

NQ Art and Design Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Art and Design
Verification activity	Visit
Round	1
Date published	August 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H202 73	National 3	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
H204 73	National 3	Art and Design: Design Activity
H202 74	National 4	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
H204 74	National 4	Art and Design: Design Activity
J1YA 75	SCQF level 5	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
J222 76	SCQF level 6	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
J223 76	SCQF level 6	Art and Design: Design Activity
J1X3 77	SCQF level 7	Art and Design: Expressive Enquiry

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres at all levels chose to follow the unit-by-unit approach.

Centres used a range of approaches, many of which demonstrated good practice. When centres give candidates personal choice, in terms of expressive and design themes, this supports candidate engagement. When candidates had opportunities to explore personal themes and thematic contexts and/or select from a variety of considered or personally developed design briefs, they performed well. When these approaches are structured in a clear way, they provide candidates with achievable and independent learning opportunities.

National 3, National 4, SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6

When the artists or designers that candidates selected for outcome 1 supported and provided continuity for evidence for outcome 2, the work showed focus and quality. At times, it clearly influenced the practical work by supporting candidate approaches, techniques, style and/or working methods. This provided suitable context for candidates to explore appropriate materials, media and techniques in relation to their chosen artists or designers.

In both expressive and design units at all levels, centres continue to develop booklets and appropriate resources to help candidates gather and produce evidence for outcome 1. Centres used mind maps, word banks and vocabulary resources appropriate to all units to support candidates when generating evidence, and there was more use of voice to text applications to support candidates with outcome 1.

Candidate approaches to the expressive unit with a Scottish context, included using prominent artists along with Scottish themes, such as shortbread, kitchen items and the local environment. Other themes included the British Museum, ancient Greece, jungle, cats and the local environment for a tourism poster.

Centres created comment sheets, mind maps and pro-formas to support creating the design brief for design outcome 2.

We remind centres that there are minimum requirements for each assessment standard that allow candidates to produce the required evidence. Centres should refer to the updated unit specifications and the unit assessment support (UAS) packs.

Robust assessment and internal verification procedures reduce issues that can affect verification outcomes.

Assessment judgements

Most centres made assessment judgements in line with national standards and were reliable and accepted. Centres made good use of the judging evidence tables to support assessment decisions.

Assessors written feedback to each assessment standard showed a shared understanding of the national standards between assessors and internal verifiers. This focused approach is an excellent way to support the learning and teaching process, and to clarify assessment decisions. Most centres used this process to give feedback to candidates and provide information on next steps.

Centres selected for verification must ensure they only provide a 'pass' or 'fail' for each candidate's current submitted evidence.

Centres should note that when a unit is incomplete at the interim stage, but candidates have passed all assessment standards up to that point, these should be judged as a 'pass' on the Verification Sample Form and not 'fail'. This reflects the interim position based on the evidence from the most recent assessment.

Note: centres must use 'pass' or 'fail' on the Verification Sample Form for each candidate, the use of 'complete' or 'incomplete' is not acceptable.

General comments

The layout of candidate evidence and paperwork submitted by most centres was well-organised and clearly identified assessment standards on individual evidence. This is helpful for verifiers when viewing evidence and assessment judgements.

Centres used varied resources for outcome 1 across all levels. Prompts, mind maps, structured booklets and other suitable resources supported candidates. This variety of support helps candidates perform well.

Candidates showed motivation and engagement in both design and expressive units when they had opportunities to make personal decisions and choices in relation to their design brief, inspiration or expressive theme.

There was a range of materials, media and techniques in expressive unit evidence. Candidates continue to have opportunities to experiment with a range of media and explore visual elements that suit their subject matter.

Candidates use of dry media, such as pencils, pens, chalk and oil pastels, cut paper and collage were complemented by paint, monoprinting as well as digital imagery and photography. It was positive to see some candidates choosing to use clay for expressive unit work.

