



NQ Verification 2021–22 Round 1

Qualification Verification Summary Report

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Section 1: Verification group information

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

National Courses/Units verified:

H23C74	National 4	Democracy in Scotland and the UK
H23F74	National 4	Social Issues in the UK
H23G74	National 4	International Issues
H23C73	National 3	Democracy in Scotland and the UK

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The most common assessment approach used by centres was SQA-generated unit assessment support packs. Some centres did submit adapted or centre-generated assessments, which mostly corresponded to the appropriate assessment standards for the specific level being assessed.

Some centres produced very effective support booklets, particularly at National 4, that clearly outlined the tasks undertaken and the level of candidate performance needed to achieve specific assessment standards. These tended to be effective in giving guidance to the candidate in how to access the assessment standards. There was continued evidence of most centres using the appropriate question prompts and the correct number of sources.

Within the submissions the most common approach was in the form of written responses to assessment questions. However, some candidates produced posters and information leaflets that allowed them to access and achieve the specific assessment standards and overall outcomes. All of these were

considered to be acceptable ways of allowing the candidates to achieve each of the assessment standards.

Some centres continue to inflate the assessment standards for some of the outcomes, often by the use of question prompts such as 'in detail'. The impact of this is that centres apply their own standards and incorrectly judge the candidate to have not achieved the assessment standard or met the overall outcome when they may have actually done so. Some centres are assessing at a standard comparable to National 5 and not National 4, particularly for the knowledge-based questions which require straightforward and not detailed descriptions or explanations. Some centres submitted two questions for an assessment standard 2.1 instead of one for assessment standard 2.1 and one for assessment standard 2.2.

Centres are reminded that they should follow the specific assessment standards and apply the relevant judging the evidence table when assessing candidate performance and that it is these standards that the candidate should be judged against.

If centres are amending SQA unit assessment support packs, they should state which specific unit assessment support pack is being amended.

Overall, the majority of evidence submitted in terms of approaches to assessment was valid and in line with national standards. Centres are reminded that if they are devising their own approaches to assessment, then they can use the SQA's prior verification service to validate their centre submissions.

Assessment judgements

There is evidence from most centre submissions of national standards being applied across candidates and between colleagues for each of the levels that were sampled.

Centres are continuing to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidates' evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and outcomes. These judgements are also being correctly verified as part of the centre's internal verification procedures with, for some centres, a high level of professional dialogue and discussion taking place with regards to assessment judgements.

There was evidence from most centres that the SQA documentation (assessment and judging the evidence table) was being applied effectively. In some cases, centres were successfully adapting the judging the evidence table to meet the specific demands of the centre's assessment tasks. This personalisation should ensure consistent assessment judgements being made between colleagues and across candidates within centres.

Centres used the judging the evidence table effectively in articulating the assessment standard to markers and verifiers. The judging the evidence table should be used by centres to ensure consistency of assessment judgements.

There was evidence of centres continuing to use annotation effectively on scripts at the section in candidate submissions where they have achieved the relevant assessment standard. This is considered to be good and effective practice as it can facilitate consistent judgements between colleagues and across candidates.

Within some centres, there was evidence of cross-marking and random sampling of candidate evidence tied to robust and consistent internal verification policies and procedures. These measures ensure consistency of assessment judgement across not just all candidates but also between markers and the centre's verifier.

Where candidate submissions were in the form of a poster or booklet, centres were effectively annotating on the submission at the specific point where it was judged that the candidate had achieved the assessment standard. This judgement was then countersigned by the centre verifier.

Whilst some centres clearly had effective internal verification policies and used these to inform assessment judgements, a minority of centres did not submit any statement or policy of internal verification. Centres are reminded to follow SQA guidance in relation to internal verification.

There was evidence of continuing professional dialogue taking place within some centres in relation to the judging of assessment standards in line with a robust internal verification process and procedure. Some centres produced and made good use of workbooks/logbooks in effectively supporting candidates to achieve the assessment standards. These approaches highlighted the high level of dialogue and discussion occurring between colleagues and candidates, particularly where remediation was necessary to allow specific candidates to achieve assessment standards and overall outcomes.

There was some evidence of the candidate assessment record being used very effectively when recording candidate progress and achievements. There was also evidence of very detailed candidate feedback being given in some centres. However, some centres should consider using the candidate assessment record more thoroughly and effectively. The candidate assessment record should be used to log any verbal remediation between candidate and assessor and the outcome of this discussion should be recorded on the candidate assessment record.

If centres are using verbal remediation, they should note that when this is the case and follow their own internal verification processes and ensure that the candidate's verbal response is noted, assessed and the assessment judgement agreed by the centre's verifier. If a positive outcome is agreed during this two-

stage process, this should be recorded and the candidate assessment record or centre record amended.

Centres should be reminded to submit original candidate evidence and not photocopies of such. This is to ensure that it is clear to the external verification team that cross-marking has taken place using different coloured pens.

Centres are reminded that the National 4 threshold approach for re-assessing candidates is still valid for session 2021–22 and should be applied where relevant. The SQA threshold guidance states:

‘If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of Assessment Standards they will be judged to have passed the Unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

The specific requirements for this Unit are as follows:

3 out of the 4 Assessment Standards must be achieved

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of reassessment where that is required’.

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Section 3: General comments

Overall, the standard and quality of centre submissions was good with evidence of national standards being applied consistently across candidates and centres with presentations being made at the appropriate level. Most centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards and there was evidence of consistent application of these standards between colleagues. Some centres provided very effective task booklets which offered support and guidance to candidates regarding how they should approach each assessment standard.

There was also evidence, within some centres, of thorough and effective internal assessment and verification procedures. These procedures were robust with evidence of cross-marking and annotation of candidate scripts by both marker and internal verifier. Some centres appear to be having detailed discussions regarding candidate performance and the consistent application of assessment standards. Some centres are effectively recording candidate performance and progress through detailed and specific candidate assessment records.