



**National Qualifications 2016  
Internal Assessment Report  
Scottish Baccalaureate in Science**

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

# National Qualifications units

Scottish Baccalaureate in Science: Interdisciplinary Project

## General comments

External verification was carried out on a sampling basis, with 27 centres submitting evidence.

Of the 71 projects verified, external verifiers agreed with the grading decisions of 55 projects (77%). Eighteen centres were accurate for all of their candidates demonstrating a clear and accurate understanding of the standards.

Issues were identified with assessment decisions in nine centres. The assessment decisions for three candidates in three centres were deemed to have been severe and a higher grade was recommended. For 13 candidates in six different centres, the assessment decisions were deemed to have been lenient and a lower grade recommended.

## Unit specification, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

In general, assessors are very familiar with the unit specification, though new presenting centres should consider both this and the exemplification provided on SQA's website to support both candidates and assessors. Many centres presenting in Science are also presenting in other curricular areas and are demonstrating a collegiate approach to broaden familiarity with the assessment process for the Interdisciplinary Project.

## Evidence requirements

Many centres have a good understanding of the evidence required for the unit. There continue to be instances where centres have not submitted all mandatory pieces of evidence, the main example being where timelines have been produced outwith the templates and this separate document is referred to within the evidence but not provided. The external verifier report to centres has commented where this has occurred.

Also interim reviews, progress logs, and in some cases discs and copies of presentations and reports, are still frequently submitted along with the mandatory evidence. These are not required and are not taken into consideration during central verification. Again, where appropriate, centres have been advised of this in their external verifier report.

Centres should ensure that candidates remain focused on the process and not the product when completing templates. Candidates should be encouraged to use the italicised prompts in each section to help them provide evidence of their skills development and the manner in which the project was conducted.

## **Administration of assessments**

All centres used the Science template provided on the SQA website. These were completed in full by candidates.

Many centres have developed a strong understanding of how to complete the assessor report. External verifiers have commented on the richness and quality of assessor comments in the assessor reports. These are vital in giving insight into grading decisions and informing the external verification process.

Many good examples of internal verification are evident with centres who are presenting across the curricular areas. The assessment and internal verification process is strengthened by a collegiate approach. This provides excellent support for assessors and makes the assessment decisions more robust.

However, in some centres, internal verification is not picking up on basic omissions in paperwork, for example unchecked criteria in assessor reports and missing dates.

## **Areas of good practice**

There is evidence of some centres developing a team approach to delivering and supporting the Interdisciplinary Project. This allows sustainable support for candidates and develops expertise across the curricular areas.

It is pleasing to see candidates continue to develop new, innovative project themes and methods of presentation. Candidates have developed blogs, websites and videos, but must ensure that they submit evidence of evaluation of these methods, otherwise they become superfluous.

Many assessors provide extremely useful comments in the assessor report, providing reasoned arguments for their awarding of criteria. These comments give real insight into their thought process and grading decisions. These comments should be directed towards internal/external verifiers and not to candidates.

It is evident from returning centres that they are using the information they gain from the quality forum event and the development points from their external verifier report to improve their practice.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

Assessors should encourage candidates to consider the relevance of their projects in relation to the real world and to extend their range of learning environments. Several candidates limited themselves by conducting online research and presenting to peers, making it more challenging to access certain grading criteria. Some projects were little more than Advanced Higher science projects with a presentation of the findings at the end. An Interdisciplinary Project must be much broader and take candidates into new learning environments to develop their generic skills.

External verification reports for many centres drew attention to the signing and dating of evidence. This should take place at the time the evidence is submitted by the candidate and signed off by assessor rather than when it is printed for submission for external verification.

Group projects continue to present challenges to both candidates and assessors. A group project needs to have sufficient breadth to allow each candidate to access all grading criteria individually. Each candidate must make it clear across all pieces of evidence what their role has been in the project and how it related to the whole project, and evaluations must be relevant to their own development. More information on group projects, including exemplar projects can be found on the [Group Projects page](#) of the Scottish Baccalaureate web pages.