Many candidates demonstrated a clear process in their development work, particularly in their design units. Graphic design was the most popular design area followed by hat and mask design. Some candidates used information and communication technology (ICT) through the manipulation of images using Photoshop and PowerPoint to create posters. Other candidates used cutting machines to explore lettering as an alternative approach.

The opportunities of personalisation and choice engaged candidates throughout the units, developing their confidence and refinement.

We remind centres to refer to the judging evidence tables in the UAS packs for the requirements of each assessment standard.

Centres used thorough and robust approaches to internal verification. Some centres used our candidate assessment records and others used centre-devised assessment records. It's good practice for the assessor to note on the candidate assessment records the assessment evidence with comments, any feedback, signature and date. The internal verifier should then check this evidence, and sign and date the form. All centres should use these approaches, as they provide excellent opportunities for

quality assurance and giving feedback to candidates on their unit progress and next steps.

Some centres assessed candidates at suitable points throughout the school year following departmental, faculty or school policy. This is good practice.

There was collaboration within and between centres in terms of the verification of assessment standards. This professional dialogue was clearly shown on annotated records. This approach is important to develop within single-teacher departments where the internal verifier is a non-subject specialist or from another centre.

Most centres had an internal verification policy in place. Art and Design departments should consider developing a bespoke policy that meets the needs of their setting and candidates.

In preparation for the verification visit, centres:

- must have all the necessary documentation and assessment evidence prepared, as outlined in the visit plan
- can discuss the procedures and requirements of the visit with verifiers in advance of the agreed date
- should make the verifier aware of any issues prior to a visit taking place to allow them to provide support

Further information is on our [Internal Verification Toolkit](#) web page.

NQ Art and Design Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Art and Design
Verification activity	Visit
Round	2
Date published	August 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H206 74	National 4	Art and Design: Practical Activity

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

For the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity unit, candidates built on their earlier work from the expressive and design units. These provided candidates with a solid base to approach assessment standards 1.1 and 2.1, as they could consider and evaluate the strengths of their mandatory unit work.

For assessment standards 1.2, 1.3, 2.2 and 2.3, candidates worked independently and made personal choices and decisions with the support of their assessor in relation to their planning, identification of a suitable approach, and consideration to media and techniques for the final artwork and design work.

We remind centres that there are minimum requirements for each assessment standard that allow candidates to produce the required evidence. Centres should refer to the unit specifications and the unit assessment support (UAS) packs for further guidance.

When dual-presenting candidates for National 4 and National 5 Art and Design, a few assessors incorrectly assumed that National 5 Art and Design evidence would meet the requirements for the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity unit. While there is some overlap, additional evidence must be generated to meet the requirements. Centres must engage fully with the correct documentation to avoid 'Not Accepted' outcomes for assessment approaches.

We remind centres that candidates should complete assessment standards 1.1, 2.1, 1.2 and 2.2 before the final artwork and design work (assessment standards 1.3, 1.4, 2.3 and 2.4). This is because the first assessment standards form part of the evaluating and planning stage for the practical works. Retrospective evidence for completed art and design work is not a suitable approach.

Assessment judgements

Most centres made assessment judgements in line with national standards and were reliable and accepted. Most centres made good use of the judging evidence tables in the UAS pack to support assessment decisions.

Assessors written feedback to each assessment standard showed a shared understanding of the national standards between assessors and internal verifiers. This focused approach to written feedback through professional discussion is an excellent way to support the learning and teaching process, and to clarify assessment decisions. Many centres used this process to give verbal and/or written feedback to candidates and to provide information on next steps.

When centres did not use the UAS pack, they often made assessment judgements on evidence that was incorrect or did not exist and were not in line with national standards.

Some centres marked candidates as 'fail' on the Verification Sample Form, when all the assessment standards up to that point had been passed by the assessor and internal verifier. Although a unit is incomplete at this interim stage, candidates should be judged as a 'pass' on the Verification Sample Form to reflect this interim position based on the current submitted evidence. 'Pass' or 'fail' is required on the Verification Sample Form for each candidate, the use of 'complete' or 'incomplete' is not acceptable.

