NQ Verification 2015–16
Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	Sociology
Levels	N5 and 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:	Sociology
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

National 5 and Higher Human Society, Social Issues and Culture and Identity

02 ## Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres used the exemplar assessment with the Unit assessment support packs (UASPs). Centre-devised assessments that deviated markedly from the UASPs on some occasions missed out Assessment Standards or overburdened candidates with additional demands.

Evidence of good practice was found where assessors flagged up the Assessment Standard next to each question and encouraged their candidates to do the same in their answers. This made it very easy for verifiers to find evidence. Attaching the Candidate Assessment Record to the front of each person's assessment also made evidence clear for candidates, assessors and verifiers.

Centres were aware of the requirement to submit an indication of the internal verification procedures used by the department. It was extremely helpful to have a clear context in which assessment judgements had been made. Centres should be aware of *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres offering SQA Qualifications* (February 2011).

However, it was often difficult to see where sampling of candidate's work had taken place. Very few centres had internal verifier comments or initials on candidate evidence and record sheets to show their agreement or disagreement with assessor judgements. Those centres that did provide internal verifier annotations were very helpful.

Action points

1   Continue to flag Assessment Standards next to questions in centre-devised assessments, and continue to use the Candidate Assessment Record, or a centre-devised version.

2   Continue to send in evidence of internal verification and evidence of sampling of candidate's work. Internal verifiers should clearly annotate candidate evidence or the candidate assessment record to show their agreement with assessment decisions.

3   The National 5 and Higher Sociology Courses give rise to a variety of integrated delivery of Units and integrated assessment approaches, partly due to the need to cover Social Issues or Culture and Identity with Human Society for the Assignment deadline. Centres might find it helpful to review Unit assessment support packs 2 and 3 in order to explore the combined/portfolio approach as a means of reducing the overall assessment burden for candidates.

4   Due to recent changes in the Human Society UASP version 1.1, candidate evidence was accepted, for one year only, based on Human Society version 1.0. Centres are reminded that they need to use the most up-to-date version of the UASP. It is the centre's responsibility to keep up with published changes as they may be Not Accepted for verification if they are assessing candidates with an out of date UASP.

Assessment judgements

Centres were judging the evidence according to the appropriate Assessment Standard and were correctly entering candidates for the appropriate level. Assessors are understanding that marks are not appropriate for summative assessment, but can be used for formative assessment.

There was good practice regarding the clarity of decision-making processes in terms of quantitative annotation of scripts where Assessment Standards had been achieved. This was very helpful for verifiers in understanding the process that centres had carried out. However, there continues to be very little qualitative feedback on candidate evidence and centres did not indicate if qualitative feedback was given orally instead.

There also continues to be a lack of evidence to show that remediation has taken place, perhaps because typed work already includes remediation in a portfolio approach. Good practice was found where assessors had marked remediation as 'clarified through learner conversation'. This enabled external verifiers to understand the assessment process more clearly.

All centres provided a record of internal verification, but there was less evidence of good practice in checking assessment judgements, eg blind-marking and cross-marking and sampling of scripts.

Action points

1 Remove marks and time restrictions on centre-devised assessments. Some assessors need to develop a more secure understanding of the differences between Unit assessment and Course assessment; the purpose of Unit assessment being to assess skills at minimum competence without the use of marks, whereas Course assessment aims to assess content and skills. Each Unit Specification clearly states that time limits are not a feature of Unit assessments.

2 Record remediation — a cover sheet with a remediation column would be excellent practice so a teacher, candidate and verifier can track changes.

3 Provide more qualitative feedback or annotate scripts to indicate that feedback was given orally or via a digital method.

4 Allow personalisation and choice. Only one centre allowed candidates to choose their method of assessment. Centres should review their assessment tasks to ensure that candidates are being offered personalisation and choice in how they provide evidence to meet the Assessment Standards.

5 Ensure that assessors are using the most up-to-date UASPs.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

When completing the Verification Sample Form, it would be helpful if candidates were entered in this order.

Ideally, the candidate sample provided by the centre should include a variety of candidate performances covering both pass and fail categories.

Centres should take care when transcribing details onto the Verification Sample Form that pass/fail indications match, and that Unit codes are entered correctly. On this form, 'interim evidence' relates only to where one Outcome from a Unit is submitted.

Action point

1 All centre staff are reminded that assessments must be checked to ensure their validity before they are taken by candidates. Internal quality assurance procedures must ensure that all assessors have a common understanding of the standards required. Meetings between assessors and the internal verifier to discuss the planned assessment will help to standardise interpretation and understanding of Assessment Standards. Whilst we appreciate that this might take some time to do, it is likely to save more time later in the assessment process.