



Alternative Certification Model 2020–21: National QA Exercise Key Messages

Subject	Spanish
Level	National 5

This report provides information on themes emerging from the national quality assurance exercise, which is part of the Alternative Certification Model for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

A sample of candidates' assessed work from selected centres was reviewed to determine whether assessment was in line with the national standard. The evidence submitted may have been partial or incomplete and is unlikely to have represented all of the evidence that will be gathered to allow the centre to determine a provisional result.

The centres selected for review in this subject and at this level have been provided with specific feedback on the evidence that they submitted. The comments below highlight key points about the assessment approaches and instruments used and the sampled centres' assessment judgements, for all centres delivering the subject at this level to reflect upon and make any appropriate adjustments.

Section 1: Comments on approach to assessment

All centres adopted an approach to assessment that closely followed SQA's guidance on gathering key evidence.

Most centres provided evidence of reading, writing and listening with a minimum of one piece of evidence for each, demonstrating a range of attainment.

Some centres provided evidence of performance-talking and a few centres submitted supplementary evidence, in the form of assignment-writing.

Centres made effective use of the SQA 2021 assessment resources.

A few centres devised their own assessments using a range of SQA past papers, which had appropriate course coverage and level of demand.

Other centres used a commercially produced paper, which contained appropriate course coverage and was mostly in line with national standards, however the level of demand in one listening question was insufficient. Centres following the same approach should take account of this when selecting instruments of assessment.

It is good practice to check all reading texts, listening transcripts and questions before assessment and during the assessment process to ensure correct level of demand. Centres should ensure that marking instructions are comprehensive and that they are applied accurately.

It is important that centres are aware of the most up-to-date conditions of assessment, particularly when using past papers as the basis for assessment. For example, there is no longer an overall purpose question in the listening or reading question papers.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Centres' assessment judgements were mostly valid, reliable and in line with national standards. They were clearly recorded against specific aspects of performance.

Most candidates were assessed accurately and consistently in accordance with national standards. However, there were instances where marking instructions had been applied too leniently. This was apparent in aspects of reading and listening, where some candidates had given insufficient detail.

Where performance-talking evidence was submitted, centres assessed the presentation section in line with national standards. In most centres, the range of questions in the conversation demonstrated appropriate challenge. However, there were a few examples of leniency in the assessment of the conversation section, where candidates gave limited responses, lacking in detail. Centres should ensure that the assessor asks a variety of open-ended questions that will enable candidates to expand on, and provide detail in their responses, where appropriate.

In writing, most centres showed good practice in annotating candidates' scripts to indicate where each bullet point had been addressed. Overall, centres assessed writing in line with national standards. However, a few candidates were assessed too leniently and others too severely. Centres should be aware of this when making their assessment judgements and should consult Understanding Standards materials available at www.understandingstandards.org.uk.

Many centres submitted comprehensive amended marking instructions for reading and listening, which detailed additional responses from candidates, both acceptable and not accepted. This ensures consistency and is an effective tool for understanding and sharing standards within the centre.

While it is good practice to amend the marking instructions to reflect candidate responses, centres should exercise caution when moving too far away from the original marking instructions as this could reduce challenge in the question paper.

There was evidence of internal quality assurance having taken place, specifically cross-marking and professional dialogue. Centre evidence included assessors' comments and other relevant supporting documentation that clearly showed the basis for assessment judgements. These processes were thorough, detailed and highly effective. This is very good practice and centres are to be commended.

Some centres also submitted evidence of cross-centre quality assurance, which showed detailed discussion and a sharing of standards. This is also very good practice.

Further guidance on internal quality assurance is available on [SQA's website](#).