NQ Verification 2014–15
Key Message Reports

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<th>Verification group name:</th>
<th>Computing Science</th>
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<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>N4 to Higher</td>
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<td>Date published:</td>
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This Report combines all Verification Key Messages for the academic session 2014-15.
Section 1: Verification group information

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<th>Verification group name:</th>
<th>Computing Science</th>
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<td>Verification event/visiting information:</td>
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<td>Date published:</td>
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National Courses/Units verified:
H223 76 Software Design & Development (Higher)
H223 75 Software Design & Development (National 5)
H223 74 Software Design & Development (National 4)

H226 76 Information Systems Design & Development (Higher)
H226 75 Information Systems Design & Development (National 5)
H226 74 Information Systems Design & Development (National 4)

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches
Centres should ensure that they are making use of the most recent Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) and the appropriate Evidence Requirements.

Centres should ensure that if they make changes to the assessments in the UASPs the assessments still cover all the Assessment Standards. The prior verification service is available free of charge. Full details, along with appropriate forms for submission, can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63004.html.
**Assessment judgements**

Most centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard.

It is important that Assessors record on the candidate responses when they decide that an Assessment Standard is achieved. This would help with support for the candidates, internal verification of the candidates’ work and, eventually, the external verification process.

Any observed evidence should be supported, where possible, by screenshots. This is important in areas such as databases and websites.

Centres are encouraged to create their own marking schemes to show acceptable answers. The exemplars provided with the UASPs are not definitive Marking Instructions and centres should not feel constrained by the answers they contain. If an answer meets the Assessment Standard as defined in the ‘Judging evidence’ tables within the UASPs, then it is an acceptable answer.

If a candidate has produced a working program/information system then it is assumed that they have identified and corrected any errors. There is no requirement for the candidate to create errors to satisfy this Outcome.

The candidate responses accepted by some centres for Higher Information Systems Design & Development Assessment Standard 1.1 (Applying contemporary design and development methodologies) was much lower than required when applied to website design. The design should show where the implementation of the required structure and links will take place, eg internal and external hyperlinks and search facility.

The use of internal commentary to cover Assessment Standard 1.2 (Describing the purpose of a range of programming constructs and how they work) in the Software Design and Development Unit is an acceptable assessment approach and can help to reduce the amount of assessment undertaken. It can, however, be difficult for candidates to ensure that they cover the Assessment Standard using this method. Assessors should ensure that candidates understand the Assessment Standard being undertaken using this approach.

If the candidate’s evidence does not satisfy all of the Assessment Standards, the candidate only needs to be re-assessed on the specific part of the Assessment Standard(s) that have not been met.

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**Section 3: General comments**

Many centres have excellent internal verification practices in place, but it can be difficult to see what decision has been agreed by the Assessor and the Internal Verifier. It would be helpful to show the final decision and the reasons why it was reached.
Evidence of internal verification must be provided, as should a detailed description of how this has been carried out by the centre. Cross-marking should be clearly shown in a different colour to the original marking, as should the signature of the cross-marker. Clear guidance exists on SQA’s website regarding internal verification:


However, a number of centres are labelling their evidence as interim, although they have candidate evidence for all the Outcomes for the Unit. Evidence can only be interim if it does not include evidence for all the Assessment Standards within the Unit.
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<thead>
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| Verification event/visiting information | National 4 — Event  
National 5 and Higher — Visiting |
| Date published: | June 2015 |

National Courses/Units verified:
H227 74 Computing Science Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit  
C716 75 Computing Science Assignment (National 5) IACCA  
C716 76 Computing Science Assignment (Higher) IACCA

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches
All centres had used an SQA-produced assignment.

Some centres had created electronic pro formas for candidates to use. This is acceptable as long as the electronic versions are identical to the paper versions.

Assessment judgements
All the assessments that had been verified this year were found to be within the tolerance of the national standards.

National 4
Centres should be careful not to demand more than is required from the candidates in these assignments. It is appreciated that some candidates have perhaps started on the National 5 assignment and then been moved to the equivalent National 4 assignment, but centres should ensure that the candidates’ work has only been evaluated against the appropriate standards.
In the Language Tutors assignment the program testing should be undertaken with the data produced by the database. There is no requirement for candidates to test the program with normal, extreme or exceptional data.

In the Games Review assignment it is enough for the assessor to say that they have observed the links working.

It should be remembered that the report should reflect the task as a whole, so the suggestions on how it could be improved should relate to both the information system and program parts of the task.

**National 5**

**Stage 1 Analysis**
The written analysis should not simply comprise of a direct copy of the task supplied but should be in the candidate’s own words.

**Stage 2(b)(i) Building a solution (program): design and development**
Many candidates did not create a design of the user interface. An annotated sketch is more than adequate. Where the interface is mainly text based then the screen prompts and layout should be indicated.

**Stage 2(b)(ii) Building a solution (program): testing and refinement**
The tests conducted and samples outputted should match the data listed in the test table.

Test tables would benefit if each test run were numbered to match the corresponding output.

**Stage 3 Reporting on the solution**
The legal or security implication, which should be clearly identified, should be in context rather than generic.

**Higher**
There was some misunderstanding by some assessors as to what was required in the marking scheme for candidates to have complete evidence. This will be addressed by changes made to the marking scheme for next year.

**Section 3: General comments**
It was good to see that the vast majority of centres had used the marking scheme supplied with the assignments and had not created their own micro-marking schemes.

Assessors should feel free to add comments on candidates’ completed assignments to explain how they arrived at their decisions on the banding. This
not only helps the assessor come to their decision but is helpful to both the internal and external verifier.

The comments made by the assessors regarding the reasoning for their marks was invaluable to the verification process.

The majority of centres have a good internal verification process in place. Guidance on internal verification can be obtained from www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.