National Qualifications 2018

Qualification Verification Summary Report

Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences

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

National Qualifications (NQ) Units

During the 2017–18 session, the following NQ unit was verified:

Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences: Interdisciplinary project

General comments

This year a total of 10 centres presented candidates for the Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Project. External verification was carried out on projects from 16 candidates across 7 centres.

Six centres made assessment judgements in line with national standards (86%) and these centres were commended for their accuracy in their verification reports. External verifiers judged the assessment for one candidate to have been lenient and this candidate was recommended a lower grade.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Mostly, assessors have a good understanding of the instruments of assessment and unit specification. Four centres also presented in other curriculum areas and there is evidence of strong links across the disciplines from quality forum meetings. This provides invaluable support for assessors in all areas.

Experienced and first time presenting centres all made use of the exemplification material available on the SQA website. Both assessors and candidates accessed the material and assessors commented on its value at the quality forum meeting. However, centres should be aware that the format of exemplar materials differs from the updated templates, which candidates must now use.

Evidence requirements

Some centres were not represented at the quality forum meeting. It was apparent that those attending had a clear understanding of the evidence requirements for the unit. Representatives made valuable contributions to discussions and appreciated the opportunity to interact with external verifiers and representatives from other centres to further develop their knowledge.

Most centres submitted the mandatory five pieces of candidate evidence plus a completed assessor report. However, a few centres omitted timelines from their submissions. Producing a relevant, realistic timeline is a C grade criterion. If the timeline is not included within the body of the plan, it must be included as a separate document to enable verification of the overall grade awarded.

Administration of assessments

With more centres presenting candidates across different curriculum areas, many have developed robust internal verification procedures. At quality forum meetings, some representatives have described the team approach taken by their centre to supporting all interdisciplinary project candidates. This is commendable but not always possible.

For centres in more rural locations and/or with fewer candidates, sound support mechanisms and internal verification processes help to ensure consistency and maintenance of standards. External verifiers have commended centres in their verification reports.

Areas of good practice

Some candidates are making good use of the italicised prompts within each section to help them keep focused and remain on track.

External verifiers have commented on the quality of some assessor comments, which provide valuable insight into the thoughts behind the awarding of grades.

Several centres were commended for their approach to internal verification and quality assurance.

Specific areas for improvement

Progress logs and interim review documentation continue to be submitted in addition to the required evidence. Logs and reviews are for candidate/centre use and are not considered during external verification. The updated templates indicate this at the top of the two relevant pages.

Feedback to candidates should differ in context from comments made in the assessor report. Feedback to the candidate should support and challenge the candidate, and could summarise discussions that have taken place. Assessor comments should be directed at verifiers, both internal and external, and should provide insight into grading decisions.

Many projects are limited in their scope and are borderline in their interdisciplinary nature. Mentors/assessors should encourage candidates to take more care in choosing a topic and ensure that projects are not one-dimensional as this limits opportunities to meet the assessment criteria.