



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 2

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Spanish
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H26V 74	National 4	Added value unit
H7XM 77	Advanced Higher	Specialist study unit
C769 75	National 5	Performance: talking (IACCA*)
C769 76	Higher	Performance: talking (IACCA)

*Internally assessed component of course assessment

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Added value unit

The approaches to assessment used by most centres selected for verification were 'accepted' or 'accepted with recommendations'. This demonstrates that centres have followed guidelines and made use of the feedback and support provided by SQA in publication updates, the verification key messages and at events (for nominees and practitioners) during 2014–16. This should be reassuring for practitioners and is to be commended.

Centres are reminded that the unit specification for the *Modern Languages Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit* was updated (May 2015) and the original assessment standard 1.2 was replaced and is now the assessment standard relating to a candidate's presentation. Centres should therefore use the most up-to-date version of the unit assessment support pack on SQA Secure to

avoid assessing candidates unnecessarily against the previous assessment standard 1.2 (selecting relevant information).

Centres produced centre-devised assessments to assess their candidates reflecting the approach set in the published added value unit assessment support pack. This allowed for personalisation and choice. The tasks were on the whole appropriate, varied and on interesting topics.

Specialist study unit

The logbook template produced by SQA and located in the unit assessment support pack for the specialist study was used by all centres selected for verification in round 2. It was encouraging to see candidates demonstrate the process of their preparatory work for the portfolio (course assessment).

There was clear indication of independent research by candidates in the specialist study. Some candidates changed their focus as they went through the process of selection and analysis of evidence. Centres should advise candidates to go back to assessment standard 1.1 in their log and adapt the focus or research aim accordingly.

Some candidates selected a theme across two literary texts as a focus of analysis and others chose to demonstrate a theme across a literary text and a poem. All centres verified ensured candidates referenced at least two sources in the Modern Language and any reference to other sources not in the Modern Language was documented appropriately with reference to web addresses and the dates these were accessed by the candidate.

Centres should encourage candidates to keep any quotes from texts in the Modern Language in their logbook in the Modern Language. The analysis aspect is what candidates are undertaking in English.

Centres are encouraged to include a section in a candidate's log to allow for documentation or recording of any content relating to remediation work.

National 5 and Higher performance: talking (IACCA)

All centres verified in this round used the SQA guidelines for the internally assessed component of course assessment — *National 5/Higher Modern Languages Performance: talking assessment task*.

The quality of the performances was generally very good across both levels and it was clear assessors had guided candidates in selection of their topics to enable them to demonstrate a suitable range of structures and vocabulary appropriate to each level. Centres are reminded that listing nouns either in the presentation or the conversation does not provide scope for candidates to demonstrate detailed (National 5) or detailed and complex (Higher) language.

Centres are reminded that they should check the quality of the audio recording of the performance and that recordings are playable.

Presentation section of the performance

Centres are reminded to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of time the presentation should last. Centres should refer to the *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information* document.

Conversation section of the performance

Generally speaking interlocutors asked a good range of open-ended questions to elicit detailed answers from candidates. Interlocutors were supportive of their candidates and prompted them as appropriate during the conversation. Some candidates were able to correct their own errors although in a few instances the interlocutor might have given candidates more time to clarify or add to their answers where the candidate hesitated.

A few conversations were unnecessarily prolonged and this was not necessarily to the candidates' benefit.

At Higher, centres are reminded that the conversation must lead into at least one other context.

At both National 5 and Higher, some conversations appeared to be somewhat rehearsed with candidates responding to questions at length with what seemed like a short presentation. It was encouraging to hear some candidates give a mixture of extended and shorter answers. It was equally encouraging to hear some candidates use idiomatic phrases such as '*bueno*', '*vamos a ver*', '*pues si/no*' etc. These add to the conversation and allow candidates additional thinking time.

Assessment judgements

Added value unit

The majority of assessment judgements made by assessors in centres were 'accepted' as they were in line with national standards. Centres explained how they made their assessment judgements and gave good feedback to candidates, and this is good practice.

