

NQ Drama Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Drama
Verification activity	Event
Round	1
Date published	July 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H231 73	National 3	Drama Skills
H232 73	National 3	Drama: Production Skills
H231 74	National 4	Drama Skills
H232 74	National 4	Drama: Production Skills
H232 75	SCQF level 5	Drama Skills
J28V 77	SCQF level 7	Drama Skills

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

For National 3, National 4 and National 5 Drama, centres continued to demonstrate a range of approaches to assessment, with some designing these approaches specifically to capture the skills required to meet the assessment standards. Overall, candidates are being offered a range of creative opportunities to respond, explore, and develop drama skills and production skills.

Centres delivering the Drama Skills (National 3) unit used some approaches to assessment that were designed and structured to provide the necessary support for candidates at this level. Approaches included step-by-step support relating to the required skills for each assessment standard and differentiated resources to support candidates at this level. Centres also developed digital approaches to assessment. These approaches clearly supported candidates to demonstrate their developing skills, with opportunities for assessor feedback clearly visible throughout.

Where this was not the case, centres presented candidates with assessment approaches that were not specifically designed for National 3 level — for example, by presenting a National 3 candidate with an assessment approach intended for National 4 level. These approaches often lacked structure and signposting. As a result, candidates faced unnecessary challenges and were required to engage with skills, knowledge and understanding beyond those required at National 3 level.

There was minimal evidence of candidates being offered the opportunity to explore production skills at National 3 level. However, from the evidence submitted for verification, the approaches to assessment clearly supported candidates to meet the requirements of the assessment standards at this level. Approaches to assessment were clearly structured, role-specific and differentiated, with the necessary prompts and structure to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the unit.

For the Drama Skills (National 4) unit, approaches to assessment included evidence relating to all the assessment standards for this unit. This range of evidence provided the opportunity to quality assure contrasting approaches to assessment, including a diverse range of stimuli that supported candidates' creative responses.

However, some centres failed to offer appropriate stimuli for assessment standard 1.1, did not capture candidates' application of practical skills effectively for assessment standards 1.3 and 2.2, and used approaches that did not allow candidates to access assessment standard 2.3. The requirement for this standard is for candidates to explore form, genre, structure, and style. Many centres required candidates to simply state which elements they would use, with no practical exploration. These centres were advised to make closer reference to the judging evidence table of the related unit assessment support pack to support candidates.

Tasks relating to assessment standards 2.4 and 1.4 were, for the most part, clear. However, some centres failed to adequately support candidates in assessment standard 1.4 by focusing solely on the final production and not the process. Evidence from some centres indicated that their assessment approaches did not fully support candidates to meet assessment standards in their entirety or provide sufficient opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their skills in enough depth.

In contrast, there was evidence of over-assessment at National 4 level, with candidates being presented with multiple tasks for one assessment standard or with approaches intended for Drama Skills (SCQF level 5) unit. Some centres are still over-assessing at both National 3 and National 4 levels, placing greater demand on candidates than is necessary.

For the Drama: Production Skills (National 4) unit, the approaches to assessment often lacked support and structure, and the tasks offered to candidates did not provide sufficient signposting of the specific requirements of the chosen production roles. Therefore, candidate responses lacked appropriate terminology and insight into their production concept for this level. Additionally, as identified in previous event verification, some centres failed to design approaches to assessment that clearly captured the candidates' use and application of production skills.

There was clear evidence this year of robust approaches to the Drama Skills (SCQF level 5) unit that allowed candidates to fully immerse themselves in the creating process. Centres used booklets effectively, as well as video evidence across several assessment standards. However, it is important to note that assessment approaches must allow for individual assessment, and centres should not create approaches that

assess candidates as a group. To enable individual assessment, centres must clearly label candidates so that assessors can easily identify them for assessment purposes.

For the Drama Skills (SCQF level 7) unit, it was evident that centres' approaches clearly provided the required challenge and allowed candidates to fully access the assessment standards. The approaches ensured that candidates were engaged with suitable challenging tasks and received appropriate scaffolding to support achievement at this advanced level.

Assessment judgements

Unit verification requires the centre to make clear assessment judgments to accompany candidates' evidence, allowing the verifier to reach an informed decision about whether the centre is making reliable, consistent and valid assessment judgements that are in line with national standards.

In some centres, there was clear evidence of reliable, consistent and valid judgements being applied to candidate evidence. This was the case where the approach to assessment was specifically designed to meet the requirements of an assessment standard at the appropriate level. The centre assessor was therefore able to confidently and correctly judge the candidate evidence by referring to the judging evidence table in our unit assessment support pack.

When an assessment judgement was identified as lenient or severe, this was, in most cases, due to the approach to assessment not supporting candidates in meeting the requirements of an assessment standard at the appropriate level, or to the inconsistent application of the assessment judgement across all candidates in a cohort.

All assessment judgements should be evidence-based and can be applied using a combination of candidate-generated responses and assessor commentary. If assessor judgements rely heavily on assessor commentary alone, that commentary needs to be specific to the assessment standard and the skill being assessed, and detailed enough to capture the candidate's application of skills.

Some centres submitted complex systems for to their assessment judgements, often grading candidates and applying marks to assessments. While this may support internal tracking and monitoring, it is not valid for unit verification. Unit assessment is assessed as either pass or fail.

