



**National Qualifications 2016  
Internal Assessment 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 units

Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences: Interdisciplinary Project

## General comments

Nine presenting centres were subject to external verification in this the fourth year of delivery of the Interdisciplinary Project Unit in Social Sciences.

Of the 14 projects verified, external verifiers agreed with the grading decisions of 13 (93%), demonstrating a clear and accurate understanding of the standards.

Issues were identified in one centre where for one candidate the assessment decision was deemed to be lenient and a lower grade was recommended.

## Unit specification, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

There is strong evidence from quality forum events that experience and expertise in supporting the Interdisciplinary Project is being passed on from other staff within centres. Indeed of the ten presenting centres, eight also presented candidates in one of the other curricular areas this year.

Many centres have now developed cross-curricular support for candidates and this is consolidating the familiarity with the instruments of assessment and the exemplification materials available. This also has a positive impact on the support for candidates and assessors, and strengthens the assessment decisions within centres.

## Evidence requirements

There is a developing understanding of the evidence requirements for the unit within most centres. All centres submitted all of the mandatory pieces of evidence and a completed assessor report for each candidate.

Most assessor reports were completed with extremely useful comments regarding grading decisions. These comments provide a valuable insight into the assessors' thoughts.

Some centres continue to provide interim reviews, progress logs, and in some cases copies of presentations and reports, along with the mandatory evidence. These are not required and are not taken into consideration during central verification.

## **Administration of assessments**

All centres used the Social Sciences templates from SQA's website, though centres should encourage candidates to be more aware of the italicised prompts to help guide them in completing templates.

Internal verification procedures in many presenting centres are now well developed and this is reflected in the number of grades which have been substantiated during external verification. A wide variety of approaches to internal verification are in evidence and, with more centres also presenting in Expressive Arts, Languages and Science, there are some excellent examples of inter-departmental verification in many of these centres. Other centres are developing equally valid and robust processes of internal verification. At quality forum events, centre representatives gave full accounts of their internal verification mechanisms.

## **Areas of good practice**

Candidates are being encouraged to access a wide variety of learning environments, however some projects suffer from being too narrow in their focus.

This year saw a wide range of interesting and innovative projects carried out with enthusiasm, broadening candidate experience beyond the classroom. One project theme incorporated both Classical Studies and Media while others covered a variety of topics such as the EU Referendum, voter apathy and censorship.

Many centres have encouraged candidates to expand on the broad contexts, explaining why they have selected particular contexts. This is a good way to focus candidates on the context of their project and ensure that their project has sufficient scope to access all grading criteria.

Many centres presenting in more than one curricular area have been commended on their cross-curricular approach to supporting the Interdisciplinary Project across the school. This helps to spread expertise within the centre and provides invaluable and sustainable support for candidates and assessors.

## **Specific areas for improvement**

A few centres need to improve their internal verification process to focus on verifying grading decisions rather than cross-marking. Where centres are presenting in more than one curricular area, mentors and assessors should be working together, verifying reciprocally and supporting each other and the candidate. Where this is not the case, centres should try to forge links with other presenting centres.

Some projects are being approved by assessors which are mainly internet-based research projects with little external contact. These do not allow candidates to fully meet grading criteria as they are not sufficiently interdisciplinary and do not allow candidates to access a variety of learning environments. Also poor

guidance on project choice in some centres has resulted in narrow project topics which have disadvantaged candidates. Projects should contain sufficient strands to allow candidates the opportunity to potentially meet all grade A criteria.

Some centres continue to submit progress logs and interim reviews along with the mandatory evidence. Centres are reminded that only the five mandatory pieces plus assessor report are required.