NQ Verification 2016–17 Key Messages Round 1

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Sociology
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2017

National Courses/Units verified:

H26J75	National 5	Human Society
H26J76	Higher	Human Society
H26L75	National 5	Social Issues
H26L76	Higher	Social Issues
H26K75	National 5	Culture and Identity
H26K76	Higher	Culture and Identity

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

There was evidence that centres are now avoiding marks and have fully understood the notion of a minimum competence pass. Most centres used unit assessment support packs, but centre-devised assessments were likely to miss out assessment standards or over burden students with additional demands.

Evidence of good practice was found where assessors flagged up the assessment standard next to each question and encouraged their candidates to do the same in their answers. This made it very easy for verifiers to find evidence. Attaching the Candidate Assessment Record to the front of each person's assessment also made evidence clear for candidates, assessors and verifiers.

Centres were aware of the requirement to submit the internal verification procedures used by the department. It was extremely helpful to have a clear context in which assessment judgements had been made. Centres should be aware of *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications* (February 2011).

However, it was often difficult to see where sampling of students' work had taken place. Very few centres had internal verifier comments or initials on candidate evidence and record sheets to show their agreement or disagreement with assessor judgements. Those centres that did provide internal verifier annotations were very helpful.

Action points

♦ Continue to flag assessment standards next to questions and use the Candidate Assessment Record, or a centre-devised alternative.

♦ Continue to send in evidence of internal verification and evidence of sampling of students' work. Internal verifiers should clearly annotate candidate evidence or the candidate assessment record to show their agreement or disagreement with assessment decisions.

♦ The National 5 and Higher Sociology courses give rise to a variety of integrated delivery of units and integrated assessment approaches, partly due to the need to cover Social Issues or Culture and Identity with Human Society for the assignment deadline. Centres might find it helpful to review unit assessment support packs 2 and 3 in order to explore the combined/portfolio approach as a means to reducing the overall assessment burden for candidates.

♦ Centres have a responsibility to keep up with published changes so should not be asking for re-assessment where the subject review states that this is no longer necessary. Assessors should refer to the Sociology web pages to keep up to date with changes designed to reduce assessment.

Assessment judgements

Centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate assessment standard and were correctly entering candidates for the appropriate level. Assessors are understanding that marks and past papers are not appropriate for summative assessment, but can be used for formative assessment.

There was good practice regarding the clarity of decision-making processes in terms of numerical annotation or ticks on scripts where assessment standards had been achieved. This was very helpful for verifiers in understanding the process that centres had carried out. However, there continues to be very little qualitative feedback on candidate evidence and centres did not indicate if qualitative feedback was given orally instead.

There also continues to be a lack of evidence to show that remediation has taken place, perhaps because typed work already includes remediation in a portfolio approach. Good practice was found where assessors had marked remediation as 'clarified through learner conversation'. This enabled external verifiers to understand the assessment process more clearly.

All centres provided a record of internal moderation, but there was less evidence of good practice in checking assessment judgements, eg blind-marking and cross-marking and sampling of scripts.

Action points

♦ Record remediation. The current candidate assessment record attached to the unit assessment support pack has no column for recording remediation. A cover sheet with a remediation column would be excellent practice so a teacher, candidate and verifier can track changes.

♦ Provide more qualitative feedback or annotate scripts to indicate that feedback was given orally or via a digital method.

♦ Allow personalisation and choice. Only one centre allowed candidates to choose their method of assessment. Centres should review their assessment tasks to ensure that candidates are being offered personalisation and choice in how they provide evidence to meet the assessment standards.

♦ Ensure that assessors and candidates are using the most up to date unit assessment support packs and are familiar with the changes outlined in the [subject review](#).

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Each centre selected for verification should submit evidence for a sample of 12 candidates. The centre can choose which unit (or units, in a combined approach) to select for each level. The sample submitted should comprise six candidates per level at the two different levels (National 5 and Higher).

When completing the Verification Sample Form, it would be helpful if candidates were entered in this order.

If the centre does not have candidates (or sufficient candidates) at one level then further candidates should be added to the levels they do present at to ensure there is still a sample of 12 candidates. The centre must choose the same unit for all candidates at any one level, but can choose different units for different levels.

Ideally, the sample should include a variety of candidate performances covering both pass and fail categories.

Centres should take care when transcribing details onto the Verification Sample Form that pass/fail indications match, and that unit codes are entered correctly. On this form, 'interim evidence' relates only to where one outcome from a unit is submitted. If the unit has been completed but still requires remediation then this is a fail at this time.

Action point

♦ All centre staff are reminded that assessments must be checked to ensure their validity before they are taken by candidates. Internal quality assurance procedures must ensure that all assessors have a common understanding of the standards required in the judging evidence table of the unit assessment support pack. Meetings between assessors and the internal verifier to discuss the planned assessment and the judging evidence table of the unit assessment support pack will help to standardise interpretation of assessment standards. Whilst this might take some time, it is likely to save more time later in the assessment process.