



# **NQ Verification 2013–14**

## **Key Message Reports**

<b>Verification group name:</b>	German
<b>Levels</b>	N4 and N5
<b>Date published:</b>	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:	Modern Languages: German
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	January 2014

#### National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

##### **C734 74 National 4**

H27R 74 Understanding Language

H27S 74 Using Language

H27T 74 Assignment — Added Value Unit

##### **C734 75 National 5**

H27R 75 Understanding Language

H27S 75 Using Language

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Most centres used Unit assessment support materials or prior verified materials.

It is good practice to include one copy of each assessment instrument used and its judging evidence table.

If a Unit assessment support pack has been adapted, centres should include the modified assessment instrument and the corresponding, modified judging evidence tables.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, while it is good practice to tick/annotate/comment on correct pieces of information, it is suggested that centres apply judging evidence holistically and refrain from using marks.

For assessment of Listening, where centres have developed candidate answer sheets for use with Unit assessment support packs, they must be careful not to add a title in English which nullifies questions such as, 'What is the speaker talking about?' This invalidates the assessment approach, as it does not allow candidates to meet Assessment Standard 2.1.

For assessment of Talking, it is worth noting that it rarely benefits candidates when recommended time limits are exceeded.

For assessment of Talking in National 4 Assignment (Added Value Unit), at the end of the presentation, the performance of some candidates at Assessment Standard 1.4 showed that simple language, (questions and answers), used accurately is very effective at meeting the Assessment Standard.

For assessment of Reading in National 4 Assignment (Added Value Unit), it is worth noting that an overall purpose question is not required, unless the centre wishes the assessment to be dual purpose, ie also cover Reading for the Understanding Language Unit. Candidates should only be assessed in Reading at Assessment Standard 1.1 for the Added Value Unit and not at Assessment Standards that apply to other Units.

For assessment of Reading in National 4 Assignment (Added Value Unit), centres should ensure texts are of a reasonable length, with a reasonable ratio of supported/unsupported questions, (broadly similar to Unit assessment support pack exemplification), and that candidates demonstrate understanding of two texts.

Centres should ensure they refer to the correct judging evidence tables when assessing the National 4 Assignment (Added Value Unit). Some centres had referred to the judging evidence tables for other Units. Some centres had amended the judging evidence table from the Unit assessment support pack to match their own Added Value Unit. This is good practice and was helpful to the verification process.

## **Assessment judgements**

Assessors should use professional judgement and a holistic approach in deciding whether candidates have achieved the Assessment Standards.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, centres should be aware that candidates must get the overall purpose question correct if they are to meet Assessment Standard 1.1 and pass the assessment overall. However, if the candidate gets this wrong, it is acceptable for the assessor to re-assess just this aspect of the assessment orally with the candidate. This should be a discussion,

and not just an opportunity to tick a different box. If the assessor is satisfied that the candidate has met Assessment Standard 1.1 during this conversation, it is acceptable to note this on the candidate's script and assessment records. If the assessor feels the candidate has yet to meet Assessment Standard 1.1, the candidate should be re-assessed at a later date using a different instrument of assessment.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, candidates do not have to answer every question correctly as they could demonstrate achievement of the Assessment Standards across questions.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, it is advisable to be holistic in interpreting judging evidence tables regarding which questions relate to which Assessment Standards. While the overall purpose question clearly relates only to Assessment Standard 1.1/2.1, it is worth noting that some other questions may be viewed as relating to both Assessment Standards 1.1/2.1 and 1.2/2.2. Therefore, centres should look at all a candidate's answers, when reaching assessment judgements. As stated above, candidates could demonstrate achievement of the Assessment Standards across questions.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, some centres were overly cautious in their interpretation of what fitted Assessment Standard 1.2/2.2, and penalised candidates.

03

## **Section 3: General comments**

All Units to be verified should appear on the Verification Sample Form.

Some centres provided a list of contents to assist Verifiers in understanding what had been submitted. This is good practice and is helpful to the verification process.

It is good practice for all the evidence for each candidate to be submitted together.

It is good practice to submit individual candidate assessment records which have been completed in ways which clearly convey assessors' decisions/judgements and the reasons for these.

Centres should ensure they make an overall assessment judgement for each Unit on the Verification Sample Form which matches the candidate assessment records — for example, Interim or Complete, and then Pass or Fail.

For assessment of Talking, centres should include detailed transcripts or assessor commentaries if no audio recording is being submitted. The centre's evaluation comments are required, but verification cannot proceed without comprehensive evidence detailing what candidates actually said, (as opposed to what they had prepared to say).

Some centres have developed answer papers for candidates by spacing out questions as originally formatted in the Unit assessment support packs. This is good practice and supports candidates to achieve their potential.

It is difficult to verify consistency of assessment judgements when evidence is submitted for fewer than three candidates in each skill, even though the centre is presenting more candidates.

All centres should provide evidence of internal verification. Some centres provided evidence of detailed internal verification processes. This is good practice.



