



**National Qualifications 2018  
Internal Assessment Report  
Scottish Studies:  
Scotland in Focus Unit**

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:

HY3P 43 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF Level 3)

HY3P 44 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF Level 4)

HY3P 45 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF Level 5)

HY3P 46 Scottish Studies: Scotland in Focus (SCQF Level 6)

## **General comments**

Verification visits were made to nine centres during March–April 2018. The majority of these centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the national standard. One of the centres was accepted for verification after further evidence had been provided; this centre was willing to reassess candidates after work had been done to support candidates to reach the required standard.

Verification samples across centres included candidate evidence from Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. Often further encouragement/work with candidates within centres could have allowed achievement at the next level.

Visiting verification enhances the verification process; dialogue with centre staff was positive and allowed assessment decisions to be confirmed. Qualification verifiers saw a variety of activities, and advised centres to ensure that learners have scope for personalisation and choice within the selection of topics. They found that candidates were, in the main, presented at the correct level. Centre staff used the verification visits to seek advice where there was debate.

Visiting verifiers advised centres to use and record dialogue with candidates to support assessment decisions and to remember that the main purpose of the Scotland in Focus Unit is to broaden learners' knowledge of Scotland.

## **Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials**

In general, centres were using a full range of appropriate SQA documentation to support candidates to reach the national standard.

### **Evidence requirements**

Evidence requirements were clearly understood by most centres. Use of the candidate and assessor checklists is crucial to document assessment decisions. Comments added to assessor checklists proved to be particularly helpful to verifiers; these are not mandatory, but significantly add to our understanding of the assessment of individual candidate evidence.

### **Administration of assessments**

Centres had judged candidate evidence to the national standard effectively in most cases. Visiting verification appeared to be helpful in terms of confirming that the correct decisions had been taken, as well as allowing centre staff to adjust levels, in some cases, following discussion. Evidence of internal verification was generally in place.

## **Areas of good practice**

Based on evidence seen during visiting verification this year, we are pleased to confirm that:

- ◆ most centres were using published, or amended, candidate and assessor checklists with detailed comments; this was enhanced by dialogue with staff during visits by adding clarity to reasons behind assessment decisions
- ◆ some centres were effectively using assessor checklists and logbooks to record candidate progress through the unit; this served to document where analysis/evaluation had been evident, often through dialogue with candidates
- ◆ most centres used either a candidate brief or an introductory set of lessons to ensure candidates knew what was expected of them. In addition, centres were often using dialogue with candidates to tailor the activity to their specific skills. Personalisation and choice in the selection of topics for the Scotland in Focus unit was evident in a number of centres.
- ◆ dialogue between staff involved in assessing/verifying often revealed that detailed debate/discussion had helped in assessment judgements; use of the 'read across' document (highlighting the requirements across the different levels) had in many cases aided the assessment process
- ◆ the practice of interviewing/questioning candidates was often used to demonstrate that knowledge of Scotland had been broadened; centres need to be more aware that reflection, analysis and evaluation can also become apparent using this means and that comments on assessor checklists can be used to document this
- ◆ centres are encouraged to continue to give advice to candidates to allow assessment at a higher level; candidates should undertake additional analysis, reflection or generation of further evidence on what has been learned about the Scottish Focus
- ◆ centres were keen to use verification visits to ask advice and gain confidence in their assessment judgements; often this extended to discussion of plans to expand use of the award with larger/more varied groups of candidates

## **Specific areas for improvement**

The verification team highlighted the following points for consideration:

- ◆ centres continue to be advised to use candidate and assessor checklists; the level of support given to candidates, evidence of interviews with candidates to determine analysis/evaluation should be clearly documented
- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to undertake different activities to match to their individual skills; whilst written reports are entirely acceptable, other forms of product e.g. artwork, electronic presentation, talks to peers, interview, group debate, and drama production are also valid
- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to revisit and amend aims in light of their findings; these should be clearly stated

- ◆ centres should check that candidates are researching using a variety of sources to broaden their knowledge of Scotland rather than using knowledge already gained through previous study
- ◆ use of a variety of types of specific sources is preferred; candidates could be encouraged to use books, TV documentaries, interviews and surveys, as well as internet sources (not search engines, specific websites/webpages should be referenced)
- ◆ candidates should be encouraged to ensure that specific sources are clearly identified either in a logbook or in a detailed bibliography; evaluation of sources should also be encouraged at all levels
- ◆ graphics and illustrative materials should be encouraged as methods of processing information; if integrated/used effectively within the product these can enhance candidate work in terms of analysis
- ◆ centres must clearly instruct candidates to express information in their own words and that material should not be lifted directly from source unless acknowledged; centres are advised to enact a stringent approach to avoid plagiarism
- ◆ encouraging universal use of units within NQ courses 'with a Scottish Context' is recommended; this will allow more candidates to achieve the full award — centres should note candidates need to be entered for these units and a pass resulted to allow achievement of the award