



NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
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:	Modern Studies
Verification event	Central Verification Round 1
Date published:	January 2014

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

Modern Studies National 3:

Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom H23C 73
Social Issues in the United Kingdom H23F 73

Modern Studies National 4:

Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom H23C 74
Social Issues in the United Kingdom H23F 74
International Issues H23G 74
Added Value Unit H23R 74

Modern Studies National 5:

Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom H23C 75
Social Issues in the United Kingdom H23F 75
International Issues H23G 75

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres made use of assessment material from SQA's Unit assessment support packs. This was accompanied by 'Judging evidence' tables. Assessments tended to follow a Unit-by-Unit approach and were frequently presented in an 'end of Unit assessment' format. A lot of use was made of past paper (Standard Grade and Intermediate) questions — many of which were accompanied by Marking Instructions intended for these qualifications.

Many assessments lacked reference to learning Outcomes and were accompanied by Marking Instructions which did not relate to the Outcome being assessed, and did not give adequate advice on how to judge the standard.

Assessment judgements

Centres did, on the whole, make good judgements relating to the pass/fail on learning Outcomes. Not all centres gave evidence as to how these judgements were arrived at — indeed, some seemed to rely on marks alone, failing to make judgements relating to the Outcome being examined. Many centres did not provide adequate advice on how to judge the standard. There was a lack of Judging evidence tables and an over-reliance on Marking Instructions from Standard Grade and Intermediate past paper questions.

Section 3: General comments

The evidence provided for the verification procedure was very mixed in quality. Some centres clearly understood the process and provided materials which allowed for accurate judgements of a candidate's success or otherwise in being able to achieve the Outcome being assessed. There was commendable practice from a number of centres regarding documentation covering internal verification procedures and the use of candidate record and feedback sheets.

Many centres used past paper questions without making the necessary modifications to ensure that CfE standards were being met, and also failed to adapt Marking Instructions to conform with the Judging evidence format.

There was a distinct lack of evidence of the internal verification procedures from a number of centres. This may have made it difficult for assessors to make judgements on candidate performance in achieving learning Outcomes.



NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Messages Round 2

01

Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

Modern Studies National 3

Politics in Scotland and the UK H23C 73
Social Issues in the UK H23F 73

Modern Studies National 4

Politics in Scotland and the UK H23C74
Social Issues in the UK H23F73
International Issues H23G74
Added Value Unit H23R74

Modern Studies National 5

Politics in Scotland and the UK H23C75
Social Issues in the UK H23F75
International Issues H23C75

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Overall, there was an improvement in the presentation of materials and in the assessment approaches adopted by centres.

Many centres used an assessment approach which was fit for purpose and enabled candidates to complete their Unit assessments successfully.

Assessments were mostly based on SQA Unit assessment support packs, although good use was made of Intermediate/Standard Grade assessments which had been adapted to correspond to the Outcomes being assessed.

Assessments were accompanied by appropriate 'judging evidence' tables and these were used to good effect by assessors.

There was evidence of well-developed internal verification policies within centres which detailed meetings, decisions, sampling of scripts and evidence of cross-marking. Some centres had developed sophisticated record keeping. This led to consistency in the centre's approach to assessment and reliability in assessment judgements.

There was evidence that some centres had 'overinflated' the demands of the assessment for Units. It would be good practice to match assessment stems to the demands of the Outcome being assessed.

Some centres had not adapted Intermediate/Standard Grade questions to meet the demands of the Outcomes being assessed. There are many Intermediate/Standard Grade questions that are suitable for use, but many need to be adapted to meet the requirements of the Outcome being assessed.

Some centres made use of Course assessment items and Course assessment Marking Instructions. Centres need to distinguish between the differing demands of Unit and Course assessment. It is often difficult to combine the two, especially as it often leads to 'overinflated' demand in Unit assessment.

Assessment judgements

Overall, there was an improvement in the accuracy and consistency of decision making in regard to candidates' achievement of Outcomes.

There was evidence of good practice with cross-marking on scripts and indications of where candidates had met Outcomes, along with assessor/cross-marker initials and comments.

There was evidence of good practice where the achievement of Assessment Standards was clearly indicated on scripts and the candidate's assessment

record. These centres generally made effective and consistently accurate assessment judgements.

Some centres effectively used coloured pens to indicate different assessor's judgements. One centre effectively bracketed the area in the candidate's script where the Assessment Standard had been achieved.

