NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	Graphic Communication
Levels	N4 and 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:	Graphic Communication
Verification event	Event
Date published:	January 2014

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

National 4 H27V 74: 2D Graphic Communication
National 4 H27W 74: 3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication
National 5 H27V 75: 2D Graphic Communication
National 5 H27W 75: 3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The verification team encountered a wide range of assessment approaches, including SQA-devised Unit assessment support packs (UASPs), modified UASPs and centre-devised assessments.

Centres that have devised their own assessments should include details describing how they make assessment judgements. Those that did not include this crucial piece of assessment evidence were informed of the need to rectify this the next time they are verified.

Failing to submit the stimulus of the assessment can make it difficult or even impossible to validate a centre's approach to assessment at verification. This part of the verification sample can be as straightforward as including the brief, instruction or question in the pack. The stimulus is a crucial item for verification to proceed, as it allows the verification team to ensure the assessment approach is valid for the level.

Centres are advised that the Verification Sample Form must be completed correctly. If no assessment decision is recorded, it is likely that no verification will

be able to take place and the sample will be returned to the centre for action and re-submission. Centres are reminded that entering a 'Pass' or 'Fail' on the forms does not indicate that a candidate has failed the Course — this is recording whether the candidate has passed or failed the Assessment Standards you have recorded within your sample.

There were a number of centres that indicated that evidence had been presented verbally. Whilst verbal evidence is acceptable, the centre is responsible for ensuring this evidence can be verified, both internally and externally. This may be in the form of a written transcript. In all instances, some form of hardcopy is the most efficient evidence to verify.

Assessment judgements

There was some evidence submitted for National 4 that would meet the appropriate Assessment Standard at National 5. Centres are reminded that it is important that candidates are presented at the correct level and that failing to do so may be unnecessarily withholding candidate progress.

Centres must take care to ensure that when they make assessment judgements they do so without confusing Assessment Standards from different Units.

For example:

In the 2D Unit, Assessment Standard 3.1 refers to **creating** a layout or display; while in the 3D Unit, Assessment Standard 3.1 deals with the **planning** of a layout or display. Confusing the two standards may result in difficulty for your candidates and difficulty at verification.

In the 2D Unit, a number of centres confused Assessment Standard 1.1 with Assessment Standard 1.2, assessing drawings as sketches.

Centres must ensure that they do not confuse sketches for drawings in either Unit.

Similarly, Assessment Standard 1.5 of the 2D Unit has been confused with Assessment Standard 1.4 of the 3D and Pictorial Unit. Centres have assessed 3D CAD commands, such as 'Extrude' and 'Revolve' as 2D commands.

Sample composition

Guidelines to centres suggest that they should be compiling a verification sample, from individual candidates, using work from either a single Unit or from both Units. However, centres have been submitting samples for individual candidates that contain work at both Units and at both levels (N4 and N5). Often evidence is assessed within a single Unit, but at both levels. This practice confuses the issue at verification. Centres are advised that, for individual candidates, work should be submitted at one level only.

Centres are reminded that electronic submissions are currently not acceptable for verification and all evidence must be provided in a hardcopy format.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Approaches to learning

The verification event saw a variety of assessment work covering the full spectrum of skills, knowledge and production methods. It was evident however, that many centres are leaning towards evidence drawings (drawing board work) when compiling their sample for verification. Many centres submitted several examples of drawing board work to cover only one Assessment Standard — a great deal of teaching and learning time is being dedicated to aspects of the Course that are not assessed to the same extent as the previous Graphic Communication Courses.

It is worth taking note that, while drawing board skills can be important in developing an understanding of projection methods and spatial awareness, in Course assessment terms the experience that candidates get in this area is of limited benefit. Over-reliance on developing drawing board skills is not likely to prepare candidates for a significant portion of the content of the Course assignment and the Course exam.

Centres are advised that designing creative DTP layouts using design elements and principles and developing problem solving skills on 3D CAD software are becoming the staples of our approach to learning in Graphic Communication. Combining these newer aspects of learning with some (carefully chosen) drawing board work is likely to be of more benefit to candidates in the long run.

