



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Levels	N3 – Advanced Higher
Date published:	October 2016

This Report combines all Verification Key Messages for the academic session 2015-2016.

NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H263 73	World Religion
H264 73	Morality and Belief
H263 74	World Religion
H264 74	Morality and Belief
H265 74	Religious and Philosophical Questions
H263 75	World Religion
H264 75	Morality and Belief
H265 75	Religious and Philosophical Questions
H263 76	World Religion
H264 76	Morality and Belief
H265 76	Religious and Philosophical Questions
H7XK 77	Medical Ethics
H7XH 77	Philosophy of Religion

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

Many centres had amended the Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) in order to make their own centre-specific assessments and this resulted in the vast majority of UASP-based assessments being particularly useful for their candidates.

There was an increase in the number of centres that used a portfolio approach to collect their evidence of Assessment Standards being met and this allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways.

A few centres that used the portfolio approach had actively encouraged their candidates to select the information that they thought had met the Assessment Standards. This gave the candidates more ownership of their own work.

Most centres gave supportive and clear instructions to candidates alongside the actual assessment task and this enabled candidates to be very clear as to what was expected from them in the assessment activity.

The majority of centres had adjusted the judging evidence table to suit their centre-specific issue/area and this included good clear examples of sample responses and these judging evidence tables clearly matched up with the relevant assessment task.

The vast majority of centres used language in their prompts that was appropriate for the level being assessed.

Some centres had taken advantage of using prior verified assessment materials found on SQA's website.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

Once again a few centres used assessment approaches that placed demands on candidates that went beyond the requirements of the Assessment Standards.

Some centres had produced assessment approaches that did not give candidates the opportunity to fully achieve particular Assessment Standards.

A few centres failed to submit a suitably adjusted judging evidence table along with the candidate responses and this meant that the verification team had difficulty in assessing the centre's assessment judgements.

A small number of centres claimed to be using the portfolio approach but the evidence that they submitted was actually 'Unit by Unit' structured.

A very small number of centres failed to submit an instrument of assessment along with their candidate evidence.

Assessment judgements

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

The vast majority of centres verified made assessment judgments in line with the national standard and centres should be commended on this.

Most centres had clearly shown on candidate scripts exactly where each part of an Assessment Standard was being met in a particular assessment. Methods suggested in previous Key Messages Reports were clearly demonstrated.

A few centres had used underlining as a means to highlight Assessment Standards being met, whilst other centres had used 'highlighting' — these methods were extremely helpful to the verification team and made the judgements of the centres extremely clear.

Once again there was good evidence of the majority of centres having clear internal verification policies which were applied and this was demonstrated in several examples of excellent cross-marking systems and record completion.

Most centres had made it perfectly clear to the verification team exactly what the centre's decisions were with regard to individual candidates.

Most centres submitted some sort of candidate record sheet along with the candidate evidence. This practice supported the verification process and is to be commended.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

A very small number of centres had failed to indicate on their candidates' responses where any Assessment Standards had been met — in other words there was no marking at all.

A few centres submitted evidence of cross-marking/internal verification that did not agree and there was no final decision stated in the evidence for the verifiers to verify.

Some centres failed to make it clear as to what their decisions about candidate achievement actually were.

Some centres had marked Assessment Standards as being achieved but then had failed to complete the candidate's records properly and the candidate had been marked as a 'fail'.

Some centres had again overestimated the evidence required to meet the Assessment Standard. This means centres are sometimes expecting to see more evidence than that required to achieve an Assessment Standard and therefore candidates can be disadvantaged.

A few centres had submitted documents explaining their internal verification process but from the inconsistencies in the application of the Assessment Standards this process had either not taken place or had not been successful.

Section 3: General comments

Centres should ensure that their assessment approaches are based on the stated requirements of each Unit.

Centres should ensure that they are fully conversant with what is expected from candidates in order that they can achieve specific Assessment Standards.

Centres should ensure that all candidate evidence is clearly marked by the centre in such a way that all Assessment Standards achieved are noted — centres should refer to previous Key Messages Reports for suggested methods of recording Assessment Standards on the candidate evidence.

Centres should remember that open-book assessment is perfectly acceptable for Unit assessments — there is no requirement for ‘exam conditions’ for Unit assessments. Centres that are assessing in this manner are potentially disadvantaging their candidates unnecessarily.

Centres should ensure that their internal verification processes actually do take place as stated in their documentation and are reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

All centres should ensure that their paperwork is correctly completed — this is a necessary part of the internal verification process.

All Assessment Standards that a candidate achieves should be credited to them — it is the duty of the centre to ensure that this is done when verification paperwork is being submitted.

Centres should remember that candidates can achieve individual Assessment Standards throughout any response — even if the assessment was looking for different Assessment Standards.

Each centre selected for verification should ensure that they submit the correct amount of candidate evidence for the levels they are presenting at. Centres should remember that they can choose which Unit (or Units, in a combined approach) to select for each level in Round 1 verification.

