NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	ESOL
Levels	N3 to N5
Date published:	July 2014

This Report combines all Verification Key Messages for the academic session 2013-14.

NQ Verification 2013–14
Key Messages Round 1

01 ## Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Verification event	Event
Date published:	January 2014

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

National 3 ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 73	National 4 ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 74 ESOL Assignment Added Value Unit H24N 74	National 5 ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 75

02 ## Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment:

♦ Most centres had made appropriate and relevant use of Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) and the 'Judging evidence' tables in their assessment approaches.

♦ A number of centres had produced or adapted the UASPs to suit the needs of their candidates and provided information on judging evidence clearly linking the assessment/task to the Assessment Standards.

♦ For the National 4 Added Value ESOL assignment, video recordings of candidate presentations and the question and answer session supported the assessment process.

♦ For Outcome 4, audio recordings of conversations, where candidates were clearly identifiable, also supported the assessment process.

- The use of a drafting process for Outcome 2, writing, is good practice and can provide appropriate support and feedback to candidates on meeting the Assessment Standards and achieving the Outcome.

- Some centres made use of or adapted the candidate assessment record in the UASPs and provided a clear indication of the basis on which the assessment judgement was made.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment:

- When submitting evidence that has been gathered during the learning process, each piece of candidate evidence should clearly identify which Outcome and Assessment Standards it is linked to, along with the assessor judgement of pass/fail.

- For the National 4 Added Value Unit ESOL assignment, candidates should complete the information asked for in the assessment and assessors should ensure that candidates produce evidence to meet Assessment Standard 1.1 *Selecting relevant information from straightforward texts in English.* Sources must be referred to during the presentation by the candidate or on visual material used by the candidate.

- For the National 4 Added Value Unit ESOL assignment, assessors should consider preparation of questions for Assessment Standard 1.3 *Responding orally in English to oral questions relevant to the topic.* It is ideal if other candidates or peers can be involved in asking questions but, if the assessor is to take part, in order to ensure that the candidate has met the Assessment Standard, questions should be specific to the topic of the presentation and not disadvantage any candidate.

- For Outcome 2, writing, the drafting process can support candidates by providing feedback. This should first and foremost be based on their progress towards achieving each of the Assessment Standards and care should be taken not to provide specific advice on corrections to be made between drafts.

- When centres are producing, adapting or making use of existing materials for assessment, these materials must demonstrate clearly the basis on which evidence will be judged in relation to the Assessment Standards. A 'Judging evidence' table or equivalent document should be submitted with the evidence for verification.

- Centres are strongly advised to make use of the SQA Prior Verification Service for centre-produced assessments or when there are significant changes to UASPs. Information can be found at http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63004.html

Assessment judgements

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements:

- Assessor use of the candidate assessment record to detail how the judgement had been made and to give feedback to candidates on progress against the Assessment Standards.

- Most assessors were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard and a few provided evidence of internal verification supporting this.

- Most centres were correctly entering candidates for the appropriate level and candidates were ready to be assessed.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements:

- Some centres did not submit candidate assessment records or an equivalent document and it was not possible to easily determine how the assessment judgement had been made against the standards, particularly for Outcomes 2 & 4.

- If any candidate evidence or the assessment judgement requires clarification, this must be noted on the candidate assessment record.

- In a few cases, assessor comments on the candidate assessment record did not reflect the content of the candidate evidence. For example, for writing, assessor comments such as 'good use of structure and linking devices', 'layout appropriate', etc, when there was little evidence of this in the candidate writing.

- When using marks for Outcome 1 or 3 refer to the Judging evidence table to ensure that all the Assessment Standards have also been met.

- There was good practice evident in the use of the drafting process for Outcome 2. However, the level of support for all candidates must be appropriate and there can be too much specific direction on errors to be corrected, rather than feedback with reference to the Assessment Standards. There were examples of candidates who had met the standards but had re-drafted again twice in response to corrections from the assessor. There were also examples of candidates who had not been given sufficient feedback on the first draft to enable them to meet the standards in following drafts. For either naturally occurring evidence or summative assessment, assessors should identify how much correction, if any, is required for the candidate to meet the Assessment Standards for that level.

03 Section 3: General comments

Centres did not submit much evidence for Outcome 3, listening, in this round of external verification. Recordings for the listening assessments in the UASPs will be available on the secure pages along with the UASPs in the near future.