# NQ Verification 2013–14

## Key Messages Round 2

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Languages: German
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2014

#### National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

##### **C734 74 National 4**

H27R 74 Understanding Language  
H27S 74 Using Language  
H27T 74 Assignment — Added Value Unit

##### **C734 75 National 5**

H27R 75 Understanding Language  
H27S 75 Using Language

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Most centres used Unit assessment support packages or prior verified materials.

If a Unit assessment support package has been adapted, the centre should include the modified assessment instrument and the corresponding, modified judging evidence table.

If a centre has used a prior verified assessment, the centre should include the assessment instrument and the corresponding judging evidence table.

It is good practice to include one copy of the assessment instrument and the judging evidence table used.

Where centres have developed their own assessments, they should refer to the relevant Unit assessment support packages for guidance regarding the length, level of language and types of questioning which constitute a valid assessment approach.

Some centres have developed bi-level assessments for Talking and/or Writing for use with bi-level classes. This is good practice. Centres should ensure there is a separate judging evidence table for each level. This ensures candidates, assessors and verifiers are clear regarding the differences between what is expected for each level. Both judging evidence tables should be included in the verification sample. It is good practice if there is also a separate assessment instrument for each level, detailing exactly what candidates must say/write at each level, as this again clarifies the different demands of the levels for all concerned.

For assessment of Talking, it is worth noting that it rarely benefits candidates when recommended time limits are exceeded.

For assessment of Talking in National 4 Assignment (Added Value Unit), at the end of the presentation, the performance of some candidates at Assessment Standard 1.4 showed that simple language, (questions and answers), used accurately is very effective at meeting the Assessment Standard.

For assessment of Talking in National 4 Assignment (AVU), at the end of the presentation, some centres asked candidates a larger number of questions than is required to allow candidates to meet Assessment Standard 1.4. This can disadvantage candidates.

For assessment of Talking in National 4 Assignment (AVU), at the end of the presentation, centres should try to ask open-ended questions, in order to support candidates in producing responses which are appropriate for the level. For example, where candidates were asked questions which elicited responses containing verbs, they met Assessment Standard 1.4 effectively.

For assessment of Reading in National 4 Assignment (AVU), it is worth noting that an overall purpose question is not required, unless the centre wishes the assessment to be dual purpose, ie also cover Reading for the Understanding Language Unit. Candidates should only be assessed in Reading at Assessment Standard 1.1 for AVU and not at Assessment Standards which apply to other Units.

For assessment of Reading in National 4 Assignment (AVU), centres should ensure texts are of a reasonable length, with a reasonable ratio of supported/unsupported questions (broadly similar to the Unit assessment support

package exemplification), and that candidates demonstrate understanding of two texts.

For assessment of Reading in National 4 Assignment (AVU), centres should ensure they include an opportunity for candidates to meet Assessment Standard 1.2.

Centres should ensure they refer to the correct judging evidence table when assessing the National 4 Assignment (AVU). Some centres had referred to the judging evidence table for other Units. Some centres had amended the judging evidence table from the Unit assessment support package to match their own AVU. This is good practice and was helpful to the verification process.

## **Assessment judgements**

For assessment of Reading and Listening, while it is good practice to tick/annotate/comment on correct pieces of information, it is suggested that centres apply judging evidence globally and refrain from using marks.

Assessors should use professional judgement and a holistic approach in deciding whether candidates have achieved the Assessment Standards.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, centres should be aware that candidates must get the overall purpose question correct if they are to meet Assessment Standard 1.1 and pass the assessment overall. However, if the candidate gets this wrong, it is acceptable for the assessor to re-assess just this aspect of the assessment orally with the candidate. This should be a discussion, and not just an opportunity to tick a different box. If the assessor is satisfied that the candidate has met Assessment Standard 1.1 during this conversation, it is acceptable to note this on the candidate's script and assessment records. If the assessor feels the candidate has yet to meet Assessment Standard 1.1, the candidate should be re-assessed at a later date using a different instrument of assessment.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, candidates do not have to answer every question correctly as they could demonstrate achievement of the Assessment Standards across questions.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, it is advisable to be holistic in interpreting judging evidence tables regarding which questions relate to which Assessment Standards. While the overall purpose question clearly relates only to Assessment Standard 1.1/2.1, it is worth noting that some other questions may be viewed as relating to both Assessment Standards 1.1/2.1 and 1.2/2.2. Therefore, centres should look at all a candidate's answers, when reaching assessment judgements. As stated above, candidates could demonstrate achievement of the Assessment Standards across questions.

For assessment of Reading and Listening, some centres were overly cautious in their interpretation of what fitted Assessment Standard 1.2/2.2, and penalised candidates.

For assessment of Writing, assessors should annotate scripts in some way to enable verifiers to understand assessment judgements. For example, centres could tick accurate use of phrases which constitute good range of structure/vocabulary for the level, and could underline errors.

03

## **Section 3: General comments**

Evidence for only one Unit should be submitted by centres for each level.

All Units to be verified should appear on the Verification Sample Form.

Information regarding whether evidence is Complete/Interim and whether the centre judges it to demonstrate Pass/Fail should match on the Verification Sample Form, Candidate Assessment Records and Evidence Flyleaf.

