



# NQ Verification 2014–15

## Key Messages Round 1

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### Section 1: Verification group information

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

#### National Courses/Units verified:

Science (National 3 and National 4) Unit assessments

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### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Most centres used the published Unit assessment support packs. Other centres made minor modifications to aspects of the packs. Provided a modified instrument of assessment still relates to the key areas of the Course, and is of an appropriate standard, such an approach is encouraged.

Centres are reminded that they should make use of SQA's prior verification service where significant changes are made to the Unit assessment support packs, or if they choose to use centre-devised assessments.

[Further information on SQA's Prior Verification service](#)

#### **Outcome 1: The candidate will apply skills of scientific inquiry and draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of the Unit to carry out an experiment/practical investigation.**

Most centres used an appropriate experimental investigation to assess Outcome 1.

Centres are reminded that it may be possible to reduce the assessment burden on candidates by achieving some aspects of Assessment Standard 2.4 (solving problems) via a carefully designed experiment/practical investigation.

**Outcome 2: The candidate will draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of the Unit and apply scientific skills by:**

*Assessment Standard 2.1 Making accurate statements*

All centres used the published Unit assessment support packs. Centres are reminded to use the most up-to-date versions.

*Assessment Standard 2.2 Describing an application;*

*Assessment Standard 2.3 Describing a scientific issue in terms of the effect on the environment/society*

Centres must ensure that the activity is appropriate to the level being assessed. Centres are encouraged to use the suggested activities from the Unit assessment support packs.

*Assessment Standard 2.4 Solving problems*

All centres used the published Unit assessment support packs. Centres are reminded to use the most up-to-date versions.

Centres are reminded that, where Unit assessment support packs are modified or where centre-devised instruments of assessment are used, individual problem solving skills should be easily identifiable. This is necessary to ensure that candidates are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate all three of the problem solving skills at National 3 and National 4 (making generalisations/predictions, selecting information and processing information, including calculations, as appropriate).

## **Assessment judgements**

Centres must ensure that their assessment decisions and internal verification decisions are clear.

**Outcome 1: The candidate will apply skills of scientific inquiry and draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of the Unit to carry out an experiment/practical investigation.**

Centres must ensure that candidate scripts are annotated by the assessor to show where a particular Assessment Standard has been achieved.

*Assessment Standard 2.1 Making accurate statements*

Rigorous, accurate and consistent application of assessment judgements is essential. This can be facilitated by effective internal verification procedures within a centre.

Marking guidance provided in the SQA Unit assessment support packs is not intended to be exhaustive of all possibilities and can be modified. Modifications, where made, should be noted and should be subject to effective internal quality assurance processes.

Centres must provide clear commentary on making assessment judgements, and it is good practice to provide annotations to show all accepted answers.

*Assessment Standard 2.2 Describing an application;*

*Assessment Standard 2.3 Describing a scientific issue in terms of the effect on the environment/society*

Centres must indicate clear reasoning for awarding a pass for Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3.

*Assessment Standard 2.4 Solving problems*

Where candidates have more than one opportunity to demonstrate a specific problem solving skill in any given assessment, they must do so on at least half of those occasions.

The recently published Understanding Standards exemplar material contains examples of candidate evidence and commentaries explaining why the evidence does or does not meet national standards for assessment. Further exemplification is provided on the Science Understanding Standards pages on SQA's secure site: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqasecure](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqasecure)

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## **Section 3: General comments**

Centre staff are reminded that all centres offering SQA qualifications must have an effective internal quality assurance system that ensures that all candidates are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently to national standards. Centres selected for external verification are expected to provide details of their quality assurance policies and processes.

Centres must ensure that accurate details are entered on the verification sample form and candidate evidence flyleaf, and on the centre's candidate assessment record or equivalent. Before submitting evidence for external verification, centres should ensure that they have referred to the guidance documents. Guidance on evidence required for external verification of Units and internally-assessed components of Course assessment is provided on SQA's quality assurance web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/cfeqa](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeqa)

Centres are advised to record any decisions taken during their internal verification process with appropriate statements on the candidate's work or an attached pro forma.