



**Standard Grade 2013
Internal Assessment Report
English and Communication**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Standard Grade qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified:

Standard Grade English Talking

General comments

It is a number of years since a centre was found to be at odds with national standards in the assessment of Standard Grade English Talking. The last year, 2013, was no different, emphasising the extent to which application of the GRC in Standard Grade had become an established and clearly understood component of English department business.

In the view of centres verified in recent years, the move to live verification of candidates (in 2006) made the process a much more positive one than the earlier transmission of gradings to the whole department through the training tapes. Since the change, candidates have responded — almost universally — to the presence of the Verifier by performing beyond the level of grades provisionally awarded. Centres visited this year had found imaginative ways of keeping Standard Grade Talking at the heart of the English syllabus, and the quality of the talks suggested that the selected candidates were well used to talking; performances, as a result, were confident and mature.

Administration of assessments

It has been a requirement of Standard Grade English Talking that centres have, within the English Department, an Internal Verifier responsible for consistency with national standards. This practice will be a crucial part of procedures for the new National exams, and it is likely that expertise gained in the verification of Standard Grade Talking will be helpful for departments, particularly in the transition period.

Sampling of candidates and cross-marking were the most effective means of achieving consistency across a department. Consistency with the national standard was achieved by revisiting the training tapes, with the Internal Verifier leading discussions.

Areas of good practice

In the centres visited this year, the Internal Verifiers were highly effective in ensuring that assessments were at the appropriate level. The following practices were common to all centres visited:

- 1 Internal Verifier visits to other teachers' classrooms, for cross-marking of Talk
- 2 Sampling, by the Internal Verifier, of candidates from all classes presented
- 3 Departmental standardisation exercises and sharing of good practice in teaching and learning

In one centre, candidates' talks were often recorded, creating a valuable bank of performances for departmental discussion.

Specific areas for improvement

Much of the good practice and expertise gained, over many years, in the development of Standard Grade Talking will help support the delivery of the new National Qualifications. The GRC provide an ideal set of guidelines for the teaching of Individual Talk and Group Discussion. The selection of assessment criteria may change the emphasis, but the fundamental principles of what makes a good talk, or a good contribution to group discussion, are true of all talk (and listening) in all situations. The GRC's clear statement of the relationship between criteria and grades will be helpful too, and teachers should bear in mind the equivalences shown in the SCQF framework. For the transitional period, and until the new performance criteria are internalised, a useful guide for National 5 performance is to consider whether it might be awarded Credit or Intermediate 2; similarly, National 4 can be regarded as broadly equivalent to General or Intermediate 1.