



NQ Verification 2021–22 Round 2

Qualification Verification Summary Report

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name: French
Verification event/visiting information: Event
Date published: June 2022

National Courses/Units verified:

C830 75	National 5	French: performance–talking (IACCA*)
C830 76	Higher	French: performance–talking (IACCA)

* Internally assessed component of course assessment

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The French verification team is pleased to report that all the centres verified in this round used the SQA’s task for the internally assessed component of course assessment for National 5/Higher: performance–talking.

The vast majority of centres adhered to the required approach to assessment at both levels.

In line with the National 5 Modern Languages: performance–talking course assessment task, centres are reminded that the presentation and follow-up conversation must be carried out in a single assessment event. The presentation must be followed by the conversation during the single recording of the performance. There should also be no interruption in recordings.

As set out in the [National 5 Modern Languages course specification](#), the National 5 performance–talking task specifies that in the conversation, candidates must go into at least one different context to the one used in the presentation.

Following a couple of questions associated with the context in the presentation, the substance of the conversation must be on a different context (culture, society, learning, employability), not simply a different topic.

Some National 5 candidates did not move on to a different context in the conversation and therefore only the maximum pegged mark 9 (or lower) could be awarded in these instances.

The performance–talking at Higher is a discussion, beginning with a few generic questions to settle the candidate, followed by questions covering at least two contexts. Some candidates only briefly moved on to a different context.

Candidates must use detailed language at National 5 and detailed and complex language at Higher in most parts of the performance in order to be considered for the top range of pegged marks.

At these levels, long lists of more than two or three items (eg places in town, school subjects) or repetitions of straightforward descriptions (eg hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary.

At Higher, the nature of some of the topics selected, or of some of the questions asked by the interlocutor, did not allow candidates to respond using detailed and complex language.

Centres must ensure that there is appropriate use of any support notes used during the performance–talking. Centres are reminded that the assessment of the performance is conducted by centres within SQA guidelines, under supervised and controlled conditions.

Candidates can refer to five headings of no more than eight words each as prompts at National 5 and Higher. These are not to be read verbatim. At National 5, this applies to the presentation only and not to the conversation.

Specifics in relation to the presentation

In the presentation at National 5, only a minority of candidates seemed to struggle with the complexity of the language. Centres should provide advice to candidates on the level of language to use and should ensure candidates understand the content of their presentation.

A few presentations were significantly short, which affected the candidates' ability to achieve the top pegged marks, even for clearly more able candidates.

Centres are advised to refer to the information in the [National 5 Modern Languages course specification](#) regarding the recommended length of the presentation, so that candidates are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the demands of the performance–talking at National 5.

Some short presentations were awarded full marks as the candidates spoke at a faster pace, and included a lot of detailed language while maintaining a clear delivery.

Specifics in relation to the conversation/discussion

Interlocutors should try to avoid asking closed questions, especially for more able candidates. Questions such as '*Tu aimes le dessin, non?*' are likely to invite very short answers and prevent candidates from demonstrating their full ability. Alternatively, these questions could be immediately followed by '*Pourquoi?*' to elicit fuller answers.

For the most part, interlocutors were supportive, especially with nervous candidates. Where interlocutors were aware of candidates' interests, this helped to elicit more natural and spontaneous conversations.

A few interlocutors did not consider the responses from the candidates before asking their next question, at times asking questions which had already been answered through earlier questions. This usually led to somewhat unnatural conversations which did not allow candidates to demonstrate a range of language.

Centres should ensure that questions are chosen so that the conversation flows naturally and gives further opportunity for personalisation and choice.

Conversations should be as spontaneous as possible for the level assessed. Some centres were too prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation, and a number of conversations appeared to be excessively rehearsed.

Centres should ask a range of questions adapted to the responses of each candidate, rather than asking the same questions in the same order to the whole cohort. The responses from all candidates in one centre were very similar. A wider variety of questions in the conversation can aid candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected.

Some interlocutors monopolised the conversation/discussion when candidates asked them questions. Although it is a conversation/discussion, the focus should be on the candidates' responses, rather than prolonged responses from interlocutors. These can be an unnecessary barrier for candidates. Interlocutors should respond to candidates' questions succinctly, before moving on to their next question.

Many conversations (National 5) or discussions (Higher) were unnecessarily prolonged or significantly short, and this affected the candidates' performances.

Centres are advised to refer to the Modern Languages course specifications for [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) regarding the recommended length of time the conversation/discussion should last, so that candidates are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the demands of the task..

The duration for the performance–talking at both levels is approximate, and the time it takes candidates to demonstrate their ability to meet the demands of the task may vary.

For example, where a candidate talks at a faster pace, the performance may be shorter than for other candidates who may need slightly longer. The approximate duration of the task at each level should serve as a guide for assessors.

At National 5, the majority of centres asked questions in the very first part of the conversation which followed on naturally from the presentation topic chosen by candidates, before moving on to the context(s) of the conversation. A couple of interlocutors moved from one context in the presentation to a different context in the conversation without any transition. Naturally moving on to other contexts allows the candidates to demonstrate a variety of language.

