



NQ Verification 2017–18

Key Messages Round 2

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Hospitality: Practical Cookery
Verification event/visiting information	Visiting
Date published:	June 2018

National Courses/Units verified:

H20P 74 National 4 Producing a Meal (Added Value Unit)

C839 75 National 5 Practical Activity (IACCA*)

*Internally-assessed component of course assessment

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

National 4 — Added value unit

Centres continue to choose from the set of given recipes to carry out this practical activity. Centres can submit their own recipe choices for prior verification if desired. Centres interpreted and used the current SQA recipes effectively. Centre assessors confidently carried out the added value unit assessments. However, centres are reminded that the added value unit should only be undertaken once all three units have been achieved by the candidate.

The added value unit is subject to visiting verification and it should be carried out at appropriate times to ensure that, if selected for verification, the first cohort is verified by the visiting verifier. Centres will be advised if they have been selected for verification by the end of January each year.

National 5 — Course assessment

All centres used the recipes provided by SQA to carry out the practical activity. However, centres are reminded that, if a recipe stipulates the use of greaseproof

paper for a given task, then this is what should be used to ensure the correct complexity of skills for all candidates. Some centres this year took it upon themselves to use parchment instead of the greaseproof paper, which is not acceptable. A number of centres used alternative ingredients for some candidates for a variety of reasons, which can be acceptable, but it is essential that any changes to the recipe is authorised by SQA before the practical activity takes place.

Holistic marking instructions were also provided and the majority of centres produced their own marking grids to implement these, or to record candidate performance throughout the task.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of centres adopting a one-mark-by-one-mark approach with their grids. Centres are reminded that this style of marking is not deemed to be holistic, as it does not give a fair assessment of candidate performance. This approach is unacceptable and must not be used.

Due to the changes in the marking of the planning stage, which is now identified as the assignment, and marked by SQA, there appeared to be some confusion as to the expectations of centre staff. Once the candidate has completed their assignment under assessment conditions, the originals must be copied and then submitted to SQA for marking. The copy should then be returned to candidates for amending if needed prior to the practical activity. It is the centre's responsibility to provide support and ensure a candidate's plan is workable, therefore enabling them to undertake the practical element of the assessment without disadvantage.

Logical sequence is a key factor in the workability of a time plan. Where possible, the candidate's own time plan should be amended to ensure it is workable. If at this stage an assessor feels a candidate's time plan is still unworkable, even after assessor input, it is only at this point that a candidate should be given a centre-devised time plan. Candidates should have their time plan visible throughout the practical activity.

Assessment judgements

National 4 — Added value unit

Judgements were made using the 'making assessment judgements' and 'commentary on assessment judgements guidance', and this was often enhanced by centre-devised marking grids to support a consistent approach.

This was used by many centres that were selected for visiting verification, and is good practice. Please note, the holistic approach must be used to evidence the candidate's success, and to ensure all assessment standards are achieved.

Centres must provide a time plan for each candidate to enable them to carry out the implementing stage (practical activity) at this level. Candidates should be given sufficient opportunity to become familiar with the contents of the centre-produced time plan prior to their assessment.

Planning stage — planning booklets

Marking of the planning booklets should be carried out in advance of the candidate performing the implementation stage, to ensure they have achieved the desired outcome. This should be accompanied by the assessor's comments to recognise this.

Internal verification of the planning booklets should also be carried out for at least 25% of the candidates prior to the implementing stage.

Centres are encouraged to create their own marking grid for the candidate planning booklet, to ensure consistency of marking — particularly for identification of minimum equipment required and the classification of ingredients. This would support decisions around the most appropriate category for specific items, eg tinned tomatoes may appear in two sections: if unopened — in dry ingredients; if opened — in fruit and vegetables.

Equipment list

Candidates should list the minimum items of equipment that would allow both dishes to be produced, and requisition what they need accordingly, eg if they were making soup they would require a saucepan.

Garnish and decoration should be appropriate to the level, and candidates should show individuality and not be finishing their dishes in the same way.

National 4 candidates should not be expected to pipe cream, as piping is deemed to be a National 5 skill.

Implementing stage

This stage of the assessment should only be marked by subject specialists who have an understanding of SQA practical assessment requirements, and are equipped to make professional judgements in this area.

Candidates should be given sufficient time to prepare all ingredients and equipment in advance of their start time. They should then carry out their plan within the given time. However, should a candidate over-run fractionally, professional judgement should be used to decide whether the dish(es) are ready to be served up very shortly after. Candidates should not be penalised at this level if it is obvious their dishes are almost ready to serve.