Detailed commentaries about each candidate's performance are very useful for internal and external verification purposes; however, it is acknowledged that this approach can be time-consuming. Therefore, a detailed checklist for each candidate's performance can be just as useful for the verifier and more practical for the centre.

Centres are reminded that where the conversation aspect is concerned (assessment standard 1.3), candidates should be able to use straightforward language with sufficient grammatical accuracy and a reasonable range of vocabulary as appropriate to National 4.

Specialist study

Judgements made by centres verified in this round were 'accepted' since they were in line with national standards.

Centres provided feedback to candidates using the logbook and are encouraged to make this as detailed as is possible. Where the candidate had a detailed discussion with the assessor about aspects of analysis and/or remediation work, centres are encouraged to document the contents of this within the logbook. This adds to evidencing the candidate's ability to meet the analysis of evidence section against assessment standard 1.2.

National 5 and Higher performance: talking (IACCA)

Generally speaking, the quality of candidate performance was high and indeed some performances went beyond the standards expected at National 5 and Higher. Some performances highlighted issues with pronunciation, intonation and grammatical accuracy, as mentioned in previous Spanish key message reports (and in key messages for other languages also).

Most centres applied the marking instructions for the performance in talking accurately and in line with national standards. Where judgements were deemed not to be in line with national standards, centres were either too severe or too lenient in their application of the marking instructions. Centres are encouraged to refer to Understanding Standards materials published on SQA Secure.

In general, centres provided clear commentaries to demonstrate how they made the assessment judgement, which was very useful for the nominee verifiers. This is also useful for internal verifiers and promotes constructive professional dialogue. Centres are encouraged to provide brief information about how they made the assessment judgement for all candidates submitted in the sample. Evidence of 'dialogue' and final decision between the assessor and the internal verifier is very useful.

Sustaining the conversation/performance section

There was some inconsistency in application of the marking instructions and some centres were too severe. Centres are reminded that candidates do not have to ask a question in the conversation to achieve 5 marks for this section. Centres are also reminded that the 5 mark section applies to the conversation as a whole and not to a candidate's ability to answer unpredictable or specific questions.

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Section 3: General comments

Added value unit

For the assessment of talking and listening in the added value unit (assessment standards 1.2 and 1.3), there is no requirement to submit an audio recording of a candidate's work. However, audio recordings allow verifiers to provide more detailed and useful feedback to centres. If no audio recording is submitted, centres must submit a detailed checklist or commentary with some examples of what each candidate says referenced against each assessment standard for the outcome.

It is recommended that centres use a range of open-ended questions to allow candidates to meet assessment standard 1.3. This will allow candidates to demonstrate that they can handle straightforward language and use a reasonable range of vocabulary appropriate to National 4.

Specialist study

Centres can adapt the SQA logbook or create their own, provided this allows the candidate to illustrate how the assessment standards are met. Candidates need to demonstrate clearly that analysis has taken place by providing enough evidence of analysis to meet assessment standard 1.2. This may include a series of ideas for analysis and relevant quotes which relate clearly to the focus. Centres should refer to the two exemplars of completed specialist study units available on the Understanding Standards section of the SQA website under CPD webinars and materials.

National 5 and Higher performance: talking (IACCA)

Centres submitted candidates' performances on CDs and memory sticks. It is recommended that centres check the sound quality of the CDs and MP3/4 files that are submitted for verification.

Centres are reminded they must include a breakdown of the marks (presentation, conversation, sustaining the conversation/performance) for each candidate and the total mark must be entered on the Verification Sample Form.

Most centres submitted evidence of internal verification for units and talking performances and the majority of candidate materials submitted were well-organised, which is helpful for verification purposes. For the National 5/Higher performance: talking most centres also included detail of why candidates were awarded one pegged mark rather than another on the candidate assessment record, and this is good practice.