

NQ Environmental Science Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Environmental Science
Verification activity	Event
Round	1 and 2
Date published	September 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H24R 73	National 3	Environmental Science: Earth's Resources
H24P 74	National 4	Environmental Science: Living Environment
H24S 74	National 4	Environmental Science: Sustainability
H24P 75	SCQF level 5	Environmental Science: Living Environment
H24P 76	SCQF level 6	Environmental Science: Living Environment
H24R 76	SCQF level 6	Environmental Science: Earth's Resources
H24T 74	SCQF level 4	Environmental Science Assignment — Added Value Unit

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres used recent unit assessment support (UAS) packs for assessment. Some centres submitted interim evidence for either outcome 1 or outcome 2. Other centres submitted complete evidence, and all centres labelled their submission correctly as interim or complete.

Some centres submitted evidence as part of the National Progression Award (NPA) in Climate Change and Sustainability (SCQF level 4).

Some centres submitted evidence for outcome 1 that was a social science survey rather than a scientific investigation. Carrying out a social science survey is not an acceptable approach for outcome 1 in environmental science.

Assessment judgements

Assessment judgements were generally in line with national standards.

Most centres annotated the marking instructions with additional alternative responses to show alternative answers that are acceptable or not acceptable. A few centres had not awarded marks for correct answers that are not in the published marking instructions.

The marking instructions in the UAS packs are not exhaustive, and centres are encouraged to annotate them, as this aids consistency between assessors and internal verifiers within a centre. However, centres should make sure that any annotations are scientifically correct.

All centres used the holistic approach of applying marks and a cut-off score of 50% for the assessment of outcome 2.

Most centres correctly awarded assessment standards for outcome 1. However, a few centres did not, particularly assessment standards 1.3, 1.4, and 1.6 at National 4 level, and assessment standard 1.3 at National 3 level.

Centres are reminded that, at National 4 level and SCQF levels 5 and 6, they cannot provide candidates with a template for outcome 1. This includes providing pre-drawn tables for recording experimental results. Candidates must design and populate the table themselves to achieve assessment standard 1.3.

For assessment standard 1.4, when a candidate presents a graph, the graph must be labelled and plotted correctly for the assessment standard to be awarded. Graphs that are incorrectly drawn or labelled do not achieve the national standard and must not be awarded assessment standard 1.4. When a candidate draws a graph, it must either be drawn using a computer graphing package or using graph paper. Drawing a graph on blank paper, lined paper or squared paper is not appropriate, as it is not possible to determine the accuracy of the plotting. When candidates use computer graphing packages to produce a graph, they must include both major and minor gridlines for the assessment standard to be awarded. When candidates include a line of best fit, it must be appropriate to the data. Centres are also reminded that candidates must use units in tables and on graphs when appropriate, and must use the correct SI units.

For assessment standard 1.6, suggestions for improvements must be an improvement. If correct scientific practice has not been followed, the assessment standard cannot be awarded for stating that correct practice should have been followed. Centres are reminded that, when candidates use scientific terms, they must use them correctly. These terms include 'reliability' and 'accuracy'. However, candidates do not have to use these specific terms for the assessment standard to be awarded.

There was evidence that extensive internal verification had taken place, but some centres had awarded assessment standards or marks that were not appropriate. Internal verifiers must be conversant with the standards for the units they are verifying and must apply them consistently and accurately, in line with national standards.

Centres must follow the guidance for assessment conditions laid out in the UAS pack for the added value unit, and not give inappropriate levels of assistance.

Centres must issue the instructions for candidates contained within the UAS packs and must not supplement them with centre-devised materials.

For the National 4 assignment — Added Value Unit, most candidates selected to use a report or a poster format for their work, with a small number choosing to prepare PowerPoint presentations. All of these formats are acceptable. PowerPoint presentations must have sufficient detail for the assessment standards to be achieved; this will usually be in the form of speaker notes.

When a candidate has drawn a graph for an outcome 1 or the added value unit, the centre must submit the original graph or a scan of the graph. A few centres sent evidence that included photographs of the graph, and, in some cases, the photograph was of insufficient size or quality for the graph to be verified.

A few centres did not annotate the evidence to show where they awarded marks or where candidates achieved assessment standards. This was a particular issue with posters, although some centres provided commentary on a record sheet to indicate where the marks were awarded. It is best practice to show where marks have been awarded by annotating the evidence, including posters.

General comments

Centres must check at the start of the year that they are using the most up-to-date assessments if they are using the UAS packs.

If a centre decides to adapt a UAS pack significantly, the adapted assessment must be submitted to our [prior verification service](#) before it is used. This helps ensure that candidates are not assessed using invalid assessments.

Updated UAS packs were published during academic session 2025-26. All of the old, outdated UAS packs have now been removed from our secure site and for academic session 2026–27 onwards, the outdated versions of the UAS packs will not be accepted as evidence.

For academic session 2026–27 onwards, centres must use the holistic approach of allocating marks and a cut-off score for assessing outcome 2. The assessments must not be split into smaller sections, such as key areas, and centres must not extract

questions from the UAS packs for use in other assessments. Centres must take care to total the number of marks awarded correctly.

Candidates must pass both outcome 1 and outcome 2 to pass a unit, although evidence for outcome 1 from any unit is transferable between all the units at that level, with the exception of the National 4 Environmental Science added value unit. Evidence from a Higher assignment, National 5 assignment, or National 4 Environmental Science added value unit cannot be used as evidence for outcome 1.

There is no need to verify all evidence internally; an appropriate sample can be verified. The internal verification carried out by centres was generally good. Many centres showed a high level of annotation on candidate evidence, showing rigorous internal verification.

Where the assessor and the internal verifier do not agree, the final decision must be clear. Both the assessor and the internal verifier must understand the standard of answer expected for each level of qualification, and must understand that the marking guidance is not exhaustive and may be annotated by the centre.

Some questions in the UAS packs specify that the answer must be appropriate to the previous part of a question. In these questions, an answer to the second part that is not consistent with the first part cannot be awarded the mark. However, where a candidate gives an answer to the first part that is incorrect and then gives an answer to the second part that is consistent with the previous incorrect answer, they may be awarded the second mark. This ensures that a candidate is not penalised twice for the same mistake.