National Qualifications 2015
Internal Assessment Report
Languages Baccalaureate

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:

Languages Baccalaureate: Interdisciplinary Project

General comments

With external verification carried out on a sampling basis, evidence from 18 centres was submitted for verification of accuracy of assessment decisions. This represented over 80% of presenting centres.

Of the 29 projects verified, External Verifiers agreed with the grading decisions of 17 projects. Assessment decisions of 11 centres were judged accurate for all of their candidates. Issues were identified with assessment decisions in seven centres. The assessment decisions on seven candidates in five centres were deemed to have been severe and a higher grade was recommended. The assessment decisions on five candidates in two centres were deemed to have been lenient and a lower grade was recommended.

Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

With 11 centres having previously presented candidates for the Interdisciplinary Project, there is a sound understanding of the specifications of the Unit. It is evident that most teachers supporting candidates with their Interdisciplinary Project are familiar with the instruments of assessment and the exemplification materials. All centres accessed materials on the SQA website for use by both candidates and assessors.

There is evidence from Quality Forum events that experience and expertise in supporting candidates through the Interdisciplinary Project is developing across the curriculum, with several centres also presenting candidates in other subject areas. This provides strong support for assessors and candidates, and this is strengthening the assessment decisions within centres.

Centres continue to support the Quality Forum events and express their appreciation of the benefits they gain from them. This participation is a vital part of the external verification process, providing insight into the conduct and assessment of Interdisciplinary Projects across the country.

Evidence Requirements

There is a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Unit within many centres. All centres submitted all the mandatory pieces of evidence and an Assessor Report for each candidate. In a few cases there was no feedback given to candidates on their Proposal and Plan — feedback is vital to inform the candidate of progress and, where comments are positive, provide motivation to

the candidate. Omission of feedback has been highlighted in relevant External Verifier (EV) reports.

Candidates carried out a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects. In some centres there were several candidates all working on individual, complex projects. Centres were commended in their EV report on their support and obvious enthusiasm in working with these candidates.

Administration of assessments

With many centres having previously presented candidates for the Interdisciplinary Project Unit, there is a strong understanding of the requirements of internal verification. In centres presenting across several subject areas there are some excellent examples of co-operative, cross-curricular internal verification between departments and this approach has provided excellent support to staff within centres in understanding and applying national standards.

Almost all candidates used the templates from the SQA website, with a few choosing to alter them slightly. This has caused no issues this year, though assessors should advise candidates to check that they are not omitting any information required in the evidence that might impact on meeting grading criteria. Candidates should be encouraged to use the italicised prompts to help them complete the templates.

At the Quality Forum event, centre representatives gave full accounts of their internal verification processes. Where no representative could attend, External Verifiers have commented on the lack of information on the internal verification process. This information is vital to help judge the robustness of the assessment process.

Areas of good practice

Centres are taking on board advice from External Verifier reports from previous years and are encouraging candidates towards much more diverse projects that are solidly interdisciplinary in nature. Topics range from comparisons between Scotland and France in spending culture and disposable income; lives of refugees and asylum seekers; cuisine; and racism; to how IT can support the learning of modern languages.

It is interesting to note that some centres are supporting candidates to move outwith the languages taught in schools, which increases the diversity of project evidence being submitted, for example, Scots and Polish.

In many centres, the quality of assessor feedback and comments is exceptional, providing strong motivation to candidates and contributing to the verification process. Centres have been commended in their EV report where this is evident.

With the support of the local education authority, some centres are part of a consolidated, rigorous internal verification process which ensures consistency across several centres. While there are many examples of other equally robust

mechanisms, this contributes to the broadening of support and expertise across education authorities and is commended by External Verifiers.

Specific areas for improvement

Most Assessor Reports contained high quality comments which were very helpful to the external verification process. However, some assessors are directing comments in the Assessor Report at candidates and not at verifiers — both internal and external. This should be picked up at internal verification.

Centres should ensure that all sections of templates are completed, and should encourage candidates to use the prompts within each section to help. Some evidence is submitted with sections not completed, though, due to the holistic grading of the project, evidence can be found across all pieces. This can, however, disadvantage candidates and restrict access to certain criteria. Centres have been advised in their verification report where this is the case, though it should be picked up at internal verification.

Candidates should be encouraged to produce more detailed timelines. This can also contribute towards dependencies and help candidates keep on track better.

Centres should ensure that evidence is signed off by candidates, assessors and internal verifiers with corresponding dates for time of completion of that piece of evidence and not time of printing.