



NQ Verification 2015–16 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 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H267 73 Science: Fragile Earth
H268 73 Science: Human Health
H267 74 Science: Fragile Earth
H268 74 Science: Human Health

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres used the published Unit assessment support packs. However, a number of centres did not use the most recent version of the 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 to use the most up-to-date Unit assessment support packs and corresponding marking instructions. Some centres used the most up-to-date assessment however they had used an old version of the marking instructions.

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 appropriate support can be given at National 3. This support could be targeted towards giving clear initial aims in order that appropriate conclusions can be achieved. Assessors should also give support with table/headings/units, as appropriate.

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.

One centre adapted the Science: Human Health Unit assessment support pack to specifically ask why there was an agreement or disagreement with the health claim. This was noted as good practice as candidates were given a clear steer on how to achieve the Assessment Standard.

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 are reminded that an application of Science must be researched by the candidate.

Centres are encouraged to use the assessment 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.

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.

Outcome 2: Draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of this Unit and apply scientific skills by:

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.

Centres must provide clear commentary on making assessment judgements.

Centres must provide clear marking instructions which show all accepted answers at each level.

Centres should ensure that they are correctly applying the marking instructions for the Science: Human Health Unit assessment support pack. Candidates should describe a health claim which has been in the media and state a reason why they agree or disagree with this claim.

Centres should ensure that if they have used the most up-to-date assessment then they must also use the most up-to-date marking instructions.

Marking guidance provided in the 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.

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. Judgements made via cross-marking and internal verification should be summarised with appropriate statements on the candidate's work or an attached pro forma.

Assessment Standard 2.4 Solving problems

Centres should note that for Processing it is appropriate to accept a correct numerical answer without units. This is particularly pertinent if the unit is provided within the stem of the question.

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 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.

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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 is provided on our quality assurance web page (www.sqa.org.uk/cfega).

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.