



National Qualifications Awards

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Scots Language Award

Verification group number: 535

National Qualification Award Courses

The Scots Language Award units being verified this year were both the History and Development unit and the Understanding and Communicating unit. Some centres were offering these as part of the Scottish Studies Award and some as part of the Scots Language Award. Some centres were offering these as part of a literacy course.

General comments

Centres are continuing to offer stimulating, varied and creative programmes of work with Scots Language and candidates are clearly very engaged with their learning. The number of candidates being presented for the Scots Language Award continues to grow, and schools previously not offering Scots are now doing so.

In previous years we noticed that centres and practitioners were more confident with the Understanding and Communicating unit than they were with the History and Development unit. This trend is undergoing change, as more centres are offering the History and Development unit with resources which accurately match the outcomes required. This may be due to a number of Understanding Standards events and sharing of information in a Teams group. There are still some History and Development outcomes which continue to challenge centres, namely outcomes 2.2–2.5, including the reasons for links with other languages and specific linguistic features (grammar). Recommendations are provided. Some centres have attempted to deliver the Understanding and Communicating unit alongside delivery of the English Literacy level 4 qualification. Unfortunately the Literacy outcomes alone do not cover the requirements of the Scots Language Award, and centres should use the Scots Language Award outcomes for assessment.

Course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

On the whole, centres are making good use of the course arrangements and are judging candidate evidence using SQA or adapted SQA instruments of assessment. Exemplification materials highlight how further improvements can be made by centres.

Evidence requirements

Centres provided a wide range of types of candidate evidence, from written reports, assessment grids of oral presentations and notes from visits to museums, performances and other fieldwork experiences. Candidates provided a wide range of relevant factors influencing the development of Scots over time and the influence of these factors.

The vast majority of centres provided ample candidate evidence for verification, although we identified some outcomes for which there was insufficient evidence from a small number of centres for us to confidently accept the judgements of the teacher.

These include evidence for the reasons for links with other languages and linguistic features.

Administration of assessments

Assessments were administered effectively. There is currently no specific unit assessment support pack for the History and Development unit, although there are many exemplars of successful approaches to assessment by centres on the Understanding Standards materials. Some centres have put together booklets and other resources which ably guide candidates and allow them to accurately match the award outcomes. There was a good range of assessment approaches by centres this year including candidate reports, oral presentations and notes from visits.

In all cases it was evident that assessment evidence was the product of an extended course of learning and investigation, often involving partners, visitors and engaging activities. Assessment tasks were well matched to the abilities and interests of the candidates and to the outcomes being assessed. There was ample evidence that centres were giving effective and supportive feedback to candidates. In isolated cases, there was not quite enough actual pupil evidence to accept the teacher judgements. For oral presentation evidence, evidence of content should be included, whether detailed teacher notes, candidate presentation notes or recordings, so that we can accurately assess the teacher judgements. It is also recommended, if offering the award alongside English Literacy level 4, that centres do not only use those outcomes, but also the outcomes specified in the Understanding and Communicating unit of the Scots Language Award.

Learning and teaching

Centres demonstrated a flexible approach to the award and evidenced a broad range of learning and teaching styles, methods and resources, including ICT based approaches. The centres delivered the award in a wide range of subject areas, including History Departments, English Departments and ASL departments. In some centres, a folio of evidence was presented. Interdisciplinary learning was central to the approaches taken by centres. There was ample evidence of personalisation and choice for candidates, ensuring excellent engagement and meaningful learning. There was ample evidence of excellent feedback provided for candidates, and it was clear that centres provided very engaging experiences for them. Forums for sharing materials are ongoing on Teams and being used by many centres and practitioners. A growing number of teachers have completed the Open University and Education Scotland professional development course on Scots Language, helping them to deliver the course more confidently.

Overall assessment

There is clearly growing confidence among centres in offering both units of the Scots Language Award, and more centres are offering the History and Development unit. We have identified specific areas of the History and Development unit that centres find more challenging, namely outcomes 2.2–2.5, including the reasons for links with other languages and specific linguistic features, or grammar, further detailed in the section below on areas for improvement.

We also emphasise that the English Literacy outcomes alone cannot be used to make judgements on the Scots Language Award.

Verification

Internal verification, on the whole, was carried out robustly by centres. There was clear evidence of very effective internal verification measures, pupil evidence being clearly marked or teacher signatures and comments. In some centres, this was particularly thorough, detailed and effective, while there was no evidence of internal verification in other centres. It is evident that some schools do not have other teachers with the training to do this, and feedback to centres included a suggestion to identify potential internal verifiers by way of existing support groups on GLOW for Scottish Studies and Scots Language. In addition, a free training course for teachers is offered by the Open University and Education Scotland.

Areas of good practice reported during session 2024–25

Areas of good practice reported included:

- ◆ Centres make good use of SQA provided instruments of assessment, either using them as they are or adapting them to the needs of their candidates.
- ◆ Centre assessed judgements are in line with national standards and are thorough, providing detailed evidence and reasoning.
- ◆ Internal verification was mostly thorough, detailed and highly effective.
- ◆ Excellent assessment grids are used to assess pupil evidence.
- ◆ Candidates are given ample opportunities for personalisation and choice.
- ◆ More centres are confidently offering the History and Development unit, which gives candidates the opportunity of achieving the complete Scots Language Award.
- ◆ Centres provide candidates with excellent, engaging experiences in the study of Scots Language, including expeditions and visits in the community.
- ◆ Candidates are given consistent constructive, supportive and effective feedback.

Specific areas for improvement reported during session 2024–25

Specific areas for improvement include:

- ◆ It is recommended that practitioners, if offering the Scots Language Award in parallel with English Literacy level 4, make sure that they also make judgements against the specific Scots Language Award outcomes, which are significantly different from the Literacy outcomes.
- ◆ It is recommended that the teachers evaluate the assessment instruments and resources for the History and Development unit at levels 4–6, particularly for outcomes 2.2–2.5, which are quite specific about links with other languages, the reasons for those links, and (at levels 5–6) describing and giving examples of

linguistic features. The first recommended resource is the [SQA site Award and Support Notes, History and Development unit](#) and a second resource would be [Education Scotland resource](#).

- ◆ Centres should also strengthen the instruments of assessment to enable candidates to more strongly demonstrate their understanding of outcome 1.3 (reaching reasoned conclusions about the impact of each factor on contemporary Scots). Teachers may consider assessing outcome 1.1–1.3 together with 2.3, as in many cases the factors influencing Scots may also include information on the reasons for links with other languages.