NQ Verification 2021–22 Round 2

Qualification Verification Summary Report

01 ▶ **Section 1: Verification group information**

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

National Courses/Units verified:

C834 75   National 5   German: performance–talking (IACCA*)
C834 76   Higher   German: performance–talking (IACCA*)

* Internally assessed component of course assessment

02 ▶ **Section 2: Comments on assessment**

Assessment approaches

All centres verified in this round used the SQA guidelines for the internally-assessed component of the course assessment: National 5/Higher Modern Languages performance–talking assessment task.

Most candidates were well prepared for the task, and this was reflected in the high quality of the majority of performances. Assessors had guided candidates well in the selection of topics, allowing most candidates to use a range of tenses, structures and vocabulary appropriate to each level and to the chosen topics.

National 5

Candidates performed well when the topics chosen for the presentation were covered in detail with well-structured responses and opinions, including an introduction and conclusion.

A small number of candidates had prepared a presentation using topics which did not allow for any in-depth coverage. The content was also repetitive, lacked structure, and the level of language was more appropriate to National 4. It is recommended that centres guide candidates to choose one topic and use a range of structures, tenses and vocabulary appropriate to the level.

At National 5, candidates must use detailed language as per the Productive Grammar Grid. At this level, long lists of nouns (eg places in the town and school subjects) or repetition of straightforward descriptions (eg names, ages, pets and descriptions of hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary to access the higher pegged marks.

Centres should also be careful when guiding candidates in their choice of topic and should avoid those better suited to Higher (eg effects of smoking, drinking alcohol as part of the topic of healthy lifestyle).

The presentation should last between approximately one and two minutes at National 5, and no automatic penalty is to be applied to performances which fall outwith this duration.

It is pleasing to note that all candidates covered a different context in the conversation at National 5. Assessors should make a natural link between the presentation and the candidates' choice of context for the conversation. Starting the conversation with a question not related to the presentation does not aid the natural flow of the performance.

A very small number of centres used a number of questions in the conversation which the German verification team felt were not appropriate for the level. This resulted in candidates being unable to answer these questions beyond '*ja', 'nein'* or '*ich weiß nicht*'.

Higher

All candidates chose at least two contexts for the discussion at Higher, and for most centres, the type of questioning allowed candidates to use detailed and complex language.

For a small number of centres, the questions asked were similar to those at National 5 and there was no clear difference in the level of the language, the range of structures and range of vocabulary used.

At Higher level, candidates are not expected to use straightforward or detailed language. They should avoid using lists of nouns such as places in the towns, pets and school subjects. At this level, candidates are encouraged to give their opinions, including expanding on reasons for their opinion.

Overall, most candidates coped well with the discussion at Higher, although some candidates found it difficult to sustain the discussion as it progressed. Most interlocutors were skilled in their interactions and prompted, supported or moved on when candidates were unable to answer a question.

Centres should note that the first 1–2 minutes of the Higher discussion should be used to focus on general questions to allow the candidate to settle into the task. Open-ended questions also provide candidates with scope to expand on their answers using detailed and complex language.

Comments in relation to both National 5 and Higher

Interlocutors were generally supportive and used mostly open-ended questions. More natural and spontaneous conversations were produced where interlocutors were aware of candidates' interests.

Interlocutors should avoid over-using closed questions, as it does not allow candidates to provide sufficient detail. Candidates should also be allowed some time to think so they can formulate their answers or correct themselves.

It is worth noting that candidates do not benefit from conversations and discussions which are unnecessarily long or too short. Where conversations and discussions were short, candidates were unable to demonstrate detailed language (National 5) and detailed and complex language (Higher).

Centres should refer to the information regarding the recommended length of the conversation/discussion to ensure that candidates are able to meet the demands of the National 5/Higher performance-talking task as set out in the course specifications for National 5 and Higher.

A small number of centres were overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation/discussion or used the same questions for all candidates, which did not allow candidates any personalisation and choice. Since the conversation at National 5 and the discussion at Higher should contain spontaneous and natural language, centres should avoid overly rehearsing conversations and discussions.