Some centres provided a list of contents to assist verifiers in understanding what had been submitted. This is good practice and is helpful to the verification process.

It is good practice to submit individual Candidate Assessment Records which have been completed in ways which clearly convey assessors' decisions/judgements and the reasons for these.

For assessment of Talking, centres should include detailed checklists with examples of what the candidate has said, preferably with reference to the grammar grid, if no audio recording is being submitted. The centre's evaluation comments on Candidate Assessment Records are helpful, but verification cannot proceed without comprehensive evidence detailing what candidates actually said, (as opposed to what they had prepared to say). Lack of information of this sort makes it more difficult for verifiers to evaluate the centre's assessment judgement.

For assessment of Talking in the Using Language Unit, there was evidence from only a small number of centres of candidates asking the assessor questions, as exemplified in the Unit assessment support packages.

Some centres have developed answer papers for Reading and/or Listening for candidates by spacing out questions as originally formatted in Unit assessment support package. This is good practice and supports candidates to achieve their potential.

All centres should provide evidence of internal verification. Some centres provided evidence of detailed internal verification processes. This is good

practice and often flagged up and resolved issues which might have otherwise caused problems.

Where centres had modified the published judging evidence table, but this was not included in the verification sample, it made verification of the centres' assessment judgement difficult.

Overall, verifiers commented positively on the organisation and presentation of evidence by centres in verification samples at Round 2.



# NQ Verification 2013–14

## Key Messages Round 3

01

### Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	German
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2014

#### National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

National 5 German performance: talking (C734 75)

02

### Section 2: Comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

Almost all centres had used the SQA National 5 Course assessment task appropriately to assess candidates.

For the small number of centres where this was not the case, this hindered candidates from accessing upper pegged marks. Interlocutors should respond to candidates' responses as they arise. For example, interlocutors should ask additional questions when candidates' responses are shorter than expected at National 5. On the other hand, where candidates give extended answers, interlocutors should adjust the number of questions accordingly, as unnecessarily prolonged conversations rarely benefit candidates.

Appendix 1: Information for assessors on page 8 of *Modern Languages Performance: talking*, *General assessment information* on SQA's website states that, 'Conversation involves direct interaction, which brings an amount of unpredictability. Part of the development of talking skills is the development of strategies to cope with the unexpected.' While it is good practice for centres to

prepare candidates for the performance, the conversation section should be a genuine interaction between candidate and interlocutor. Centres should encourage candidates to go beyond the use of learned material, where possible.

Where interlocutors asked a good range of open-ended questions, this provided greater scope for candidates to effectively use detailed language to express a wide range of ideas and opinions. Where more closed questions on factual topics were asked, candidates seldom gave responses which contained vocabulary and structures in line with the 'Very good' or 'Good' categories. Centres are encouraged to refer to the Productive Grammar Grid for National 5 to inform their choice of questions to candidates.

Centres had employed a range of techniques to enhance the natural element in the conversation. For example, there was an obvious link between the topics discussed/questions asked to allow for a more natural sounding performance all round; candidates asked for repetition or clarification using German; candidates made use of typical exchange techniques such as sounds, pause words/phrases and idiomatic phrases; questions asked by the candidate to the interlocutor followed on naturally from their presentation/own responses. While centres are to be commended for encouraging candidates to ask the interlocutor questions, these should arise naturally from the interaction.

It would appear that some candidates had been guided by the centre in their choice of presentation topic. While this is understandable where there are large numbers of candidates, centres are encouraged to provide candidates with every opportunity for personalisation and choice.

## **Assessment judgements**

Almost all centres had made reliable assessment judgements in relation to the marking instructions.

For the small number of the centres where this was not the case, there was a tendency to be over-generous in the application of the talking performance marking instructions in the conversation section. Where centres were over-generous, the pegged marks allocated were called into question by: the level of grammatical accuracy; the ability to sustain the performance; a limited range of detailed structures and/or a limited range of structures used to express ideas and opinions.

Most centres provided Candidate Assessment Records with commentary against the marks awarded for each section of the talking performance. Where centres had explained why they had opted for one pegged mark over another for each section, this greatly assisted the verification process.

## Section 3: General comments

Centres should refer closely to *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information* on SQA's website, the assessment task for National 5 Modern Languages performance from SQA's secure website, and also to the Productive Grammar Grid for National 5 Modern Languages when preparing candidates for this assessment task.

Some centres had created a useful document which combined the marking instructions for the SQA National 5 performance: talking assessment task and Candidate Assessment Records, which they had completed for each candidate in the verification sample. This was very effective at referencing candidate performance section by section against the pegged marks. This is good practice and assisted the verification process.

All centres should provide evidence of internal verification. Some centres provided evidence of detailed internal verification processes. This is good practice and often flagged-up and resolved issues which might have otherwise caused problems.

Verifiers commented positively on the performance of candidates in the SQA National 5 German performance: talking assessment task. There was evidence that the vast majority of candidates dealt with at verification had been presented appropriately for this level.

Overall, verifiers also commented positively on the organisation and presentation of evidence by centres in verification samples at Round 3.