Internal verification

Internal verification is a key part of quality assuring your internal assessments. This aspect of quality assurance also plays an important role during verification in helping to confirm a centre's approach to assessment. An effective internal verification process can highlight issues within the centre, which can then be rectified helping to ensure that a centre's assessment judgements are valid and reliable.

NQ Verification 2013–14 Key Messages Round 2

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Graphic Communication
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2014

National Courses/Units verified:

National 4 H27V 74:   2D Graphic Communication
National 4 H27W 74:   3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication
National 5 H27V 75:   2D Graphic Communication
National 5 H27W 75:   3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Centres have continued to use a range of assessment approaches, with a large proportion choosing to modify an SQA Unit assessment support pack. These modifications appear to be designed to clarify and improve the accessibility of Unit assessment support pack assessments for candidates. In the majority of cases, centres had maintained the challenge of the Unit assessment support pack; this ensured the approach to assessment was still valid. Centres are allowed to modify Unit assessment support packs to enable their candidates to better access the assessment, as long as the rigour or challenge of the task is not altered. In some cases, centres had taken the opportunity to allow candidates to generate evidence that fulfils other Assessment Standards not originally within a Unit assessment support pack task. This approach can allow candidates to quickly and easily generate evidence, and is commendable.

To record assessment results, the assessor checklists from the Unit assessment support packs are commonly used. However, many centres are choosing to

adapt these to assist with their own internal verification procedures. Many centres also included checklists which included an additional column for feedback to candidates or to record further evidence to confirm assessment judgements. These modifications improved the usability of the checklists and was appreciated by the verification team.

It is important to note that some centres had made errors within their checklists, some of them critical. The most common errors included:

♦ not stating which Assessment Standards were being assessed
♦ candidates entered at two levels
♦ a conflict in result between the assessor and internal verifier with no clear indication of a final assessment judgement
♦ centres not indicating if the evidence in the sample is a pass or fail for a particular Assessment Standard

These errors can hamper or halt the verification process. When checklists have been completed fully they are of great benefit to those conducting internal and external verification.

Centres are advised that the Verification Sample Form must be completed correctly. If no assessment decision is recorded, it is possible that no verification can take place and the sample will be returned to the centre for action and re-submission. Centres are reminded that entering a 'Pass' or 'Fail' on the forms does not indicate that a candidate has failed the Course; this is recording whether the candidate has passed or failed the Assessment Standards you have recorded within your sample.

Some centres are choosing to devise their own assessments. This approach can enable a centre to make assessment activities that fit a local context or enable candidates to demonstrate their skills using a wider range of tools and techniques. When centres choose to use a centre-devised assessment, they must include details describing how they make assessment judgements. Those who did not include this crucial piece of assessment evidence were informed of the need to rectify this the next time they are verified.

Not including the stimulus of the assessment can make it difficult or even impossible to validate a centre's approach to assessment at verification. This part of the verification sample can be as straightforward as including the brief, instruction or question in the pack. The stimulus is a crucial item for verification to proceed, as it allows the verification team to ensure the assessment approach is valid for the level.

A small number of centres indicated that evidence for particular Assessment Standards had been presented verbally. This commonly occurred with Assessment Standard 1.5 (Describing 2D CAD commands) and Assessment Standard 1.4 (Describing 3D CAD commands). Whilst verbal evidence is acceptable, the centre is responsible for ensuring this evidence can be verified,

both internally and externally. This may be in the form of a written transcript. In all instances, some form of hardcopy is the best way to present evidence for efficient verification.

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres are broadly making fair and accurate assessment judgements, which demonstrates the dedication and hard work of assessors to ensure candidates are appropriately awarded. Where there are inconsistencies, these appear to be judgements that are too generous with desktop publishing and design elements and principles; and too severe with technical and production drawings.

