NQ English Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	English and Literacy
Verification activity:	Event
Round:	1
Date published:	July 2025

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H2WT 73	National 3	English: Understanding Language
H2WV 73	National 3	English: Producing Language
H23W 73	National 3	Literacy
H23H 74	National 4	English: Analysis and Evaluation
H23T 74	National 4	English: Creation and Production
H23W 74	National 4	Literacy
J2A9 75	SCQF level 5	English: Analysis and Evaluation
J2AC 75	SCQF level 5	English: Creation and Production

Section 2: comments on assessment

Interim evidence

We remind centres that incomplete unit submissions should be viewed as interim evidence. When completing the Verification Sample Form, centres must enter a pass or fail on the basis of each candidate's current submitted evidence, rather than being entered as a fail because a candidate has not yet completed an outcome.

For example, for the creation and production unit, some candidates in the sample may have both writing and talking while others have only writing. In either case, the candidate evidence should be judged pass or fail on an individual basis per submission. If all outcomes for a unit are included this would be complete evidence; if not all outcomes for a unit are included this would be interim evidence.

Assessment approaches

Most centres continue to make effective use of current SQA unit assessment support packs to assess reading and listening. Centres must ensure they access current versions of unit assessment support packs from SQA's secure site rather than relying on archived material. There were instances of centres using pre-2017 versions of unit assessment support packs. A number of assessment standards were removed in 2017, including the requirement to comment on audience and purpose.

Reading and listening

There were some effective centre-devised assessments for reading and listening related to the wider context of learning and teaching. Some centre-devised materials did not offer candidates the opportunity to achieve assessment standards 1.2 and 2.2 as candidates did not have the opportunity to select and comment on at least two examples of language.

Note: SQA offers a free [prior verification service](#) to centres who devise their own assessments. This gives the centre confidence that their assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

Writing and talking

At all levels, there were some very effective centre-devised assessments that allowed candidates personalisation and choice for both writing and talking.

Assessment judgements

Most centres' judgements were valid, reliable and in line with national standards.

Reading and listening

There were some instances where candidates were incorrectly judged to have met assessment standards 1.2 and 2.2, even though they had not successfully selected and commented on at least two features of language.

Talking

Most centres gave clear indication of where assessment standards had been met, including quotation of examples of language on their detailed checklist. Some submissions were too broad in nature and centres hadn't provided sufficient evidence of how assessment standards for talking had been met.

We remind centres that detailed checklists should include examples of words and phrases used by the candidate within their presentation or discussion.

Internal verification

Most centres submitted evidence with annotation of candidate scripts by individual assessors, which supported the process of confirming assessment judgements.

Many centres went further than this and evidenced how their internal verification was carried out on candidate scripts and/or additional documentation, using

countersignatures and commentaries by assessors and verifiers to illustrate the discussions. As a result, most centres' assessment judgements were able to be easily verified.

A record of professional dialogue between assessors and verifiers greatly helps the verification process. However, not all centres provided an overview of their internal verification procedures, and it was not possible to comment on its effectiveness.

Centres should review their internal verification processes to ensure that they are effective. It is good practice to use [SQA's Internal Verification Toolkit](#).

Section 3: general comments

Centres must ensure that they are using the most up-to-date assessment materials and unit assessment support packs. These can be downloaded from SQA's secure website through an SQA co-ordinator. When devising their own assessments, centres must ensure that all assessment standards can be fully met by candidates.

An increased number of centres are making effective use of SQA's prior verification service.

We encourage centres to make use of SQA's free [prior verification service](#) – available for all units apart from H23Y 74 English Assignment: added value.

NQ English Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	English and Literacy
Verification activity:	Event
Round:	2
Date published:	July 2025

National Course components and/or National Units verified

Course code	Course level	Component title
HK57 75	National 5	English: performance–spoken language
J00T 76	Higher	English: performance–spoken language

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23Y 74	National 4	English assignment

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

National 4 English assignment

Most centres selected for verification successfully implemented the revised approach to the National 4 English assignment.

A small number of centres followed the unrevised approach, which was acceptable for this year only. From session 2025–26 onwards, all centres must follow the revised approach.

Part 1

Candidates have to produce a critical essay on a text from one of the following categories: prose fiction, drama, poetry, non-fiction, web pages, film or TV.

The text can be literary, for example a poem or short story from the National 5 Scottish text list or any other appropriate literature. Equally, it could be a non-fiction text, newspaper article, web page, film, TV episode, season or series.

