



# NQ Verification 2017–18

## Key Messages Round 2

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Spanish
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	May 2018

#### National Courses/Units verified:

C869 75 National 5 Performance–talking (IACCA\*)  
C769 76 Higher Performance–talking (IACCA)

\*Internally-assessed component of course assessment

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

##### National 5 and Higher Performance–talking (IACCA)

All centres verified in round 2 used the SQA guidelines and course specification for the internally-assessed component of course assessment — Higher and National 5 Modern Languages performance–talking assessment task.

Event verifiers noted that the quality of the performances sampled at both levels was generally good. Assessors had mainly guided candidates well in the selection of their topics and in many performances, these allowed candidates to employ a range of structures, vocabulary and tenses appropriate to each level. However, centres should encourage candidates to personalise their presentation and/or use a range of contexts or topics for the presentation.

##### *Presentation*

Many presentations evidenced well-organised and relevant content and candidates were generally accurate in this section. Centres should remind candidates to avoid listing (nouns in particular) at National 5 and Higher and should encourage candidates to take their time in the delivery of their presentation. Candidates should be encouraged to prepare for the assessment

independently, selecting their preferred vocabulary and language structures for the chosen contexts. This allows candidates to personalise their presentation and use language structures and resource with which they are familiar.

### *Conversation*

Assessors were very supportive and prompted their candidates at appropriate points during the conversation where hesitation occurred. However, the assessor should only prompt candidates when necessary, possibly rephrasing questions, and should allow time for the candidates to think about a suitable response. Some performances were characterised by good use of interjections and connectives, although centres could encourage candidates to employ a variety of interjections and ways of seeking clarification (in Spanish).

Assessors are reminded that open-ended questions are more effective in eliciting detailed/detailed and complex language from candidates, but the over-use of closed questions in a few performances did not help candidates expand on their answers. Assessors should avoid the use of closed questions on a repeat basis. Assessors should always give candidates appropriate thinking time in the conversation so that they can formulate their answers and, in some instances, correct themselves. Centres are reminded that the assessor should not monopolise the conversation — cf. the ‘assessment conditions’ for ‘performance-talking’; these can be found in the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification* and the *Modern Languages Performance–talking: General assessment information* document at Higher.

Candidates may use extended answers in places, but assessors are reminded to dissuade candidates from responding to questions with ‘mini-presentations’ or short monologues. Some such longer answers can appear to be very rehearsed and any sense of spontaneity in the conversation is lost. Ideally, a variety of shorter and longer responses should be employed in the conversation.

Centres are reminded to provide candidates with a variety of questions and to ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability at both levels. Assessors should avoid the same conversation questions for all candidates as this may mean candidates do not use a wider variety of vocabulary and structures in language resource. Where candidates select similar topics for the conversation, centres should consider how to phrase questions in a variety of ways or how to focus on different aspects of a same topic area with candidates.

### *Duration of the performance–talking*

In relation to the guidelines for approach, centres are reminded to refer to the recommended duration of the talking performance as laid out in ‘assessment conditions for performance-talking’ which can be found in the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification* and the *Modern Languages Performance–talking: General assessment information* document at Higher. Some performances were too long and this was not necessarily to the benefit of candidates. Other performances were significantly shorter than the recommended duration and, at times, this meant that candidates did not always

have the scope to demonstrate their abilities in using detailed, or detailed and complex, language and a wider variety of language structures. This was particularly the case in some conversations.

Centres are reminded that at National 5 the conversation must cover at least one different context to that used in the presentation, rather than a different topic within the same context. Centres should refer to the 'contexts, topics and topic development' table in the course support notes (appendix 3 of the National 5 course specification) as a guide to topics and contexts.

## **Assessment judgements**

### **National 5 and Higher Performance–talking (IACCA)**

The majority of centres applied the marking instructions in line with national standards. Centres which were 'not accepted' were either too severe or too lenient in their application of the marking instructions and are encouraged to make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 and Higher Spanish talking performances (IACCAs) published on the SQA secure website.

Some performances went beyond the standards expected at National 5 and Higher. Weaker performances highlighted problems with grammatical accuracy, problems with intonation and pronunciation and limitations in language resource.

Centres generally provided very useful commentaries in the candidate assessment record (or similar document) to relay how decisions regarding marks were reached and this was very useful to event verifiers.

Centres are reminded that performances may be uneven and to expect some variation in the quality of performance, even within each pegged mark in the marking instructions. All four performance aspects should be considered when marking the talking performance: content, accuracy, language resource and interaction (conversation only). Performances should be marked positively and holistically and do not have to be flawless to be awarded the highest marks. Assessors are reminded to refer to the general marking principles along with the detailed marking instructions (pegged marks) within the relevant documents highlighted above.

On some occasions, centres were too severe in the application of the marking instructions in relation to 'sustaining the conversation'. Centres are reminded to refer to the pegged mark headings which differentiate between performances which 'readily' sustain a conversation versus 'adequately' sustain a conversation etc. The mark awarded for 'sustaining the conversation' is discrete from the content, accuracy and language resource mark awarded for the conversation. It is worthwhile highlighting that candidates do not have to ask questions and may demonstrate the ability to recover from hesitation, for example, and still achieve full marks in this section.

## Section 3: General comments

### National 5 and Higher Performance—talking

Personalisation and choice should ensure that candidates select a topic/topics of their choice for their presentation and conversation. Assessors should support and advise candidates in their choice of topic(s) from within the contexts in the Modern Languages course (at both levels). Candidates can talk about different aspects of one or more topic(s) developed from at least two contexts at both levels.

The degree of accuracy is something event verifiers comment on. Grammatical errors can detract from the overall impression in performances. This should be an area for continued focus in learning and teaching.

#### *Recordings*

Centres are reminded that they must ensure all recordings are audible and playable on a variety of devices (and not solely the type of device used to make the recording). Most recordings were immediately playable but some were characterised by background noise.

#### *Marks*

It is essential that centres note that they are required to provide a breakdown of marks and a total on the candidate assessment record (or similar document). Equally, centres should provide the same total on the Verification Sample Form. Where there has been discussion between the assessor and internal verifier about the marks awarded, for the purposes of external verification it must be clear which final marks and total were agreed.

The majority of centres produced a verification sample which was well organised. Centres are reminded that candidates should be listed alphabetically per level (National 5 and Higher) on the Verification Sample Form.

The majority of centres provided evidence of internal verification. It is always useful in the external verification process when centres include detail (eg on the candidate assessment record or similar document) of the reasons why a candidate was awarded one pegged mark rather than another for any section of the talking performance.