Re-assessment

Should a candidate require re-assessment in one or two assessment standards, then professional judgement is required. The candidate can be re-assessed with an appropriate activity at a given time, eg if a candidate has forgotten to garnish the finished dish and has therefore not achieved assessment standard 1.4 of the added value unit, they would not be expected to be re-assessed on a whole new task. It would be deemed appropriate to re-assess this assessment standard during another practical activity. If, however, the candidate has burned the main course and it is not deemed to be edible, while also forgetting to decorate the dessert, a complete re-assessment would be required. Assessors would be

required to use their professional judgement as to when a complete re-assessment would be required.

Candidates are not permitted to be re-assessed on part of an assessment standard — they must be re-assessed on the complete assessment standard, eg assessment standard 1.3 stipulates preparing the ingredients and controlling the cookery processes. If the candidate prepares all the ingredients correctly but fails to control the cookery processes, then the complete assessment standard must be re-assessed, and the most appropriate way to do this would be to present the candidate with a completely new task that is equally demanding.

National 5 — Course assessment

Implementing stage

This stage should be marked by subject specialists to ensure consistency, and that professional judgements are adhered to. It is essential that the assessor is therefore familiar with the standards required for the various cookery processes and preparation techniques used within the assessment recipes.

The recipes this year were deemed aesthetically pleasing and flavoursome by both candidates and assessors. The use of greaseproof paper for the baking of the meringue caused much anguish during the practice of the dishes. However, during the period of live assessment, few candidates actually struggled with the removal of the paper during their assessment.

Recipes

The definition of 'blanch' seemed to vary from centre to centre, with many candidates choosing not to cook the leeks at all. For some candidates the piping of the potatoes did prove problematic, depending on the size of nozzle used. However, if the potato mixture was mashed correctly, it was easily piped from a range of nozzle sizes.

The quality of meringue made was generally very good in those centres visited, and the removal of the greaseproof paper was not an issue.

The timing, preparation, and cooking order of ingredients varied from centre to centre, with most candidates managing to cook and serve their dishes in the allocated time. Some candidates, depending on their skills level, did not complete the second bake of the fish nests, or use their time correctly to ensure their rice was cooked properly, which did have a negative impact on their results.

Candidates should also be reminded that tasting and seasoning is important to ensure flavour is adjusted appropriately. This was not always evident. However, centres must be aware that failure to taste and season does not mean that the candidate automatically received 0 marks for skills, as all other skills listed in this section are also taken into account when determining a holistic mark.

When awarding marks for garnishing and decoration of the finished dishes, centres are reminded that it is acceptable for candidates to garnish/decorate either the food or the plate, but to be deemed appropriate it must consist of a component (ingredient) and a preparation technique. It is not appropriate for candidates to use shop-bought decorations and achieve credit for a preparation technique.

The completion of this practical activity requires a high standard of multitasking, and centres are reminded that candidates should have experience of this type of multitasking in advance of the course assessment. Centres are advised to ensure candidates have experienced the creation of three dishes (possibly through prelim activity or a similar opportunity) in advance of their course assessment, to ensure they are thoroughly prepared for the practical activity.

03

Section 3: General comments

Centres should remember that, if selected for visiting verification, the session agreed with the visiting verifier should be the first one carried out in that centre. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that the centre is marking to the national standard. All other sessions should run thereafter, and where applicable, the assessor who was verified should share their experience to create a consistent and fair approach across their centre. The discussion between the assessor and visiting verifier proved to be the most valuable aspect of the verification activity, and allowed for discussions to occur which ensured the national standard is being adhered to.

Good practice would be for centre staff not to assess their own candidates, and, if possible, to make arrangements with colleagues to assess each other's candidates.

Centres are reminded that there should always be reserve candidates available during visiting verification, in case of absence on the day. Six candidates must be observed during the practical activity, unless a centre does not have that number entered (however this would be known in advance of the visit).

In addition, there should be copies of the same six candidates' planning booklets (assignments), which have been checked and amended to ensure workability, available for the visiting verifier to check prior to the practical activity beginning.

National 4 — Added value unit

The standard has been maintained on most visits, with support offered where necessary. Assessors and visiting verifiers have agreed that the format suits the candidates. Most centres have used internal verification effectively this year. Centres are however reminded it is recommended that 25% of candidates' work is cross-marked to ensure consistency of assessment judgements, but for this process, it is not essential for this to be completed by a subject specialist.

National 5 — Course assessment

Most candidates were suitably prepared for this level, which is a significant step up from National 4. Centres this year were also well prepared for candidates in the provision of sufficient ingredients and appropriate equipment. Assessors are however reminded that time prompts are only provided at regular intervals and 5 minutes before each service time. It is also not appropriate to provide any additional guidance to candidates with regard to hygiene and safety, or general support during the assessment, as in this situation the teacher's role is not as a class teacher but that of an assessor.

Please note that background music is not permitted during the 2½ hour period of the practical assessment.

Finally, centres are reminded that visiting verification is in place to support centres in assessment of candidates, and to ensure national standards are understood by all who deliver the courses.