There was evidence of good use of 'judging evidence' tables — many of which had been adapted to meet the Assessment Standards. This seems to have helped in the consistency of approach to making assessment judgements.

Some centres failed to include evidence of their internal standardisation approach. These centres tended to have an inconsistent approach to their assessment judgements. It would be good practice for centres to develop an internal verification procedure and provide evidence that this has been adhered to in the assessment process.

Some centres, as they had 'overinflated' the demands of the Unit assessment, failed to award candidates a pass for a particular Outcome as they were looking for 'too much'. It would be good practice for centres to use assessment items which correspond to the Outcomes.

Some centres made use of oral prompts and indicated that candidates had responded orally. However, there was little evidence of what the candidate had said. It would be good practice for centres to take a note of candidates' oral responses and indicate this on scripts.

03

Section 3: General comments

Generally, the improvement shown in the quality of submissions from centres is very encouraging. Many centres had shown consistency in applying the Assessment Standards, having provided clear and well-organised evidence to support their decisions.

Some centres would benefit from developing more robust internal standardisation procedures to ensure consistency of approach and accurate assessment judgements.



NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Messages Round 3

01

Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

Modern Studies National 4 Added Value Unit (H23 R 74)

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The improvement in the presentation of materials and the approaches to assessment noted in Round 2 continued into Round 3.

Centres used the SQA support materials to good effect, with many centres using these to develop their own approach to the Added Value Unit.

Many centres developed their own prompt sheets, recording of evidence sheets and log books, and these were used to good effect.

As noted in Round 2, centres continued to provide evidence of well-developed internal verification policies. Centres provided evidence detailing meetings, decisions made, and also evidence of these decisions being carried out. Assessed scripts had been sampled by an internal verifier and there was good evidence of cross-marking.

There was good practice shown by many centres relating to annotation of scripts to show where candidates had achieved Assessment Standards. Many centres

had adopted sophisticated record keeping — leading to a consistency of approach and reliable assessment judgements.

There was evidence of personalisation and choice in relation to the candidate's choice of topic to be researched.

However, some centres could improve their approach to the Added Value Unit by:

- ◆ ensuring that the task corresponds to the demands of the Added Value Unit at National 4
- ◆ raising candidate awareness of the demands of the Assessment Standards, especially AS 1.4 which requires a brief explanation, and AS 1.5 which requires development of the justification
- ◆ introducing personalisation and choice into the process of choosing a topic
- ◆ encouraging a narrower focus for research, perhaps by use of an hypothesis or a question relating to the topic chosen
- ◆ discouraging the use of 'cut and paste' especially in relation to PowerPoint presentations and posters
- ◆ encouraging the use of referencing — including specific references to sources when describing and explaining

Centres are reminded that the use of appropriate verbal prompts can help candidates fully achieve the Assessment Standards.

Assessment judgements

Most centres made accurate and consistent judgements regarding their candidates' achievement of Assessment Standards.

There was evidence of good practice regarding the assessors' marking of scripts (with good annotation of where candidates had met specific Outcomes); cross-marking; and the use of assessor/cross-marker initials and comments (often colour coded).

Good use was made of candidate record of assessment sheets with appropriate comments as to the achievement of the Assessment Standards.

Centres made excellent use of log books to structure, check and assess progress.

There was evidence of good use of the 'judging evidence' table with assessors assessing the evidence according to the Assessment Standards. This seemed to have helped centres achieve consistency in applying the Assessment Standards.

Some centres made use of oral prompts and indicated where the candidate had responded orally and included notes to support this.

Some centres still failed to produce evidence of their internal standardisation approach. These centres tended to have an inconsistent approach to making assessment judgements. It would be good practice for centres to develop an internal verification procedure and to provide evidence that this has been adhered to in the assessment process.

Some centres were inconsistent in making assessment judgements relating to Assessment Standards 1.4 and 1.5. This was especially the case with candidates who submitted PowerPoint presentations or posters. Centres are reminded that they should make use of the 'judging evidence' table to ensure accurate and consistent assessment judgements.

03

Section 3: General comments

Generally, the improvement noted in Round 2 continued. Centre's submissions were thorough and related to the evidence required for the Added Value Unit at National 4 level.

Centres, on the whole, showed consistency in their approach and made accurate judgements relating to the Assessment Standards.

Centres, on the whole, provided clear and well organised evidence to support their decisions (although some centres did tend to include too much superfluous material).

There are still some centres, however, that would benefit from developing more robust internal standardisation procedures to ensure consistency of approach and accurate assessment judgements.