NQ Verification 2013–14

Key Message Reports

Verification group name:	Spanish
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 Languages — Spanish
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	January 2014

National Courses/Units/Awards verified:

H26S 74   National 4: Spanish: Understanding Language
H26V 74   National 4: Spanish: Added Value Unit
H26S 75   National 5: Spanish: Understanding Language
H26T 75   National 5: Spanish: Using Language

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres sampled in round 1 used the SQA Unit assessment support packages. Where centre-produced materials were used for Unit assessments, they were designed in the same way as the SQA-produced assessment and were judged to be at the appropriate level.

In the main, centres followed the SQA Added Value Unit template effectively. There could be some improvement in how centres approach Assessment Standard 1.2 (selecting relevant information). Centres are advised to refer to the Added Value Unit assessment support document as to how evidence should be gathered for this Assessment Standard.

For all samples submitted, centres should ensure they include the approach to assessment, ie the tool of assessment used to assess the candidate. This applies to SQA-produced assessments, prior verified assessments and centre-devised assessments.

Assessment judgements

Where the assessment judgements for centres have been accepted, they have provided evidence in the form of 'judging evidence' tables or centre-devised approaches to judging evidence. In addition, they provided evidence of how assessment judgements have been made in relation to the different Assessment Standards, eg 1.1 and 1.2 in reading.

For all samples submitted, centres should ensure they provide some form of evidence as to how assessment judgements were made in relation to the Assessment Standards.

Assessment judgments should be made in relation to each Assessment Standard and not as a holistic judgement across the whole assessment. For example, centres must ensure that candidates meet Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2 in listening rather than applying a marks-based approach to the whole listening assessment. Both Assessment Standards must be met separately.

In the Understanding Language Unit (reading and listening), centres are reminded that where candidates do not meet Assessment Standards 1.1 or 2.1 (overall purpose and main points), they have the opportunity to revisit that Assessment Standard with the candidate.

Some centres submitted candidate material that showed no evidence of making judgements. Centres should be aware that they should annotate candidate work to show which answers have been accepted in relation to their judging evidence.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Centres are reminded that evidence of internal verification should be submitted with their samples. Examples of good internal verification highlighted how some centres had quality assured both the approach to assessment and the reliability of the application of the judging evidence, eg cross-marking.

NQ Verification 2013/14
Key Messages Round 2

01 ▶ Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	**Modern Languages — Spanish**
Verification event/visiting information	**Event**
Date published:	**March 2014**

National Courses/Units verified:

H26S 73	National 3 Spanish: Understanding Language
H26T 73	National 3 Spanish: Using Language
H26S 74	National 4 Spanish: Understanding Language
H26T 74	National 4 Spanish: Using Language
H26V 74	National 4 Spanish: Added Value Unit
H26S 75	National 5 Spanish: Understanding Language
H26T 75	National 5 Spanish: Using Language

02 ▶ Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The majority of centres sampled in round 2 used the SQA Unit assessment support packages. Some centres successfully devised their own materials for Unit assessments. Where a centre-devised assessment was not deemed to be valid, this was most commonly because candidates were not given the opportunity to meet Assessment Standards 1.1 or 2.1 (overall purpose and main points in reading and listening). In a few cases, the centre-devised assessments did not allow candidates to meet the national standards.

To elicit overall purpose, centres are advised to include more than two possible responses if assessing by means of a supported question. This allows centres to reasonably re-assess candidates where required.

In the main, centres followed the SQA National 4 Added Value Unit assessment template effectively. Centres are advised to refer to the Added Value Unit assessment support document for advice on how evidence should be gathered for Assessment Standard 1.2 (Selecting relevant information from the texts).

For all samples submitted, centres should continue to ensure they include the approach to assessment, ie the tool of assessment used to assess the candidate. This applies to SQA-produced assessments, prior-verified assessments and centre-devised assessments. It would be useful for verification purposes if centres could clearly identify which Unit assessment support pack they have used (eg pack 1, pack 2, pack 3).

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres provided evidence of assessment judgements in the form of 'judging evidence' tables or centre-devised approaches to judging evidence. In addition, they provided evidence of how assessment judgments were made in relation to the different Assessment Standards, eg 1.1 and 1.2 in reading. This is very helpful for SQA external verification.

For all samples submitted, centres should ensure they provide some form of evidence as to how assessment judgments were made in relation to the separate Assessment Standards. Centres are reminded that assessment judgments should be made in relation to each Assessment Standard and not as a holistic judgment across the whole assessment. For example, centres must ensure that candidates meet Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2 in listening rather than applying a marks-based approach to the whole listening assessment. Equally, some centres continued to pass candidates in reading and listening assessments despite the overall purpose and main points Assessment Standards (1.1 and 2.1) not being met by the candidates.