Candidates engaged in a wide variety of texts across a range of genres. Verifiers noted the texts used included:

Drama: *An Inspector Calls*, *DNA*

Prose fiction: *Galloping Foxley, Of Mice and Men, The Landlady, Fearless, Lamb to the Slaughter, The Lighthouse, Superman and Paula Brown's New Snowsuit, The Pedestrian, Fahrenheit 451, If I Quench Thee, The Lottery, Stone Cold, Father and Son, Private Peaceful, Boy, The Hate U Give, On the Sidewalk Bleeding, Mary Moon and the Stars, The Outsiders*

Poetry: *Shooting Stars, Havisham, Visiting Hour, Glasgow 5th March 1971, Dulce et Decorum Est*

Media: *Jaws, Get Out, Romeo and Juliet, The Woman in Black, The Great Gatsby, Rocky*

Prose non-fiction: *A Hanging*, Scottish Tourism website, Dogs Trust website

We remind centres that the following minimum requirements apply for part 1:

- the minimum word count is 600 words for a written essay
- the duration of on oral presentation is approximately 5 minutes

If candidates change from National 5 to National 4, centres should offer them a chance to revisit and potentially revise critical essays completed for prelim assessment. This would be particularly useful where the minimum word count has not initially been met.

Most centres included an indication of word count or duration.

Part 2

In the revised format, candidates have to engage in a group discussion or discussion-based activity on a topic related to the selected text(s), to which they contribute relevant ideas, opinions, and/or information, using straightforward language. They must take account of what others say and stay focused on the topic or task.

Most centres used this revised approach. Some centres took advantage of the flexibility for the discussion to take place at any point in the assessment process. For example, relating this to a planning or evidence sharing activity. We remind centres that it is not necessary to wait until completion of the critical essay or oral presentation before the discussion takes place.

There were a small number of instances where the revised approach was not followed and candidates were asked a number of specific questions instead – as in the previous version of the added value assignment. From session 2025–26 onwards, all centres must follow the revised approach.

Reasonable assistance

Many centres made appropriate adaptations to the assessment in the unit assessment support pack to support candidates by offering general guidance, for example the broad structure of main body paragraphs using PEAR, PEE or PETAL structures. However, in a few centres the level of support offered to candidates went beyond reasonable assistance.

We remind centres that: 'Teachers and lecturers can clarify with candidates how to approach the assessment and to guide them in producing their response. Teachers and lecturers may prompt candidates where appropriate to clarify the requirements of the assessment but should not direct them as to any specific response. For example, they should not provide specific advice on how to improve responses or provide model answers.'

There were a small number of centres providing candidates with significant scaffolding, sentence starts and model paragraphs. These approaches were not accepted as they go beyond reasonable assistance at this level.

National 5 and Higher English: performance–spoken language

Most centres submitted a detailed performance–spoken language assessment checklist, which provided detailed comments on the contributions made by candidates.

Most centres generated evidence from both individual presentations and group discussions that naturally linked to areas of course content, such as presentations related to discursive essays for folio work, and group discussions related to texts being studied for the critical reading question paper.

We remind centres that it is possible to gather evidence for the performance–spoken language over a range of spoken language opportunities throughout the course, rather than during one assessment event.

Assessment judgements

National 4 English assignment

We remind centres that for assessment standard 1.4, evidence should be in the form of a detailed checklist with observation notes.

Most centres provided detailed comments on the candidate discussion checklist (found in the National 4 English assignment unit assessment support pack). It was clear from the inclusion of key ideas contributed, quotations of language used and illustration of non-verbal language and listening skills how candidates had met the requirements of the assessment standard.

In some instances, the checklists did not provide enough detail for verifiers to confirm the assessment judgements made.

National 5 and Higher English: performance–spoken language

Most centres evidenced internal verification procedures through annotation on candidate scripts and details of assessment judgements on internal documentation. As a result, most centres' assessment judgements were able to be easily verified.

In a small number of instances, due to lack of specific detail on the checklists, it was not possible to verify the assessment judgements made by these centres.

We remind centres that for verification purposes they should submit a detailed checklist with comments making clear the basis for assessment decisions for the National 5 and Higher performance–spoken language.

Centres could provide an indication of the topic and/or question candidates addressed, how they responded or the original point, and how it was developed or disputed by giving detail of some of the content and language of their response.