National Qualifications 2018
Qualification Verification Summary Report
Scottish Baccalaureate in Languages

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

Titles/levels of NQ units verified:

Scottish Baccalaureate in Languages: Interdisciplinary Project

General comments

Out of 18 presenting centres, 14 were selected for external verification, with a total of 28 candidates' projects being verified.

Eleven centres made assessment decisions that were upheld by external verification (79%), and these centres were commended for meeting national standards.

Decisions for 3 candidates from 3 centres were deemed to have been severe, and a higher grade was recommended for these candidates.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Assessors have a good knowledge of the unit specifications and instruments of assessment. Feedback given to candidates in the early stages indicates a sound understanding of the assessment criteria and how candidates can access these within the context of their project.

The exemplification materials provided on the SQA website were used by all centres and candidates. Assessors attending the quality forum meetings commented on the usefulness of these materials. Centres should be aware, however, that the format of the exemplification materials differs from the updated templates that candidates are now required to use.

Evidence requirements

External verification requires submission of five pieces of evidence completed fully by the candidate, and a completed assessor report. Some submissions were incomplete. This issue should be apparent at internal verification, and where it is not picked up, it raises questions about the robustness of the internal verification process.

There continues to be an issue with centres submitting progress logs and interim reviews. Use of the checklist provided by SQA along with submission of paperwork should prevent this being an issue in the future.

Administration of assessments

Assessors have a clear idea of the use of the assessments; however, they should be encouraging candidates to add more depth in the early stages of the project — the proposal and plan. A well-considered proposal and plan can drive a project and motivate the candidate through to completion.

The internal verification process in most centres is now well-established, with centre representatives attending quality forum meetings giving insightful accounts of their procedures. There is evidence of collaborative approaches involving other departments and in some cases different centres. This strengthens the internal verification process and contributes to accurate assessment decisions, as well as providing ways to extend experience to other staff within centres.

Areas of good practice

External verifiers commented on some candidates taking a bullet-point approach to the objectives within the plan. This creates a strong platform for development of their project and provides a clear focus for each of the stages within the project.

Several centres have taken on board feedback from previous years from either their internal or external verification report, or from speaking to the external verifier at the quality forum meeting. This has resulted in improved application of national standards.

Many candidates are showing great creativity in making excellent use of external agencies and learning environments.

Specific areas for improvement

Not all centres have used the updated templates. The SQA website provided these templates for use from 2017–18. These now require candidates to expand on the broad contexts section. Centres not using the updated templates have been advised of this in their verification report.

Some centres need to encourage candidates to design the project title and proposal to be clearer and better thought out. Some proposals are very one dimensional, and a more considered proposal can make a project more meaningful and create a better idea of where it is headed. This will make grading criteria more accessible.

External verifiers commented on several projects where the contingencies are weak and irrelevant. Too often, contingencies refer to resorting to internet searches for information. This impacts on the development of communication skills, and consequently on the awarding of marks to criteria relating to these.