact of the influences identified in assessment standard 1.1 on two pieces of work by two photographers. While in most cases an attempt had been made to do this, candidate comments often failed to address this correctly.

The general standard of evidence produced for assessment standard 1.3 was strong. Candidate responses included justified personal opinions on the work of their chosen photographers. In some instances, however, candidates failed to use appropriate language to convey their opinions. Centres are reminded that candidates must be able to use appropriate photographic language and vocabulary to describe their own work and that of other image makers.

Image Making — outcome 2

The evidence produced by candidates for this outcome was mostly of a very high standard and reflects the high quality of learning and teaching that has taken place prior to commencing the unit assessments. In some instances it was clear that unit assessments had commenced far too early in the session. In these cases it was evident that candidates did not have the technical or creative skill to be able to undertake the assessment independently to a quality that reflects the national standard. Best practice would be to teach candidates all the skills they will need prior to undertaking the assessment.

Most centres presented evidence digitally for the purposes of external verification. This approach helps to minimise consumable costs for the units and encourages candidates to make better use of their time. Most centres effectively presented evidence in Word documents and PowerPoint presentations.

Work produced by most centres demonstrated a very strong technical understanding of digital photography. Final image selections were appropriate and offered a range of different styles and genres. The standard of technical skill does, however, continue to be inconsistent with many candidates producing images that were under-exposed, out of focus or with inappropriate use of flash.

The majority of candidates produced evidence for assessment standard 2.2 that was very strong. Some candidates presented work for external verification that was inappropriately composed and did not demonstrate an understanding of effective compositional techniques.

The quality of evidence produced for assessment standard 2.3 was varied. Many candidates did not engage with their own work effectively and offered no personal opinions or review of the images they had taken. The lack of appropriate technical language continues to be an issue within this outcome. This is an important aspect of both the unit assessment and course assessment; it is therefore important that all candidates are encouraged to use appropriate technical language and vocabulary throughout. It was noted that centres that adopted the combined approach generally produced more suitable evaluations. Centres may wish to make use of Understanding Standards materials to assist them in this area. Materials are available on the SQA secure site.

Contextual Imagery — outcome 1

Evidence presented for the Contextual Imagery unit was of a good standard. The quality of photographic work was strong and demonstrated candidates' abilities to use appropriate photographic processes for creative effect.

Centres that adopted the combined approach produced evidence that strongly linked to the work of their influential photographers in the Image Making unit.

Most candidates selected styles and genres that were appropriate for their choice of equipment and level of technical skill. Some candidates had chosen styles and genres for assessment standard 1.2 which were too challenging for their current

level of skill. Centres should always encourage candidates to pursue projects which are achievable and suitable for their level of skill.

Contextual Imagery — outcome 2

Evidence produced for outcome 2 was thorough, with most centres adopting a standardised approach by using both SQA and centre-devised pro formas. This approach to assessment ensures that all candidates have an understanding of the requirements of the outcome.

As with Image Making assessment standard 1.3, many candidates did not use appropriate subject-specific language which would be expected at Higher level. Candidates must be taught how to evaluate photographic images in preparation for undertaking the unit assessment. This will ensure that they are equipped with the skills that they need to be able to achieve this assessment standard.

Many candidates did not meet the requirements of assessment standard 2.3 as they failed to evaluate the success of their work in relation to their original intentions. Centres are reminded that candidates must identify one valid strength and one area for improvement in their photographic work and practice.

Assessment judgements

Most centres' assessment judgements were deemed to be accurate, consistent and reliable, in line with the national standard.

Most centres recorded their assessment judgements clearly using either SQA devised Candidate Assessment Records or an appropriately adapted version to suit an individual centre's approach. In some instances, however, no assessment judgements were given or no comments to justify decisions. This is an important part of the assessment and verification process and centres should always record this in a suitable format.

The majority of centres demonstrated clear evidence of effective internal verification procedures. In some cases the centre's internal verification policy had not been successfully used as the internal verification process did not identify inconsistencies in assessment decisions.

Some centres that were new to presenting candidates for this course made use of colleagues from other centres to assist in the internal verification process and assist them with their own assessment judgements.

Centres currently without an internal verification procedure are reminded that all centres offering SQA qualifications should have an effective internal quality assurance procedure in place. More information on internal verification can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.

In some instances, centres submitted evidence for external verification that was marked as 'complete' when in fact the candidate had not successfully met or produced evidence for all assessment standards. Centres are reminded that

'interim' evidence is perfectly acceptable for the purposes of external verification; however, internal assessment must accurately reflect this.

Centres are advised to revisit candidate evidence periodically to ensure their judgements reflect the most up-to-date work for each candidate.

03 Section 3: General comments

Centre staff engaged well with external verification and found the process to be supportive and transparent.

Generally, candidate evidence and details of departmental learning and teaching were presented in a coherent manner, allowing the verification process to run smoothly.

There was strong evidence of candidate engagement and a high level of skill present in both units.

Centre staff should be commended for developing effective resources to support learning and teaching. The following ideas, techniques, strategies, policies and processes are examples of good practice which were observed in centres' delivery of both units:

- ◆ The overall quality of candidate responses indicates the effectiveness of the learning and teaching taking place prior to the commencement of the unit assessments.
- ◆ Candidates are provided with excellent resources in the form of centre-devised course handbooks, tutorials and workshops that support their understanding of the subject, both creatively and technically.
- ◆ Some centres provide candidates with a list of photographers to investigate for Image Making outcome 1. This approach supports candidates in meeting this outcome successfully by vetting the photographers that they choose.
- ◆ Centres have made use of a variety of digital formats to present candidate unit work. This effective approach to assessment can reduce course costs without compromising the candidates' experience.