



NQ Verification 2017–18 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

H25T 74 National 4 Making a Finished Product from Metal (Added Value Unit)
C861 75 National 5 Practical Metalworking (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 all of the subject updates for this session, but especially the 2016–17 key messages, the 2017–18 course specification, Understanding Standards materials, and the Changes to assessment: Questions and Answers area of the SQA website. With regard to 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), there is absolute confidence that centres will again make sure they read and follow the advice given and keep up to date with any National Qualifications developments.

All but one of the centres that were externally verified used the Garden Lantern task, at both National 4 (AVU) and National 5 (IACCA) levels.

Centres are reminded that the use of power and machine tools to undertake assessable tasks is limited to those detailed in the course assessment specification document. To ensure valid and reliable national assessment, any candidate use of power and/or machine tools not specified will result in candidates either not gaining marks at National 5 or not passing assessment standards at National 4.

H25T 74 Making a Finished Product from Metal AVU

The National 4 Garden Lantern AVU documentation used by externally verified centres was not modified in any way. 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](#).

Across assessment standards 1.1 to 1.7 at National 4 level, assessors' records of observation, activities documented in the record of progress, and the candidates' completed products, all showed good use of skills appropriate to this level. The finish of the products was also of an acceptable standard and free of major blemishes.

Centres are reminded that throughout the practical activity, candidates are required to keep a record of progress. This could be an informal log or diary and could be handwritten or kept electronically.

C861 75 Practical Metalworking IACCA

All externally verified centres used the log book and Practical Activity assessment task from the SQA secure site.

The log book was completed well by the majority of candidates and it was obvious that centres had prepared them well for this. The majority of centres had applied the marking instructions correctly for candidates' work on the log book and most centres reported they had referred to the [specimen log book](#) available from the SQA website. Centres either chose to complete the log book through manual or electronic means — both are acceptable.

A minority of centres had issued candidates with different material thicknesses to those specified in the assessment task. While most of these centres had correctly updated the drawings to suit these changes, a minority of centres did not. Centres are reminded that they must try to obtain the material thicknesses as specified in the assessment task. Only in circumstances where specified material cannot be sourced, can centres adapt working drawings and issue a different thickness of material. Centres do not need to inform SQA if a change in material thickness is necessary.

Centres must not alter lengths or widths of material.

Centres must not alter or adapt the drawings in any way apart from the exceptional circumstances identified above. This includes moving the content of the practical activity into a different format.

A number of centres had not correctly approached the assessment with regard to functional sizes. Centres are reminded that functional sizes must be consistent for all candidates within the group and candidates must be made aware of them prior to starting the assessment task.

The majority of centres had correctly set the level of their candidates at National 5. However, it was evident in some centres that they should have considered setting some of their candidates at a lower level, due to the quality and accuracy of the work produced by those candidates.

Our cohort of verifiers reported excellent use of the practical activity assessment record for each candidate. This is to be commended as it ensured a reliable external verification process across all sampled centres, and provided excellent evidence for making assessment judgments.

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres are making fair and accurate assessment judgements at both National 4 and National 5 levels. The majority of centres have confidence in judging the evidence and correctly applying the marking instructions to the correct areas of the candidate evidence. Our cohort of verifiers reported that centres were more confident in applying the 2017–18 National 5 marking instructions devised for this academic session, as they were more specific than the previous marking instructions.

The majority of centres are making valid and reliable assessment judgements, which is absolutely essential to the credibility of the subject. Furthermore, it ensures candidates are awarded the grades their work merits.

C861 75 Practical Metalworking IACCA

Centres are reminded that candidates must not be awarded full marks in any section where evidence from that section is incomplete. For example, if the tray is missing then the candidate cannot achieve full marks in either the Bench Work or Fabrication sections of the marking instructions. Furthermore, candidates cannot achieve full marks in the independence of work area within these sections.

It is recommended that assessors put as much detail as possible in their marking commentaries within the practical activity assessment record, as this will support both the internal and external verification processes. In situations where there is incomplete work, this is particularly important.

In a number of centres, the tray was not joined by spot welding or riveting. The working drawing within the assessment task states that the tray must be spot welded or riveted; this is part of the candidate assessment process.

Centres are reminded that the depth of holes and threads must be taken into account when applying the marking instructions. This is part of the Machining section of the marking instructions.

Our cohort of verifiers reported that a number of candidates could not gain marks for finishing due to a poor standard of preparing the component parts. It is recommended that centres advise candidates, before assessment takes place, of the standard of finish required at National 5 level, ie deburring and polishing component parts to remove scratches, process marks, etc.

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Section 3: General comments

Our cohort of verifiers reported excellent preparation for external verification across the large majority of centres. This is to be commended as it ensured a reliable external verification process across all sampled centres.

Centres must ensure that any non-permanent mechanical joints such as internal and external threads should be easily disassembled to aid the verification process.

The vast majority of centres did not apply a finish that obscured the candidates' completed products; 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.

Centres are reminded that as part of the revised approach to undertaking the practical activity for the National 5 Practical Metalworking course assessment, that there is now an annually issued task for candidates to complete. This will be published to the SQA secure website at the end of October of each academic session, and it will only be valid for that academic session.

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 ensure 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 the best opportunity for deliverers to make valid and consistent assessment judgements.