NQ Art and Design Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Art and Design
Verification activity:	Visit
Round:	1
Date published:	August 2025

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
H6NM 73	National 3	Art and Design: Design Activity with a Scottish Context
H202 74	National 4	Art and Design: Expressive Activity
H204 74	National 4	Art and Design: Design Activity

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

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

Good practice was identified through a variety of approaches. The opportunity for personalisation and choice in terms of expressive and design themes 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.

Verifiers noted that when artists or designers selected for outcome 1 clearly supported and provided continuity for candidate evidence generation for outcome 2, the work showed focus and quality.

The choice of artists and designers supported candidate approaches, techniques, style and/or working methods. This approach provided suitable context for candidates to explore appropriate materials, media and techniques in relation to their chosen artists and designers.

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

Some of the approaches to outcome 2 for the expressive units included themes using Scottish animals, artefacts form the Burrell Collection, and photography to support still life themes.

Centres created comment sheets, mind maps, and pro-formas that were used to support construction of design briefs for design outcome 2.

One centre produced work that exceeded the minimum 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.

Minor discrepancies were 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. Robust assessment and internal verification procedures should stop these issues from occurring and affecting verification outcomes.

Assessment judgements

Most centres made 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 very good use of the judging evidence tables included in the unit assessment support packs to support assessment decisions.

Verifiers noted that assessors' written feedback 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 the 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 the assessment standards up to that point had been passed by the assessor and internal verifier. Although the unit was incomplete at the 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.

Some centres were lenient or severe in terms of assessment judgements. At times this could have been avoided through paying closer attention to the judging evidence tables and the requirements for each individual assessment standard. The judging evidence tables can be found in the unit assessment support packs.

Section 3: general comments

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

Verifiers consistently observed good practice across both levels in terms of differentiated resources for outcome 1. 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.

Candidates were successful in both design and expressive units when they had opportunities to make personal decisions and choices. These opportunities led to increased candidate engagement in researching and investigating designers, artists, design briefs and expressive themes.

A range of materials, media, and techniques was observed in expressive unit evidence. It is clear that candidates had the opportunity to experiment with a range of media, exploring appropriate visual elements that suited their subject matter. This included dry media such as pencils and oil pastels, which were sometimes complemented by paint, press print, and photography.

Verifiers noted a range of design work that showed clear process, and that was well-organised and laid out. Predominantly dry media was used to create initial design development ideas, along with collage and press print. Graphic design was the most

popular design area, along with product design, headpieces and fashion design. Strong use of information and communication technology (ICT) was noted through digital mock-ups and manipulating images effectively using saturation, colour and scale.

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. All centres should adopt these approaches, as they provide excellent opportunities for quality assurance and 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 candidates and setting. 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 requirements of the visit in advance of the agreed date.

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.

NQ Art and Design Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Art and Design
Verification activity:	Visit
Round:	2
Date published:	August 2025

National Units verified

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

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres chose to follow the unit-by-unit approach.

All candidates built on their earlier work from the mandatory expressive and design units. This gave candidates a strong base to consider the strengths of their unit work,

plan for the final art and design work, execute the work, and evaluate the strengths of it. Candidates worked independently to make personal choices and decisions, identified a suitable approach, and considered media and techniques with the support of their assessor.

Centres are reminded that there are minimum requirements for each assessment standard which allow candidates to produce the appropriate evidence required. Centres should refer to the updated Art and Design unit specifications and 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 that 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.

Robust assessment and internal verification procedures should stop these issues from occurring and having an impact on verification outcomes.

Centres are reminded that the assessment standards 1.1, 2.1, 1.2 and 2.2 for the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity must be carried out before starting on 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.

Assessment judgements

Almost all 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 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.

Issues were noted with some centres who were lenient and/or severe in terms of assessment judgements. This inconsistency led to assessment judgements being 'accepted with recommendations'. At times, this could have been avoided through paying closer attention to the judging evidence tables in terms of the requirements for each individual assessment standard. The judging evidence tables can be found in the unit assessment support packs.

It is important to reinforce that assessors must explain in the candidate assessment records, in a short comment, how assessment judgements have been made for each individual assessment standard. It is not enough to just write 'pass' or 'fail' without any written evidence to explain each assessment judgement.

It must be noted that the threshold for the National 4 Art and Design: Practical Activity (added value unit) is 7 out of 10 assessment standards. However, candidates should be given the opportunity to meet all 10 assessment standards.

Section 3: general comments

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

Good practice in terms of differentiated resources was observed to support assessment standards 1.1, 1.2, and 1.5 in outcome 1 and assessment standards 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5 in outcome 2. Apart from the SQA-devised pro-forma to support planning and evaluation, centres created their own resources and prompts, and carried out discussions with candidates to provide opportunities to successfully meet these assessment standards.

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.

A range of materials, media and techniques were observed in the practical activity. It is clear candidates had the opportunity to experiment with media while developing and refining their skills.

For outcome 1, a range of genres from still life, portraiture and landscapes with a wide range of themes were noted — for example gaming, food, fruit and vegetables, life and death, football, the beach and the art room. Materials and techniques included traditional dry and wet media such as pencils, pens, and oil pastels, complemented by watercolour, tempera, acrylic and ink. Candidates used printing, mixed media collage and photography for planning ideas. I

For outcome 2, there was a broad spectrum of design areas. Graphic design for posters and drinks cans used digital technology and were created by hand using collage techniques and pattern. 2D areas included digital illustration, repeat patterns and stained-glass windows. 3D work involved lighting, jewellery, masks and clay tile design. Fashion and textiles included textile design, body adornment and headpieces. Work

was created using cheaper materials, paper, card and straws, along with traditional hand sewing techniques using netting, beads, sequins and ribbon.

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 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 in the NQ internal verification toolkit on SQA's 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 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.