NQ Verification 2016–17 Key Messages Round 2

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Science
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2017

National Courses/Units verified:

H26A 74   National 4   Science Assignment (Added Value Unit)

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres used the SQA Science Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit assessment.

Most candidate evidence submitted for verification took the form of written reports. Some excellent candidate material consisted of both a log/day book and a presentation or report. Although not necessary, it was seen to be a good strategy for overtaking all of the assessment standards.

Posters seemed to be an effective means of engaging candidates, and good examples of posters produced by candidates were submitted for verification.

Centres that devise their own marking instructions based on the judging evidence table in the unit assessment support pack should be wary of being over-prescriptive in their expectations.

Assessment judgements

Although centres were using the detail contained within the judging evidence tables to support them in their assessment judgements for each of the assessment standards, some were using out of date versions of these. Centres are reminded to use the most up to date judging evidence tables as these show the criteria against which their judgements should be made.

The following specific points relate to individual assessment standards.

Assessment standard 1.1 Choosing, with justification, a relevant issue in science
This assessment standard was completed well. The relevance to the environment/society was largely well described; however, this relevance must be referred to again to reinforce the findings.

Assessment standard 1.2 Researching the issue
This assessment standard was completed well. As highlighted in previous reports, candidates must supply the full URL when referencing websites they have accessed.

Centres should ensure that the research is relevant and information can be accessed easily by candidates.

Assessment standard 1.3 Processing and presenting appropriate information/data
This assessment standard was generally completed well; however, candidates must present one of their pieces of information/data in a different way to that found in the published source.

All appropriate headings, labels and units for the presented information/data must be included.

Assessment standard 1.4 Apply knowledge and understanding of science
Centres are reminded that the marks for this can only be awarded for descriptions or explanations of relevant underlying science. Centres are also reminded that candidates can only access the third mark for this assessment standard if the impact is explained/described using some knowledge of science. Guidance should be given to candidates in the initial stages of choosing a topic to ensure that this is an assessment standard they can meet.

Assessment standard 1.5 Communicating the findings of the investigation
Centres are reminded that candidates are now required to draw a conclusion or to summarise their findings and that this must be backed up by the evidence in the investigation. A short statement was often seen to be an effective means of summing up/drawing a conclusion of the findings of the investigation. Evidence must be clear, concise, relevant and appropriately structured in order to meet this assessment standard.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Centres should ensure that candidate scripts are annotated by the assessor to show where a particular assessment standard has been achieved. Good practice would be for the internal verifier to also annotate scripts. This is helpful for candidates and for verifiers.

Centres should also record reasons for judgements in a clear manner for verification purposes.

Centres should use the published exemplars to help clarify their own knowledge of how to achieve an assessment standard. This can be incorporated into the internal verification approach. Centres are also reminded that the use of Internal Verification Toolkit (www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit) is seen as good practice.

Centres are advised that it would be effective during their internal verification process to record decisions through discussion with appropriate statements on the candidates work or an attached pro forma.

Centres are advised that all appropriate SQA documentation must be provided within the external verification pack. There are checklists provided to advise what this entails. It is especially important that the candidate evidence flyleaf is completed correctly and attached to the candidate evidence.