A wider variety of questions in the conversation/discussion allows candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected as set out in the performance–talking task in the course specification. Centres are reminded that candidates should prepare for their performance–talking assessment independently to personalise their performance. This means candidates can select their own topics of interest, vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Centres are reminded that candidates may use brief notes and/or use visual aids. Candidates may refer to up to five headings of not more than eight words each to assist them (this applies to the presentation only at National 5). The headings are prompts and are not to be read out word for word.

At Higher level candidates may use extended answers, although assessors should dissuade candidates from responding to questions with mini-presentations. Longer answers can appear to be overly rehearsed, and discussions should include a range of short and long answers. Overly rehearsed conversations/discussions may not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the top marks, and may not prepare candidates for the demands of Advanced Higher or real life situations.

Candidates should also be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability at both levels. It is also important to

encourage differentiation through the choice of topics/sub-topics and a range of questioning techniques.

It is good practice for the interlocutor to engage actively in the conversation, but care must be taken that answers to candidates' questions do not detract from the purpose of the assessment. Interlocutors should be mindful of this and keep answers short, if asked questions by candidates.

It is worth noting that native or near-native candidates need the same level of support and guidance during the performance as non-native speakers do.

Assessment judgements

Most centres applied the marking instructions in line with national standards at both National 5 and Higher. Some centres were 'not accepted' as their application of the marking instructions were either severe, lenient, or inconsistent. In this instance, centres should make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 and Higher German talking performances (IACCAs) published on the SQA secure website.

Centres should also use the marking instructions in line with the Productive Grammar Grid to ensure that candidates use detailed language at National 5 and detailed and complex language at Higher.

Reference should also be made to the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions of the Modern Languages course specification documents for National 5 and Higher.

Centres should also note that performances can be uneven and some variation in the performance is to be expected, even within the pegged mark in the marking instructions.

Performances should be marked holistically and positively and do not need to be perfect to be awarded the highest marks. All aspects of the performance should be taken into consideration: content, accuracy, language resource and interaction (conversation only at National 5).

When explaining assessment judgements, assessors should refer closely to the detailed marking instructions and provide examples of candidate utterances, where possible. This helps external verifiers to understand how assessment judgements were reached.

03 ▸ Section 3: General comments

The majority of performance–talking evidence was submitted using USB drives. Some centres submitted their evidence digitally through SQA Connect. Both physical and digital evidence was clearly labelled with the candidates' information.

The majority of the tracks were audible, although in a small number of recordings the candidate was not always clear. It is important to remind centres that the audio recording device should be placed near the candidate to ensure that their responses can be heard. Centres are reminded that the performance-talking should be recorded in an appropriate location with minimal background noise.

Centres should ensure that all performances are recorded and stored securely so they are available for verification. Centres are reminded that the recording must be playable on a variety of devices and not solely on the device on which it was made.

Some centres provided robust internal verification evidence, including evidence of professional dialogue between the assessor and the internal verifier. This allowed the German verification team to gain an insight into how marks were awarded and how any disagreement was resolved. This is to be commended and is good practice.

A number of centres with only one German teacher found a creative solution to verification, using a mixture of email and online meetings to verify candidates' work. This collaborative approach is an example of exemplary practice.

Where centres include school internal verification policies in their submission, assessors and internal verifiers should demonstrate how the policy was applied in the context of the performance–talking assessments. Centres should also provide some commentary from the internal verifier on the discussion about each judgement. For the purposes of external verification it is more helpful to have some detail in the verification notes as to why one mark was awarded over another.

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.

Preparation of the sample for external (SQA) verification
Centres are kindly requested to thoroughly check their sample submission and all related paperwork.

SQA generic documentation relating to external verification may refer to internally-assessed components of course assessment at Advanced Higher. However, this does not apply in Modern Languages. The performance–talking at Advanced Higher is externally assessed by a visiting assessor.

For preparation of future samples for external (SQA) verification, centres should refer to the key publications for verification of the performance–talking:

Verification guidance for internally-assessed course assessment in 2021-22

This publication (and other documents for the verification of units) are available on the [SQA National Qualifications external verification](#) web page.