



NQ verification 2023–24 round 1 and 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Art and Design
Verification activity:	Visit
Date published:	July 2024

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
H6NM 74	National 4	Art and Design: Design Activity with a Scottish Context
H206 74	National 4	Art and Design: Practical Activity Added Value Unit
J1YA 75	SCQF level 5	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
J1YC 75	SCQF level 5	Art and Design: Design 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): Expressive Enquiry
J1X6 77	SCQF level 7	Art and Design (Design): Design Enquiry

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Nearly all centres at all levels chose to follow the unit-by-unit approach, with one centre choosing to follow the portfolio approach.

Good practice was identified through a variety of approaches. The opportunity for personal choice in terms of expressive and design themes, and final art and design work at National 4 level (Practical Activity) was evident and supported candidate engagement. Candidates clearly performed well when they had the opportunity to make independent decisions,

explore personal themes and/or select from a wide variety of considered or personally developed design briefs. These were clear and achievable with appropriate thematic context, providing the candidate with choice and appropriate levels of independence.

National 3, National 4, SCQF level 5 and 6

Verifiers noted that selecting artists and designers for outcome 1 who clearly influenced outcome 2 (in terms of approach, technique, style and/or working methods) provided support and cohesion for candidates. This approach provided context for candidates to explore appropriate materials, media and techniques in relation to the chosen artists or designers, producing work that showed focus and quality.

Centres continue to develop booklets and appropriate resources to assist candidates when gathering and producing evidence for outcome 1. This was noted in both expressive and design units at both levels. Mind maps, word banks and vocabulary resources appropriate to both units are increasingly used by centres to support candidates when generating suitable evidence.

A number of centres produced work that exceeded the amount of work required in terms of volume. Centres are reminded that there is information on making assessment judgements for each assessment standard that help candidates produce the appropriate evidence required. Centres should refer to the updated unit specifications and the unit assessment support packs.

There were minor issues identified with centre-generated assessment records. These issues were to do with the incorrect transfer of assessment standards which led to assessment judgements not being in line with national standards. Centres are advised to use the SQA candidate and class assessment record documents located in the unit assessment support packs.

Inconsistent use of candidate assessment records and record keeping was noted as a concern, when assessed candidate evidence did not tally up with judgements made against assessment standards. Anomalies were also noted on the verification sample form which did not reflect the assessment judgements made on the candidate assessment record. Centres must note that the visiting verifier requires a 'pass' or 'fail' only for each candidate based on the most recent assessment of that candidate's evidence.

There were issues identified when centres did not refer to the unit assessment support packs and the judging evidence tables in them. When this was identified, centres did not meet the requirements of the assessment standards. This led to either a lack of evidence or more evidence than necessary being produced, candidate assessment records not being used to meet assessment standards, and unit requirements and internal verification not being carried out.

With the reintroduction of the added value unit, centres are reminded to look closely at the requirements for each outcome and the assessment standards relating to these. Centres should refer to the unit assessment support pack to make sure candidates are given the opportunity to generate evidence for all 10 of the assessment standards in both outcomes. Once candidates have been given this opportunity to generate the evidence, there is a minimum threshold of achieving a pass in 7 out of 10 assessment standards to achieve an overall pass for the unit.

Centres are also reminded that the assessment standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2 for the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity Added Value Unit should be carried out before starting the art and design works, as they are part of the planning stage for these works. Retrospective planning for a completed art or design work is not a suitable approach.

Robust assessment and internal verification procedures should stop these issues from occurring and impacting on verification outcomes.

Assessment judgements

Most centres had assessment judgements in line with national standards and were deemed to be reliable and accepted. It was clear to verifiers that overall, centres were making good use of the judging evidence tables to support assessment decisions. Verifiers noted that written feedback by assessors that was internally verified in relation to each assessment standard showed a shared understanding of the national standards. This focused approach proved to be an excellent way to support the learning and teaching process and to clarify assessment decisions. Many centres used this process to give clear feedback to candidates and to provide information on next steps.

There were some issues with candidate assessment records where candidates had been noted as 'fail' on the verification sample form, even though all of the assessment standards up to that point had been passed by the assessor and internal verifier. It must be noted that although the unit was incomplete at this interim stage, the candidates should have been judged as a 'pass' on the verification sample form to reflect this interim position based on the evidence from the most recent assessment.

'Pass' or 'fail' is required on the verification sample form for each candidate, the use of 'complete' or 'incomplete' is not acceptable.

In exceptional cases where a candidate is entered for both National 4 and National 5, centres should retain photographic evidence for the relevant work used to assess the candidates at National 4. The images should be clear so they can be effectively used if the work is externally verified by SQA.

Section 3: general comments

The clear organisation and layout of candidate evidence and paperwork was consistently noted by visiting verifiers. This was helpful to verifiers when viewing candidate evidence and centre assessment judgements.

Good practice in terms of differentiated resources for outcome 1 was consistently observed across both levels. Prompts, mind maps, structured booklets and resources clearly supported candidates who had a wide range of abilities. These varied approaches allowed candidates to be successful in meeting the assessment standards.

Success was identified in both design and expressive units when candidates had opportunities to make personal decisions and choices. These opportunities lead to increased candidate engagement in researching and investigating designers, artists, design briefs and expressive themes.

A wide and varied range of materials, media and techniques were observed in expressive unit evidence. It is clear that candidates who had the opportunity to experiment with a range of media explored appropriate visual elements that suited their subject matter. Dry media such as pencils, charcoal, pen, chalk, and oil pastels along with collage were complemented by wet media such as acrylic, watercolour and ink. Mono, lino, poly and drypoint printing were also noted by verifiers. Digital drawing was successfully used by candidates to show their skill and creativity.

Predominantly dry and wet media was used to create initial design development ideas. Low relief jewellery design was noted, along with products made out of MDF and clay. A range of digital media was used to create graphic design ideas and solutions as well as exploring repeat pattern layout and ideas.

Personalisation and choice engaged and encouraged candidates throughout the unit. As candidates progressed with their unit work they began to develop ownership and play to their strengths, developing confidence and refinement.

Verifiers noted thorough and robust approaches to internal verification, with both SQA and centre-devised candidate assessment records being used. It is good practice to have candidate assessment records that note assessment evidence with comments and feedback signed and dated by the assessor. This should be followed up with this evidence being checked, dated, and signed by the internal verifier. These approaches should be adopted by all centres as they provide excellent opportunities for quality assurance and to give feedback to candidates on their unit progress and next steps.

It was noted as good practice when centres planned to assess candidates at suitable strategic points throughout the school year in accordance with departmental, faculty or school policy.

Collaboration within and between centres was noted in terms of the verification of assessment standards. This professional dialogue was clear to see in terms of detailed records. This approach is particularly important to develop and maintain within single person departments where the internal verifier is a non-subject specialist or from another centre.

Most centres have 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. Further information is available on SQA's [internal verification toolkit website](#).

Centres must be fully prepared for the requirements of a verification visit and have all the necessary documentation and assessment evidence as outlined in the visit plan. Verifiers are available to fully discuss the procedures and the requirements of the visit in advance of the agreed date. It would be advisable for the centre to let the verifier discuss the visit with the subject specialist staff at the earliest suitable time to allow for questions on any aspect of the visit and to be fully prepared.

It is concerning when a centre has little, or no evidence assessed prior to a verification visit. Centres should make the verifier aware of any issues prior to a visit taking place to allow support to be provided.