Centres must ensure assessors add a short comment on the candidate assessment records to show how they made assessment judgements for each assessment standard. It is not enough to write 'pass' or 'fail' without any written evidence to explain each assessment judgement.

A few centres were lenient and/or severe in terms of assessment judgements. Centres could avoid this by closely checking the judging evidence tables for the requirements for each assessment standard. Centres can find the judging evidence tables in the UAS pack.

Note: the threshold for achieving the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity is 7 out of 10 assessment standards. However, centres should give candidates opportunities to meet all 10 assessment standards.

General comments

The layout of candidate evidence and paperwork submitted by most centres was well-organised and clearly identified assessment standards on individual evidence. This is helpful for visiting verifiers when viewing evidence and assessment judgements.

Many centres used the resources from the appendix section in the UAS pack to achieve assessment standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2, demonstrating good practice. Some centres adapted these documents to meet the needs of candidates, allowing candidates to evaluate earlier unit work and plan appropriately for their expressive art and design work.

Candidates showed motivation and engagement through the quality of the artwork and design work when they had opportunities to make personal decisions and choices.

Candidates continue to have opportunities to experiment with a range of materials and media, allowing them to focus on what they do best through exploring appropriate visual elements that suited their subject matter and displaying skills suitable for their chosen design work.

For outcome 1, still life and portraiture continue to be popular areas. Food themes were common, including fruit and vegetables, junk food and kitchen utensils. Nature was often represented in the forms of plants, flowers, sea creatures and parrots. Other areas included movie themes, special events, objects representing different cultures, science, war, and found items.

Candidates used a range of materials, media and techniques in the final artworks. Their use of dry media, such as pencils, charcoal, pens, alcohol markers, chalk and oil pastels, and cut paper were complemented by wet media acrylic paint, watercolour, inks, spray paint stencilling, lino printing along with some digital work.

For outcome 2, graphics was the most popular area, with candidates designing posters, album covers, logo and surface design for packaging. Others designed repeat patterns for scarves, upholstery, aprons and trainers. 3D areas focused on headpieces, body adornment, and brooches along with product design lighting, ceramic mugs and shoe design. Inspiration came from a range of sources such as nature, sea life, architecture and films.

Candidates used a variety of media to create the design work:

- Confident use of a range of ICT software to create sleek and clean designs in graphics and repeat patterns.
- For 3D designs, they used a range of affordable materials, such as paper, card, straws and model magic, which were manipulated with skill.
- Adding decorative aspects in the form of beads, wire, tissue paper and acetates.

Centres used thorough and robust approaches to internal verification. Some centres used our candidate assessment records and others used centre-devised candidate

assessment records. It's good practice for the assessor to note on candidate assessment records the assessment evidence with comments, any feedback, signature and date. The internal verifier should then check this evidence, and sign and date the form. All centres should use these approaches, as they provide excellent opportunities for quality assurance and giving feedback to candidates on their unit progress and next steps.

Some centres assessed candidates at suitable points throughout the school year following departmental, faculty or school policy. This is good practice.

There was collaboration within and between centres in terms of the internal verification of assessment standards. This professional dialogue was clearly shown on annotated records. This approach is important to develop within single-teacher departments where the internal verifier is a non-subject specialist or from another centre.

Most centres had an internal verification policy in place. Art and Design departments should consider developing a bespoke policy that meets the needs of their setting and candidates.

In preparation for the verification visit, centres:

- must have all the necessary documentation and assessment evidence prepared, as outlined in the visit plan
- must ensure they use the unit specification and UAS pack to support delivery and assessment of the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity
- can discuss the procedures and requirements of the visit with verifiers in advance of the agreed date
- should make the visiting verifier aware of any issues prior to a visit taking place to allow them to provide support

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