In the *Understanding Language* Unit (reading and listening), centres are reminded that where candidates do not meet the Assessment Standards 1.1 or 2.1 (overall purpose and main points), they have the opportunity to revisit that Assessment Standard with the candidate.

Also, centres are reminded that only column four of the 'judging evidence' tables ('Commentary on Assessment') in SQA Unit assessment support packs can be adapted. The first three columns of these tables must remain unchanged.

A few centres submitted candidate material that showed no evidence of making judgements. Centres are encouraged to annotate candidate work to show which responses have been judged to meet specific Assessment Standards.

Equally, centres are asked to ensure that the correct 'judging evidence' table for the Unit assessment support pack used is submitted with the sample for SQA verification.

03 ▸ Section 3: General comments

While there was an increased amount of evidence of internal verification documentation in the samples submitted for round 2, centres are not required to submit copies of the centre/local authority internal verification policy. It would be more helpful for verification purposes if centres show evidence of verification procedures, decisions and reasoning in relation to the Unit assessments and candidate assessment outcomes.

Some centres submitted candidate evidence from more than one Unit. This is only necessary where combined assessment has been used (for example writing and reading). Where a centre submitted candidate evidence for more than one Unit in round 2, only one Unit was verified.

Many centres included SQA flyleafs with their sample but some of these were completed incorrectly. For clarity, centres are reminded that 'interim evidence' should be used where candidates have attempted only one part of a Unit at the time of sample submission for SQA verification (eg. reading only in the *Understanding Language* Unit). 'Interim evidence' should not be entered on flyleafs when candidates have attempted all assessments in a Unit but have failed one aspect of that Unit. 'Pass' or 'fail' can be used to describe the outcome of a candidate's assessment and not to describe how much of a Unit has been attempted at a given point in time.

NQ Verification 2013–14
Key Messages Round 3

01 Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	**Modern Languages — Spanish**
Verification event/visiting information	**Event**
Date published:	**June 2014**

National Courses/Units verified:

National 4 Spanish Added Value Unit (H26V 74)
National 5 Spanish performance: talking (C769 75)

02 Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres sampled in Round 3 used the SQA National 5 Course assessment task appropriately to assess all candidates.

Performances from some centres showed a variety of content and language structures in the presentations and conversations. For example, some centres encouraged candidates to personalise their presentation and/or use a range of contexts or topics for the presentations. In these centres, a wider variety of questions in the conversation aided candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected. In this way, centres managed to avoid candidates recycling the same language and structures from their presentations into their conversations.

Where centres followed the guidelines from the SQA document *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information* in relation to the conversation, including the natural element, centres were able to elicit an authentic interaction between the candidate and the interlocutor. For example, this was achieved by encouraging candidates to ask for clarification in Spanish and to use idiomatic phrases.

Where the interlocutor asked a good range of open-ended questions, this provided more scope for candidates to demonstrate use of detailed language in their answers. For candidates to be able to express a wider range of ideas and opinions, and where appropriate to employ a wider range of tenses, the interlocutor should be ready to use appropriate questioning techniques to enable this to happen.

Centres are advised to refer to *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information* with regards to the recommended duration of the performance. Some centres had extended presentations which tended to limit candidates' ability to sustain the conversation using detailed language. It is good practice for interlocutors to adjust the number of questions, since candidates rarely benefit from either prolonged or brief performances as this can prevent candidates from accessing the higher pegged marks.

Assessment judgements

Almost all centres made reliable assessment judgements in relation to the marking instructions. This was encouraging and highlighted the majority of centres' understanding of the national standard.

A small number of centres were over-generous in the application of the pegged marks. This was mainly due to the limited range of language resource and grammatical accuracy appropriate to National 5 in the presentations and particularly in the conversations.

The majority of centres provided Candidate Assessment Records with detailed commentary in relation to candidates' performances, which was useful for the purposes of verification. Some centres gave detailed justification for their decision regarding a pegged mark where a presentation or conversation showed elements of different pegged mark categories.

Some centres provided evidence of detailed internal verification, for example, cross-marking and associated discussion of candidates' performances. This is good practice and in some cases resolved issues in the application of the marking instructions.

03 ▶ Section 3: General comments

Overall, the vast majority of candidates from the centres sampled were presented appropriately for National 5.

Centres should refer closely to *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information* and the National 5 Modern Languages performance: talking assessment task. Both these documents should be considered in conjunction with the Productive Grammar Grid for National 5 Modern Languages.