



NQ verification 2022–23 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	April 2023

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23C 73	National 3	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
H23F 73	National 3	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
H23G 73	National 3	Modern Studies: International Issues
H23C 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
H23F 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
H23G 74	National 4	Modern Studies: International Issues

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Overall, the majority of evidence submitted in terms of approaches to assessment was valid and in line with national standards.

The most common assessment approach used by centres was SQA-generated unit assessment support packs. Some centres submitted adapted or centre-generated assessments, which mostly corresponded to the appropriate assessment standards for the specific level being assessed. Centres are reminded that if they are producing their own assessment materials then they can submit these to SQA to be prior verified. This ensures that assessment materials are appropriate and fully in line with the national standard.

Within the submissions, the most common approach was in the form of written responses to assessment questions.

Some centres continue to inflate the assessment standards for some of the outcomes, often by using question prompts such as 'in detail' and the allocation of numerical marks. Centres are reminded that the prompt, 'in detail', is a differentiator between a National 4 and National 5 assessment and centres must not use this prompt for any National 4 assessments. Additionally, as these assessments are a simple pass or fail criteria based on the candidate meeting the individual assessment standards, there should be no marks on assessment materials. The impact of this is that centres often 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 done so.

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

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

Assessment judgements

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

Centres continue to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidates' evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and outcomes. These judgements are, in the main, being verified correctly 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 as evidenced on candidate work and candidate assessment records or pupil progress logs.

There was evidence from most centres that SQA documentation (assessment and judging evidence table) was being applied effectively. In some cases, centres were successfully adapting the judging 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 evidence table effectively in articulating the assessment standard to markers and verifiers. The judging evidence table should be used by centres to ensure consistency of assessment judgements.

There was evidence of centres using annotations effectively on candidates' work 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 judgements across all candidates, and between markers and the centre's verifier.

While 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 and, if they need further support, access SQA's [NQ internal verification toolkit](#) for advice on how to create and implement an effective internal verification process in the centre.

There was evidence of continued and ongoing professional discussion and dialogue taking place in 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 or 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. Some centres were very effective in logging remediation discussions and outcomes on candidates' work and candidate assessment records.

There was some evidence of the candidate assessment record being used very effectively when recording candidate progress and achievements. In addition, very detailed candidate feedback was being given in some centres. However, more centres should consider using candidate assessment records more thoroughly and effectively as well as looking to embed this into their verification processes as standard.

The candidate assessment record should be used more consistently by all centres 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 this 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 updated to reflect any further progress and attainment.

Centres are reminded that the National 4 threshold approach for re-assessing candidates remains valid 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 re-assessment where that is required.'

Therefore, to activate the threshold approach, candidates should fully attempt all assessment standards and not merely three out of the four of these assessment standards.

Section 3: general comments

Overall, the standard and quality of centre submissions was good with evidence of the national standard generally being applied consistently across candidates and centres, with candidate presentations being made at the appropriate level. From the centre submissions, it is apparent most centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards, and there was evidence of consistent application of these standards between colleagues, as well as clearly articulated professional dialogue taking place among and between centre 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 evidence, in some centres, of thorough and effective internal assessment and verification procedures. These procedures were robust with evidence of cross-marking and annotation of candidates' work by both marker and internal verifier. Some centres appear to be having detailed discussions regarding candidate performance and the consistent application of assessment standards, with these discussions being recorded and annotated on candidates' work and evidence files. Some centres are highly effective in their implementation of their internal verification policy with clear evidence of it being applied thoroughly and consistently across all candidates and between all colleagues. Some centres are effectively recording candidate performance and progress through detailed and specific candidate assessment records. It is considered good practice to submit a detailed and thorough candidate assessment record that highlights the decisions reached and the reasons for these.