Centres are again reminded that if they are selected for verification they should ensure that they have complete copies of the following information:

- ◆ the assessment task
- ◆ the judging evidence table adjusted to suit their own situation or marking Information
- ◆ specific quality assurance processes for internal verification documentation
- ◆ candidates’ evidence of meeting the Assessment Standards including assessor decisions clearly marked
- ◆ evidence (and comments where applicable) of the work done by the internal verifier

Centres and local authorities will find it very helpful to enlist the help of RMPS nominees in their area for support and guidance. Their expertise will be invaluable for centres seeking to develop their approaches to assessment and the reliability and consistency of assessment decisions.

Centres seeking guidance on internal verification should refer to www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit.



NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 2

01

Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	June 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H266 74 National 4 RMPS assignment Added value unit

02

Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

All centres successfully verified at the event were deemed to be either 'accepted' or 'accepted*'. Centres are to be commended on this.

Once again, many centres had produced research booklets for their candidates, to aid the process of collecting relevant information.

The vast majority of centres had clearly worked with their candidates to ensure that the topic/issue for study was appropriate for research, within the context of RMPS.

Most centres had built prompts into their candidate instructions. This helped support candidates with the assessment process, clearly showing what was expected for a pass.

A few centres had developed approaches that involved the use of visual and audio media, and this allowed candidates to present in a less formally structured way. It also allowed centres to deal with specific educational needs, when devising assessment approaches for candidates.

Again, a few centres had candidates who chose to submit their findings in a poster approach. This approach allowed for personalisation and choice.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

Most centres submitted written reports. Centres should consider whether an extended piece of writing is an appropriate vehicle of assessment for all of their candidates.

A few centres need to provide clear guidelines with regard to what candidates are expected to achieve for each assessment standard.

Some centres seemed to have 'over-structured' their support materials. This could have potentially limited opportunities to achieve the assessment standards, based on their candidates own work.

Assessment judgements

During verification the following examples of good practice were observed:

Most centres clearly marked exactly where candidates had met particular assessment standards. Centres have to be commended on this, as it makes the verification process more straightforward.

For assessment standard 1.4, many centres had developed a clear coding system to clearly show in candidate submissions where the different parts of this assessment standard were being met.

The majority of centres that were sampled demonstrated a clear understanding of what was needed to achieve each individual assessment standard.

A good number of centres submitted detailed candidate record sheets relating to internal verification. These included evidence of dialogue regarding decisions about the final judgement of the centre. This practice supported the verification process and is to be commended.

Action points

The following comments are intended as a guide to centres on future practice:

A very small number of centres submitted candidates' work with no marking indicated and this meant that the verification process could not take place. Centres are reminded that the verification process is checking that centres are applying the assessment standards correctly (not whether the candidate has passed or failed).

Assessment standard 1.2 asks for the candidate to provide '*evidence of having collected evidence from at least two sources of information*' and '*at least one of these sources should include a religious viewpoint*'. A few centres seemed to think that this meant a bibliography is needed from candidates. This is not the

case, although a bibliography would meet the standard. This standard can be met throughout the presentation in a variety of different ways.

Once again, some centres linked assessment standard 1.6 to candidates giving a conclusion, which is not correct. Assessment standard 1.6 is awarded for the final presentation of the findings, in whatever format the candidate chooses to do so. This assessment standard is not linked to a conclusion.

A few centres had marked candidate submissions using ticks and did not always link these ticks to specific assessment standards on the candidates' scripts. This meant that verifiers had significantly more work to do to match up centres judgements with candidate responses.

03

Section 3: General comments

There was again a wide variety of topics/issues selected by candidates and centres are to be congratulated for encouraging this approach.

There were no 'not accepted' decisions this year and this demonstrated that centres, on the whole, are clearly grasping the requirements for meeting the assessment standards at this level.

Some centres submitted extremely detailed candidate record sheets and these made it very clear where each assessment standard had been met. They also included feedback on the candidates work and this helped the verification process immensely.

Many centres submitted their candidate resource/record booklets as well as the final presentation and this extra information helped the verifiers in their duties. Centres are encouraged to take this approach where practical.

It was encouraging to see that centres had sought to ensure a robustness and reliability regarding the sources that candidates or centres are using.

Centres that submitted audio/visual materials as evidence had clearly shown on these materials where each assessment standard had been met. This was done by noting timings, giving transcripts, etc. and this approach was again helpful to the verification process.

A few centres still need to ensure that they are fully conversant with all the assessment standards, especially assessments standards 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6.

Centres are reminded that assessment standards can be met at any part in the final presentation and indeed some can be met through the candidates' research materials.

Centres should ensure that all SQA paperwork is carefully completed before submitting materials for verification.

A very small number of centres were given a verification 'cannot proceed' decision because they had submitted candidate evidence with no marking on the materials submitted. This meant that the verification process could not take place as there was nothing to verify.

Centres and local authorities are once again reminded that they could find it very helpful to enlist the help of RMPS nominees in their area for support and guidance.