Centres should submit the following evidence for external verification:

- Evidence of the centre's internal quality assurance processes

- Details entered on the verification sample form and candidate evidence flyleaf, and on the centre's candidate assessment record or equivalent

- The assessment or other stimulus that generated the judged candidate evidence

♦ The candidate's evidence with the assessment judgements

Before submitting evidence for external verification, centres should ensure that they have referred to the guidance in the document 'Evidence required for external verification of Units (including Added Value Units) at verification events'

There was evidence of some centres having carried out internal verification effectively. However, a number of the centres verified had not submitted evidence of internal quality assurance processes. Internal verification is the means by which centres can fully support assessors and the internal assessment process. For further information about internal verification go to http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46174.html

NQ Verification 2013–14
Key Messages Round 2

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**
Verification Event	**Event**
Date published:	**March 2014**

National Courses/Units verified:

National 3	National 4	National 5
ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 73	ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 74	ESOL for Everyday Life H24H 75
	ESOL in Context H24L 74	ESOL in Context H24H 75
	Added Value Unit: ESOL Assignment H24N 74	

This Key Messages Report should be read in conjunction with the Key Messages from Round 1. Apart from the general comments section, these have not been repeated here but this report may contain additional information on points covered in the Round 1 report.

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment:

♦ For the Added Value Unit ESOL Assignment one centre had effectively used assessment material for a Unit in another subject area to produce evidence to match all the Assessment Standards for the Added Value Unit. The centre had shown evidence of thorough preparation work prior to the presentation to meet Assessment Standard 1.1. An assessor checklist had detailed commentary that provided useful and effective feedback to candidates by two different assessors and demonstrated clearly the basis on which assessment judgements had been made.

♦ One centre had adapted the Unit assessment support packs to improve presentation and layout, adding interesting visuals and a web link relevant to the topic, which could be followed-up after the assessment. These improvements did not impact in any way on the actual assessment.

♦ Adaptation of a speaking and listening assessment from a Unit assessment support pack included the use of a structured non-assessed introduction. This approach benefitted the candidates by providing an opportunity for candidates to feel comfortable prior to the actual assessment.

♦ A number of centres had produced assessments which related to a variety of learning contexts relevant to the candidates. In most cases these were supported by relevant information on judging evidence. One centre had personalised a speaking assessment to reflect the candidate's cultural heritage. One of these centres had submitted the materials for prior verification.

♦ Where re-assessment had been necessary, some centres had focused only on the Assessment Standards still to be achieved. This avoided over-assessment of candidates.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment:

♦ Some centres had not submitted all the necessary materials for centre-produced assessments. Centres must submit the assessment/task that has generated the candidate evidence along with a judging evidence table or similar document which shows how the assessment judgements will be made against the Assessment Standards. Ideally, centre-produced assessments and supporting information should be sent to SQA for prior verification.

♦ Some centres had submitted materials that were not required and it was difficult or not possible to identify the materials and candidate evidence that

related to assessment. All assessments and supporting information must be clearly identified and candidate evidence must have a clear judgement of pass or fail along with an accompanying candidate assessment record with comments, where appropriate.

♦ Some centres were over-assessing candidates by:

— requiring a separate piece of evidence for each Assessment Standard when one of piece of evidence could demonstrate that all the Assessment Standards had been met
— re-assessing candidates for writing on a different task, rather than providing feedback related to the Assessment Standards and allowing redrafting of the original text
— re-assessing candidates on all Assessment Standards when the candidate had met some of them and it was only necessary to re-assess one of the Assessment Standards

Assessment judgements

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements:

♦ Many centres had made effective use of the candidate assessment record providing useful feedback for the candidates which clearly related to the Assessment Standards. One centre had added the wording of each Assessment Standard to their candidate assessment records. This approach supports the candidate, assessor and both internal and External Verifiers. The comments on these candidate assessment records were not only clear, but positive, constructive and relevant to the Assessment Standards.

♦ Some assessors made very good use of the drafting process in Outcome 2 and this was clearly documented. The best examples of this demonstrated consistency for all candidates and ensured candidates were judged against the Assessment Standards. At one centre the evidence produced by the candidates for Outcome 2, writing, was creative, colourful and realistic.

