



NQ Verification 2014–15

Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Psychology
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2015

National Courses/Units verified:

Psychology National 5 and new Higher all Units

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres used SQA-provided assessments from the Unit assessment support packs. Centre-devised assessments in the main had been internally verified and prior verified by SQA.

The majority of centres used package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach; although there were a few centres using packages 2 or 3: combined or portfolio approach. It is possible that using the portfolio or combined approach could reduce the amount of assessment for candidates. If centres do choose the portfolio approach, it is recommended that the tasks used for gathering candidate evidence be included in the verification sample.

Centres should note that using an approach which involves judgements based on threshold marks is not valid as candidates must demonstrate success in each Assessment Standard.

Centres are advised to develop a more secure understanding of the differences between Unit assessment and Course assessment: the purpose of Unit assessment being to assess skills whereas Course assessment aims to assess content and skills. 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.

Assessment judgements

The verification team were able to confirm assessment judgements for the majority of centres. Where this was not the case, assessment judgements had either not been securely based on the published Assessment Standards of the Units, or centres had used alternative approaches to measuring success.

In some instances centres were lenient in judging evaluation of approach/theory/evidence. This occurred predominantly for Unit H261 75, National 5 Psychology: Individual Behaviour Assessment Standard 1.3: Explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the psychological approaches and theories used to explain the behaviour.

Many 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.

Most centres were correctly entering candidates for the appropriate level.

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 candidates' scripts was noted as good practice as it provided very clear, supportive feedback for candidates to measure their own progress.

In one centre candidates identified how they could extend their achievement from National 5 to Higher showing good reflection of skills gained and skills to be improved on.

Some centres also provided positive developmental feedback signposting to candidates where they had developed subject-specific skills.

When using oral assessment, it is good practice for centres to standardise the question prompts being used and to record the outcomes of such conversations on the candidate assessment grid.

03

Section 3: General comments

It is important that centre-devised assessment materials relate clearly to the Assessment Standards for each Outcome. Prior verification of centre-devised assessment materials would ensure this and is recommended.

Centres should ensure that assessments devised internally address all the relevant Assessment Standards for the Unit Outcome and give candidates full opportunity within the task to be able to demonstrate their performance against the standards.

The verification team were encouraged to see some centres using portfolio and combined assessment approaches. There was clear evidence of personalisation

and choice in some approaches to assessment, particularly in candidate posters. Candidates seemed engaged with the subject and demonstrated ownership of their learning.

Centres are reminded that candidate evidence should be viewed holistically in relation to Assessment Standards. Assessment approaches should enable candidates to achieve the minimum standard and as such there is no requirement for assigning marks or the use of time limits.

Annotating candidate evidence with an indication of where Assessment Standards had been met was extremely useful during the verification event.

Centres are required to submit an indication of the internal verification approaches adopted. A clear context of the conditions of assessment and internal verification procedures is extremely helpful and supports verifiers in confirming assessment judgements. The [SQA Internal Verification Toolkit](#) provides advice on the development and maintenance of an effective internal quality assurance system.