Candidates in one centre asked a series of questions at the end of the conversation. This is unlikely to result in a natural and spontaneous conversation/discussion. Centres should encourage candidates to ask questions during the course of the conversation/discussion, at relevant times. Candidates do not have to ask the interlocutor a question during the conversation/discussion, although this may help sustain the conversation.

Assessment judgements

The French verification team observed some excellent practice from centres where detailed commentaries were included to justify the marks awarded to each candidate.

Some centres included detailed commentaries from both the assessor and the internal verifier, which was very useful for the purposes of external verification. This is also useful for internal verifiers and promotes constructive professional dialogue.

Centres are reminded to highlight which mark was finally agreed upon between the assessor and internal verifier, and this should be reflected in the mark noted on the verification sample form.

Centres should ensure that the marks on the verification sample form match the marks included in the candidate assessment record (or similar document) with the candidate evidence.

Some centres referred closely to or highlighted the sections of the pegged marks in the marking instructions which reflected each candidate's performance. This is equally effective in terms of allocating a pegged mark and can be less time-consuming. Some centres highlighted the marking instructions in two different colours: one for the assessor and one for the internal verifier.

The French verification team is pleased to report that a large majority of centres applied the marking information for the performance—talking accurately and in line with national standards by using the productive grammar grid in conjunction with the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions, as set out in the course specifications for [National 5](#) and [Higher](#).

Overall, candidate performance was good. Pronunciation remains one of the main issues for many of the candidates who did not perform as well. Verifiers must be able to understand candidates, no matter how good the content of their presentation/conversation/discussion is.

The French verification team felt that, on occasions, assessors may have been lenient regarding pronunciation. This could have been as a result of having some inclination as to what candidates were going to say.

Some candidates performed less well due to the choice of topic (eg family relationships/sports at Higher level) or because the questions did not allow candidates to respond using language at the corresponding level.

Some performances had been marked too severely, especially when the rest of the centre's sample included performances which went beyond expectations for the level. Assessors must not compare their marks across their cohort, but solely against the marking instructions.

Specifics in relation to the sustaining the conversation element at N5:

There was some inconsistency in marking. Some centres were too severe and others too lenient in awarding some of their marks.

Candidates do not necessarily have to ask a question in the conversation to gain marks for this element. Some centres incorrectly justified not awarding pegged mark 5 when candidates did not ask any questions.

In some cases, candidates paused briefly during the conversation to think about their answers — this is a natural part of a conversation. Assessors should give candidates appropriate time to think and respond. If candidates struggle to answer certain questions, assessors should try to support the candidate by rephrasing, asking another question or changing the topic.

Some conversations sounded more natural as candidates answered with a mixture of longer and shorter answers and it was clear that this was not over-rehearsed. Using over-rehearsed conversations may not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the top pegged marks in the performance, but, above all, it does not prepare candidates for the demands of Higher/Advanced Higher or of real-life situations.

Instead, candidates could prepare for their conversation thinking about the type of questions the assessor is likely to ask on their chosen topic and thinking about which key words the interlocutor is likely to use in their questions.

Examples of how candidates could demonstrate their ability to sustain the conversation include the following:

- ◆ a mixture of extended and shorter answers (ie not a suite of short presentations/monologues)
- ◆ appropriate thinking time

- ◆ natural interjections (*euh/ bah/ ben/ alors*)
- ◆ acknowledgement that they have understood the question (*oui, je suis d'accord/non, pas du tout*). Some centres included a brief commentary to describe how the candidate showed how they had understood through non-verbal means the question/ response from the interlocutor, as would happen in a natural conversation. This is very useful for verifiers who cannot see candidates.
- ◆ asking questions that are relevant to the conversation and at relevant times
- ◆ asking for repetition or clarification (eg *pardon?*)

This is not an exhaustive list.

Candidates can still be awarded five marks for sustaining the conversation even if they hesitate and recover successfully.

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Section 3: General comments

Centres submitted candidates' performances on CDs, memory sticks or by using the digital upload service on SQA Connect. It is recommended that centres check the sound quality of all the files that are submitted for verification, and that these are correctly labelled.

Clearly labelled candidate evidence is necessary for the verification team to proceed with the verification process. Where candidates' names on the verification sample form do not match the names of the candidates on the audio recordings, such evidence cannot be verified.

Centres should ensure they provide recordings of performance—talking in an acceptable electronic evidence format. Centres should refer to the information contained in [Verification Submission Guidance Internally-Assessed Components of Course Assessment](#) document.

Centres should place USB keys into the separate plastic bag provided by SQA within the large brown envelope, and this should be sealed and clearly labelled. Where the USB key is password protected centres must enclose the password also.

For verification to proceed, centres must provide the marks awarded for each subsection of the performance—talking at National 5 (presentation, conversation, sustaining the conversation), along with a total out of 30 marks. A total out of 30 marks for the Higher discussion must be provided.

Centres must also insert the total mark for each candidate's performance—talking in the 'Mark (centre use)' column on the verification sample form.

Candidates should be entered in alphabetical order on the verification sample form, starting with all the candidates at National 5, then all the candidates at Higher.