♦ Assessors had mapped Assessment Standards to questions on each assessment for Outcome 1, reading, and Outcome 3, listening, making clear how judgements had been arrived at.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements:

♦ For speaking assessments, Outcome 4, and for the presentation and question and answer part of the Added Value Unit, Assessment Standards 1.2 and 1.3, centres must submit one of, or a combination of, the following to demonstrate how the assessment judgement has been made:

— An audio or video recording
— A detailed assessment checklist

— Detailed observation notes

♦ Centre-devised candidate assessment records should provide space for each of the Assessment Standards to be addressed separately, especially for recording instances of candidates who need to be re-assessed.

♦ A number of centres were not using the information in the judging evidence tables to support judgements of pass or fail in Outcome 1, reading and Outcome 3, listening. Centres must ensure that candidates have met all of the Assessment Standards but should also make a holistic judgement in relation to achievement of each Assessment Standard. It is not necessary for all the responses against each Assessment Standard to be correct but assessors should award a pass if the candidate has provided sufficient evidence.

♦ For Outcome 2, writing, some centres had submitted only the final version of the candidate evidence. In some cases this had no errors at levels where errors could still be expected in examples of a pass. This made it extremely difficult to judge how much support the candidate had received in producing the final version. It is advisable to submit any first or, if necessary, second drafts along with the final version in order for verification to establish that appropriate levels of support have been given to the candidates.

♦ Some centres could make more effective use of candidate assessment records, ensuring that, where appropriate, relevant comments are made on how the evidence was judged in relation to the Assessment Standards.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

The following comments relate to issues that are recurring and have been addressed in the Key messages for Round 1.

Centres should submit the following evidence for external verification:

♦ Evidence of the centre's internal quality assurance processes

♦ Details entered on the verification sample form and candidate evidence flyleaf, and on the centre's candidate assessment record or equivalent

♦ The assessment or other stimulus that generated the judged candidate evidence

♦ The candidate's evidence with the assessment judgements

Before submitting evidence for external verification, centres should ensure that they have referred to the guidance in the document 'Evidence required for external verification of Units (including Added Value Units) at verification events'.

There was evidence of some centres having carried out internal verification effectively. However, a number of the centres verified had not submitted evidence of internal quality assurance processes. Internal verification is the means by which centres can fully support assessors and the internal assessment process.

For further information about internal verification go to
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46174.html

NQ Verification 2013–14 Key Messages Round 3

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2014

National Courses/Units verified:

National 4

Added Value Unit: ESOL Assignment H24N 74

National 5

Internally Assessed Component of Course Assessment: ESOL Performance — Speaking and Listening C727 75

This Key Messages report should be read in conjunction with the Key Messages reports from Round 1 and Round 2. These have not been repeated here but this report may contain additional information on points covered in the Round 1 and Round 2 reports for the Added Value Unit: ESOL Assignment.

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches: National 4 Added Value Unit: ESOL Assignment

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment:

♦ All centres had used the mandatory AVU Unit assessment support pack (UASP).

♦ The majority of centres had used the AVU UASP effectively. Some centres had clearly applied the advice on personalisation and choice and the topic agreed with the assessor incorporated the interests of the candidate and the requirements of the assignment.

♦ The use of a cross-curricular approach to assessment is good practice, especially the support this lends to the research activities required for Assessment Standard 1.1. There were examples of assignments from a range of subjects in schools.

♦ Some centres supplied good evidence of research and note-taking skills for Assessment Standard 1.1 by providing detailed notes and plans written by candidates. Copies of PowerPoint slides were also helpful.

♦ There was evidence of good preparation for the presentation, Assessment Standard 1.2, and candidates appeared relaxed and familiar with being recorded, which supported the approach to the assessment. Most video recordings submitted were of good quality and clearly showed the candidate's ability to present the information.

♦ Some centres prepared relevant, open-ended questions which supported the candidates' performances, allowing them to show how they met Assessment Standard 1.3. This was most effective when other candidates/audiences participated in this stage of the assessment.

♦ Clear introductions provided by assessors on recordings, outlining the task, level, centre and candidate's name, supported verification.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment:

♦ Centres should be aware of the suggested timing on the assignment task sheet regarding Assessment Standards 1.2, the presentation and 1.3, responding to questions on the topic. It is not necessary to be precise with this but candidates should demonstrate an awareness so that the presentation stage is neither too long nor too short. The assessor should be the guide in terms of the time spent on questions and not exceed the time once the candidate has met the Assessment Standard. Short, timed practice presentations, as part of learning and teaching would support this.