A minority of centres appear to be still entering candidates at an inappropriate level. The verification team identified candidates who had produced evidence that would satisfy Assessment Standards at National 5, whilst the candidates were assessed against, and entered for, National 4. Centres may have clear reasons for entering candidates at a lower level — most commonly, the level of support the candidate may have received. This information would be of benefit to the verification team. It is important that candidates are entered at the most appropriate level to ensure they are adequately rewarded.

Many centres have indicated their assessment judgement by detailing the extent of a candidate's pass or fail on their internal candidate assessment record. This level of detail was excellent for verifying assessment judgements, especially when the pass or fail was marginal.

Centres must take care to ensure that when they make assessment judgements they do so without confusing Assessment Standards from different Units.

For example:

♦ In the 2D Unit, Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.4 require the candidate to justify their choices.
♦ In the 2D Unit, Assessment Standard 3.1 refers to creating a layout or display; while in the 3D Unit, Assessment Standard 3.1 deals with the planning of a layout or display. Confusing the two standards may result in difficulty for your candidates and difficulty at verification.
♦ In both Units, a number of centres confused Assessment Standard 1.1 with Assessment Standard 1.2, assessing drawings as sketches. In some instances, centres had inappropriately submitted CAD drawings or models as sketches. Sketches created electronically are generated using a stylus, touch screen or mouse to replicate the sketching process. There cannot be any use of grid, snap-to-grip, dimensions or CAD tools to generate the evidence.
♦ Similarly, Assessment Standard 1.5 of the 2D Unit has been confused with Assessment Standard 1.4 of the 3D and Pictorial Unit. Centres have assessed 3D CAD commands, such as 'Extrude' and 'Revolve' as 2D commands.

- In the 2D Unit, some centres were penalising candidates against Assessment Standard 1.2 for not including dimensions, line-types, scale and the project symbol. These standards and conventions should be assessed against Assessment Standard 1.4 only.
- Confusing design elements and principles with DTP features and techniques was an issue for some centres.

Sample composition

Guidelines to centres suggest that they should be compiling a verification sample, from individual candidates, using work from either a single Unit or from both Units. However, centres have been submitting samples for individual candidates that contain work at both Units and at both levels (National 4 and National 5). Often evidence is assessed within a single Unit, but at both levels. This practice confuses the issue at verification. Centres are advised that, for individual candidates, work should be submitted at one level only.

03 Section 3: General comments

Sample format

Some centres submitted photocopies of candidate evidence. While this is in principle acceptable, some copies were of poor quality and this made it very difficult to fairly and accurately verify the assessment judgements made. Photocopies, especially of manual sketches or drawings rarely retain the detail or quality of the original item.

Approaches to learning

It is clear that many centres have begun to adapt their teaching and learning to suit the new Graphic Communication Course. The volume of evidence drawings (drawing-board work) being submitted for verification was lower than Round 1. In the instances where centres did submit evidence drawings, there was a tendency to submit several examples to cover only one Assessment Standard. More centres submitted evidence generated using 2D CAD and drawings produced from 3D CAD models.

It is worth taking note that, while drawing-board skills can be important in developing an understanding of projection methods and spatial awareness, in Course assessment terms the experience that candidates get in this area is of limited benefit. Over-reliance on developing drawing-board skills is not likely to prepare candidates for a significant portion of the content of the Course assignment and the Course exam.

Centres are advised that designing creative DTP layouts using design elements and principles and developing problem solving skills on 3D CAD software are becoming the staples of our approach to learning in Graphic Communication.

Internal verification

Internal verification is a key part of quality-assuring your internal assessments. The verification team use this to help validate assessors' assessment judgements. An effective internal verification process can highlight issues within the centre, which can then be rectified helping to ensure that a centre's assessment judgements are valid and reliable. The verification team identified several centres where an effective internal verification procedure had ensured the correct approaches to assessment and assessment judgements.

NQ Verification 2013–14 Key Messages Round 3

Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

National 5 Graphic Communication (C735 75)

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The verification team witnessed a wide range of approaches to the IACCA tasks, many of these were very positive and embraced the creative nature of the new Graphic Communication Course. Most candidates kept to within the 10 page limit for submissions and used a variety of manual and electronic responses to generate assessment evidence.