General comments

Centres demonstrated good practice this year, with an increase in recordings submitted across all levels. This is a highly effective way to evidence candidate progress. Centres are reminded to clearly identify each candidate in the video evidence. If photographs are submitted as evidence, the candidate must be clearly visible and identifiable, with some indication of the activity being explored.

Some centres provided both video evidence and written work in the form of folios. Video evidence can be used on its own and does not have to be submitted alongside booklets if there is enough evidence in the recording. Submitting both forms of evidence could be excessive for candidates.

Centres submitted evidence that captured candidates' achievement of some, or most, assessment standards.

In some cases, centres submitted evidence that did not clearly demonstrate achievement of the assessment standard to which it related.

Centres must label candidate evidence appropriately by indicating the relevant assessment standard on it.

Qualifications Scotland offers the opportunity for centres to submit digital evidence for verification. If centres choose to submit candidate evidence using this platform and scan original evidence, they must label the evidence clearly with the assessment standard(s) to which it relates. Centres should upload only evidence for the individual candidate under that candidate's name. Centres should not create a single file for multiple candidates and upload it multiple times.

Key messages

Centres must:

- identify the unit assessment support (UAS) pack they are using to assess the unit. Centres continue to describe their unit assessment as ‘centre-devised’ when it is actually from a UAS pack. If a centre wants to develop its own unit assessments that differ significantly from our UAS packs, they should submit these to our [Prior Verification Service](#) to ensure they are valid, reliable and equitable
- submit the corresponding approaches to assessment identified on the candidate sample form, candidate responses and candidate assessment records. Submitting incorrect approaches to assessment will result in a ‘not accepted’ verification outcome, as it is not possible for the verifier to confirm the validity of the associated assessment approaches or assessment judgments
- label all candidate-generated evidence with the associated assessment standard

Internal verification

There was some evidence of centres engaging with and applying internal quality assurance processes. A few centres used local authority-level documentation, adapted it for use within their own centre, and applied it within their subject-specific faculty or department. Most centres provided evidence of cross-marking and the internal verification of assessment approaches and assessment judgments.

However, there continue to be inconsistencies in some centres’ application of internal verification processes. This is evident where the approaches to assessment do not support candidates in meeting the requirements of specific assessment standards at a specific level, and internal verification does not identify this. This could result in the application of assessment judgements that are not reliable or valid.

NQ Drama Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Drama
Verification activity	Visit
Round	2
Date published	July 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H233 74	National 4	Drama: Performance — Added Value Unit

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres used a variety of assessment approaches. Many were well-designed and enabled candidates to develop the skills required by each assessment standard.

Visits in 2026 identified numerous examples of good practice. Several centres provide comprehensive booklets that guided candidates through the assessment standards. Support was often delivered through scaffolded activities, many of which were available digitally to improve accessibility.

However, some centres' approaches need improvement. A recurring issue is the inaccurate labelling of assessment standards against specific tasks. Clear labelling is essential for transparency and effective assessment; centres should revise their labelling practices to ensure that tasks are explicitly aligned with the relevant standards.

A few centres did not evidence a coherent assessment approach. Centres must ensure that every assessment standard is matched to an appropriate task or piece of evidence — this can be presented in a booklet or via recorded discussions.

Assessment approaches must also consider barriers to learning. Digital recordings of discussions are an acceptable alternative where written responses present difficulties, and should be used when appropriate to support candidates who struggle with written work.

There is concern about the inappropriate use of National 5 performance criteria to assess National 4 added value unit work. National 4 candidates cannot be assessed with National 5 acting mark sheets. National 4 is pass/fail, and assessment must reflect National 4 standards. For example, assessment standard 1.1 requires exploration of two stimuli and inclusion of a social issue; an end performance without evidence of the process cannot result in a pass for the added value unit.

Finally, some centres over-assessed. Centres must ensure that tasks and expectations are appropriate to National 4 to provide fair and valid assessment for candidates.

Assessment judgements

Centres must complete all assessment judgements before the visiting verifier's arrival so that the verifier can make an informed determination about the reliability, consistency, and validity of those judgements and their alignment with national standards.

Most centres provided substantial evidence that judgements applied to candidate work were reliable, consistent, and valid. This was particularly clear where the assessment approach was appropriately matched to the assessment standard and

level. In such cases, centre assessors could confidently and accurately evaluate candidate evidence using the judging evidence table in our unit assessment support pack (UAS).

If an assessment judgement was identified as either lenient or severe, the issue was discussed with centre staff during the visit, and a mutually agreed judgement was reached. All assessment judgements must be grounded in evidence, drawn from candidate-produced responses and assessor commentary.

Some centres used unnecessarily complex systems for recording assessment judgements, for example by grading candidates or assigning marks. Unit assessments must be recorded as pass or fail only.

Good practice would be for centre assessors to provide a detailed teacher commentary to enhance judgement decisions.

General comments

Centres must ensure that candidates entered for the added value assessment meet all four required assessment standards. There have been occasions where a National 5 candidate was withdrawn, entered at National 4, and then recorded as having passed National 4 based on National 5 performance criteria, despite not meeting the full National 4 requirements. Assessment decisions must align with the appropriate national standards.

National 4 candidates may, at the centre's discretion, complete a devised drama piece for the added value assessment; however, this is optional. Added value work does not need to be devised. Candidates may satisfy the added value unit through a scripted performance (as an actor) or by working as a designer. (**Note:** set design is not permitted at National 4 level). This flexibility supports centres where National 4 candidates commonly work alongside National 5 candidates, and helps ensure that assessment pathways remain appropriate and properly applied.