Assessment judgements: National 4 Added Value Unit: ESOL Assignment

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements:

♦ Assessment judgements were in line with national standards and assessors demonstrated that they had made good use of information on judging evidence.

♦ Some centres had made detailed comments on the assessment checklist to show how judgements had been made and to give clear and relevant feedback to candidates on meeting the Assessment Standards.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements:

♦ There were a number of examples of candidate evidence which exceeded the standard for National 4. This in itself is not an issue as long as the centre demonstrates an understanding of what meets the national standard and what does not.

Assessment approaches: National 5 Internally Assessed Component of the Course Assessment (IACCA):

ESOL Performance — Speaking and Listening

Examples of good practice in approaches to assessment:

♦ The majority of centres had used a National 5 speaking task from a UASP.

♦ In this first year of a combined assessment for speaking and listening, centres had clearly taken this into account and candidates showed an awareness of the listening aspect of the assessment. The Detailed Marking Instructions had clearly been applied to both listening and speaking.

♦ It was clear that some candidates had prepared very well for the task and this was evidenced particularly through their competencies in initiating, turn-taking and focus on tasks.

♦ The assessment can now be carried out in small groups as well as pairs and there was a fine example of how a group discussion with three candidates can work to the benefit of all involved. Candidates were supportive of each other and listened and responded well to the points made, taking an interest in what others had to say.

♦ There were some good examples of video recordings of conversations submitted which supported the verification process.

♦ There was evidence of good practice in providing written feedback on marks allocated for candidates on their assessment records.

Guidance for centres on approaches to assessment:

♦ In addition to centres using speaking tasks from the UASPs, topics can be chosen by the centre to provide further personalisation and choice. When writing the brief for candidates for the assessment task, care should be taken to ensure that there is an appropriate level of challenge for National 5. It should allow candidates to fully demonstrate their English language skills, particularly in relation to:

— organisation, development and communication of ideas/opinions
— range of general and specialised vocabulary
— use of detailed structures to communicate

- Centres must submit one clearly labelled recording for each candidate in order for recordings and candidates to be easily matched.

- There should be a clear introduction to each recording which identifies the centre, level, task, candidate's name and the date.

- If the interlocutor is not another candidate or peer, care should be taken to ensure the conversation is not dominated or conducted as an interview by the interlocutor. If this happens, it does not allow the candidate to fully demonstrate their English language skills particularly in relation to the ability to initiate and show general sensitivity to the norms of turn-taking.

- Centres should always check that recordings are on the CD/DVD/pen drive and are audible before submitting to SQA for verification.

- Centres should be aware of the suggested timing in the ESOL performance assessment task:

   — Take part in the conversation/discussion for 5–6 minutes or a little longer if there are more than two people in the group
   — Timed practice conversations/discussions, as part of learning and teaching would support this

Assessment judgements: National 5 Internally Assessed Component of the Course Assessment (IACCA):

ESOL Performance — Speaking and Listening

Examples of good practice in assessment judgements:

- Overall, the marks allocated were in line with national standards and assessors had made good use of the Detailed Marking Instructions to determine marks for both listening and speaking.

- Centres had fully taken account of the Detailed Marking Instructions for listening and allocated the 5 marks available accurately to differentiate candidate performance.

- Some centres had used and included an annotated/highlighted copy of the Detailed Marking Instructions to show how the marks were allocated to each candidate. This was in addition to the candidate assessment record. The combination of the two approaches to recording the marking process proved excellent practice and provided verifiers with clear information.

Guidance for centres on assessment judgements:

- In a few cases there was little differentiation of the marks in the top band, ie 25–22, where candidates performed well. Marks at the top of this band can be allocated where candidate performance justifies this.

♦ In a few cases more detailed comments on the candidate assessment record would have shown more clearly the basis on which the marks had been allocated.

03 ► Section 3: General comments

There was evidence of good practice in carrying out and recording internal verification procedures. Where this was the case, the sample was clearly identified and there were comments made by the internal verifier that for N5 IACCAs related directly to the Detailed Marking Instructions and for the N4 AVU related to the Assessment Standards.

The majority of centres had made good use of the checklists of evidence to be submitted and all the required documentation had been included.

A few centres had submitted the wrong evidence for verification, eg the N4 AVU when the N5 IACCA had been requested and, *vice-versa*, evidence for the Everyday Life Unit when the N4 AVU had been requested. Please ensure that you submit the evidence requested.