Qualification Verification Summary Report
NQ Verification 2018–19

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	**Psychology**
Verification event/visiting information	**Event**
Date published:	**June 2019**

National Units verified:

H260 75   SCQF level 5   Psychology: Research
H261 75   SCQF level 5   Psychology: Individual Behaviour
H262 75   SCQF level 5   Psychology: Social Behaviour
H260 76   SCQF level 6   Psychology: Research
H261 76   SCQF level 6   Psychology: Individual Behaviour
H262 76   SCQF level 6   Psychology: Social Behaviour

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment
Overall, centres had made effective use of the SQA provided unit assessment support packs (UASPs). Centres can be reassured that the unit assessment support packs have been through a rigorous quality assurance process and as such are deemed valid approaches to assessment.

A small number of centres used approaches to assessment prior-verified by the verification team, which are available from SQA Secure. The prior verification process ensures any centre-devised approaches to assessment meet assessment standards and outcome(s). Using this service is considered good practice.

The majority of centres used package 1: unit-by-unit approach, although there were a few centres using package 2: combined, or package 3: portfolio approach. It is possible that using the portfolio or combined approach could reduce the

amount of assessment for candidates. There was clear evidence of candidate engagement when these approaches were used.

Some centres applied and implemented Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) principles in their approach to assessment by using adapted and centre-devised approaches to assessment that took account of the assessment standards and guidelines in the UASPs.

Some centres utilised naturally occurring evidence and candidates were given a range of opportunities to achieve assessment standards.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment
Some centres submitted approaches to assessment that reflected course assessment rather than unit assessment. In all cases this meant the approaches to assessment were not valid. Centres are advised to develop a more secure understanding of the differences between unit assessment and course assessment. Centres might find it helpful to review their unit assessment tasks to ensure that these are aimed at gathering evidence of minimum competency in the assessment standards. In order to support this process, centres are directed to the information provided on free standing units available from: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/81213.html.

For centre-produced assessments, or adapted UASPs which are significantly different, using the free prior verification service provided by SQA is strongly recommended to ensure validity.

It is advised that a judging evidence table (JET) be written where centres have devised their own approaches to assessment, in order to support assessors in making appropriate assessment judgements.

Centres are advised to ensure they are using the most current version of SQA-provided UASPs available from SQA Secure. Centres are also advised to check SQA Secure to ensure that any prior verified assessment is still valid before use.

Centres should note that assessing a whole unit using a closed book approach increases the level of demand for their candidates and as such they are potentially being disadvantaged.

Assessment judgements

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements
The assessment judgements were in line with national standards, reliable and accepted for some centres.

Where UASPs had been used, some centres had made effective use of the information on judging evidence to support assessment judgements for each candidate. In these instances, assessment judgements were clearly based on the assessment standards and candidates had been appropriately identified as pass

or fail against these. From the evidence submitted, it was clear that some assessors have accurately and consistently applied the assessment standards and they have a clear understanding of the standards.

Some assessors provided useful notes on the candidate assessment record to explain how assessment judgements were reached.

Colour coding assessment judgements against assessment standards was useful for the verification team, and also helps candidates to clearly identify where they have or have not yet met assessment standards.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements
Centres are advised to adhere to the assessment standards while judging candidate evidence and to pay particular attention to the level of demand generated by different skill terms. This applies particularly in relation to the difference between 'describe' and 'explain', and especially for SCQF level 5.

There were some instances of inaccuracies in assessment judgements, and centres are reminded to use the judging evidence table (JET) when making assessment judgements if using an SQA-provided UASP.

In some instances centres were lenient in judging application of knowledge. This occurred predominantly for unit H262 76 Psychology: Social Behaviour Assessment Standard 1.3: 'Applying understanding of social psychology to everyday behaviour', where candidates had explained an everyday behaviour using concepts but not research. Centres should be aware that in order to achieve this assessment standard candidates are required to both 'explain everyday social behaviour with reference to concepts and/or theories' and 'explain everyday social behaviour with reference to research evidence'. This information can be found in the third column of the JET for the UASP for the unit H262 76 Psychology: Social Behaviour. Centres are also reminded that the requirement of the unit is for 'everyday behaviour'.

It should be noted that, while it is acceptable to use marks as the basis for judging evidence, centres must clearly indicate how these marks translate into attainment in the assessment standards, which are judged on minimum competency.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Internal verification
Some centres had good practice in checking assessment judgements, eg cross-marking. In addition, many centres had good practice with respect to the activities of the internal verifier, who sampled scripts in an agreed manner and recorded the details and decisions from this activity.

As well as ensuring national standards are maintained, internal verification should ensure that assessors are fully supported through the process of unit

assessment. Internal verifiers and assessors may find the suggested approach in the SQA Internal Verification Toolkit useful to ensure national standards are maintained, assessors are supported and valid assessment approaches are used. The toolkit is available from: https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74671.html.

Prior verification
Centres are strongly advised to submit centre-produced assessments for prior verification if these differ from the unit assessment support packs. This should be requested before assessments are used with candidates.

If a centre has used a prior verified assessment, the verification certificate should be included with material submitted for external verification.

Good practice
Many centres provided clear checklists or grids indicating where assessment standards had been achieved, which was helpful during the verification event.

Identifying where assessment standards were met on candidate's scripts was noted as good practice as it provided very clear, supportive feedback for candidates to measure their own progress.

It was evident that many centres are adopting Curriculum for Excellence principles in approaches to assessment where candidates have some level of autonomy and ownership over the way assessment evidence is presented.

It was encouraging to see evidence of collaborative practice between centres for internal verification purposes.

Centres are to be commended on candidate feedback. A range of feedback mechanisms were identified at the verification event: some assessment judgements were colour coded against assessment standards to enable a clear and quick identification of progress towards achievement; some assessors provided detailed and specific feedback in relation to achievement; and some assessors provided supportive and developmental feedback.