Some centres chose to supply their candidates with more information about the task. This information was designed to support their candidates in the completion of the activity. However, it was noticed by the verification team that choosing a 'pro-forma' approach to the task had the effect of limiting their candidates' responses; marks tended to be generally lower.

Most centres chose the 'Aqua-J juice bottle' or 'Buzz-It pen drive' tasks. The few centres that had chosen the more open 'Thirst4music' brief generally completed these to a high standard, although the products modelled were more complex than required.

Assessment judgements

In general, assessment judgements were in line with the national standard. It is clear from the range of responses and the justification of assessment judgements that centres have embraced many of the changes to assessment within Graphic Communication. Some centres did not make any comments on their assessment judgements, which made it difficult to understand why certain decisions had been reached. Centres are advised to make comments when a particular assessment judgement may appear at odds with the evidence supplied.

Section 1 Research and analysis

The verification team witnessed a wide range of approaches to the research and analysis component. Where this section had been done well, candidates had completed some research that confirmed all aspects of the assignment brief. Several centres generously marked candidates that only researched the graphic design aspect of the task. Many candidates that completed the Aqua-J task had purely focused on the graphic design, colour scheme and target market at the expense of other aspects, such as production drawings.

Section 2 Preliminary graphics

Some candidates produced retrospective planning. Work that is traced or is retrospective does not attract any marks. Several centres failed to identify these issues and subsequently candidates had their marks reduced during verification.

Several centres were generous in their assessment of candidates with regard to creating sufficient evidence to generate production drawings. Centres should consider whether the evidence is clear and detailed enough to enable the creation of a 3D CAD model or manual drawings.

Where preliminary promotional layouts have been completed well, candidates made clear reference to design elements and principles and the DTP features and techniques they were intending to use. There should be a clear indication of which promotional layout will be developed into the final item.

Section 3 Production graphics

Overall, production graphics were generously marked. Centres are reminded that BS8888 is the standard to be applied to these drawings; candidates should be able to change any settings within their CAD application to reflect these standards. There should be sufficient views and dimensions that could enable the product to be re-drawn via 3D CAD, if necessary.

Technical detail must be clear and relevant to the task. Where sectional, enlargements or exploded views are created, they must provide additional information or enhance the clarity of the drawings. Several centres had given marks for simply creating a view.

Section 4 Promotional graphics

Some centres incorrectly assessed candidates for producing a promotional item in relation to a brief. Both the Aqua-J and the Buzz-It tasks have specific

promotional activities that a candidate must choose from. A candidate who does not respond to the brief cannot be awarded any marks for this activity. However, subsequent marks for illustration and the use of layout techniques may be assessed from the candidate's strongest work. This is particularly useful if a candidate has created more promotional work than was required by the brief.

Section 5 Evaluation

The evaluation component was generally assessed very well by most centres; most candidates had focused upon the DTP component. Centres are reminded that candidates can evaluate any aspect of their work. A high marking evaluation should make reference to the brief and how the graphics they have produced meet the requirements of the brief.

03 ▸ Section 3: General comments

The most common causes of a Not Accepted decision at verification were arithmetical or administration errors. Many centres incorrectly transcribed marks from the internal marks to the candidate result form. A more robust final check of these marks is critical.

Several centres that carried out internal verification 'averaged' marks if there was a disagreement. This unfortunately makes it impossible to verify the marks being awarded to a specific component. Centres are reminded that they must make their assessment judgements clear to the verification team. Several centres devised their own A3 single-page marks sheet that made it clear and easy to verify marks awarded for each component. This greatly helped the verification process.

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of verification was the strong creativity of many submissions. Centres that encouraged their candidates to engage in the design opportunities offered by the assignment tasks invariably produced responses that were complex, detailed and well presented. These candidates appear well placed to progress to the new Higher Course.

With the significant changes to the Graphic Communication Course and the different methods of assessment, centres have clearly responded well. This is testimony to the hard work of assessors and candidates and sets a positive benchmark for the future of the subject.