



NQ verification 2022–23 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	May 2023

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
HA1R 72	National 2	ESOL: Preparation for Literacy
HW56 72	National 2	ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 2
H997 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Listening and Speaking
H998 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Reading and Writing
H24H 73	National 3	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 73	National 3	ESOL in Context
H24H 74	National 4	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24L 74	National 4	ESOL in Context

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

ESOL Literacy units: National 2

Overall, the approach to assessment taken by centres was valid and accepted. All centres used SQA's unit assessment support packs, unit-by-unit approach, to assess candidates for all outcomes in the literacy units.

In the unit ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 2, for outcome 3 (writing) assessors should give candidates feedback that relates to the assessment standards they have met and/or not met. Assessors can record this at the end of the writing or on the candidate assessment record. It may be appropriate to re-assess some candidates for one assessment standard, for example assessment standard 3.1 'Forming upper and lower case

letters and numbers accurately', the candidates can complete part of the writing task again to ensure that they use capital letters accurately.

All assessments must be completed in pen.

ESOL units: National 2, National 3 and National 4

Most centres submitted evidence using SQA's ESOL unit assessment support packs. Some centres adapted the unit assessment support pack and others used centre-produced assessments. Centres are encouraged to produce their own assessment tasks to allow for greater personalisation and choice.

Centres wanting to produce their own assessments may find it useful to look at other assessments in the unit assessment support packs on SQA's secure website. We recommend that centre-produced assessments are submitted to SQA's [free prior verification service](#) to check that the assessments are valid, reliable and practicable.

A few centres should review and clarify their understanding of the approach to assessment as detailed in the unit assessment support packs to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to fully demonstrate that they have met all assessment standards for all outcomes. Unit assessment support packs can be used in their entirety, or a centre can mix assessments, for example using speaking from one, and writing from another.

Combined approach

To assess candidates at National 3 and National 4 level, some centres used SQA's unit assessment support package 2: combined approach: ESOL for Everyday Life outcome X and ESOL in Context outcome X. These unit assessment support packs use the same theme for an outcome in the ESOL for Everyday Life unit and an outcome in the ESOL in Context unit.

For example, unit assessment support package 2: combined approach:
ESOL for Everyday Life outcome 1 (reading) and ESOL in Context outcome 4 (speaking)

In the example unit assessment support pack above, the theme is 'A memorable trip'. The reading task is a trip itinerary and covers ESOL for Everyday Life. The speaking task is about working for a travel agent or organising a class trip and covers ESOL in Context.

Note: if using this approach, the other outcomes in the Everyday Life unit and in the ESOL in Context unit must still be assessed.

At ESOL SCQF levels 5 and 6, some unit assessment support packs combine assessment across Everyday Life and ESOL in Context units, removing the need to assess each unit individually. For example, a reading task could provide sufficient evidence for achieving outcome 1 (reading) in both units because the language in the text is applicable to everyday life and work or study and is sufficiently detailed and complex and covers the specialised vocabulary. There is not an example of this in SQA ESOL National 3 or National 4 unit assessment support packs as the evidence provided must show enough language to cover all the assessment standards for the same outcome for both units.

Outcome 1 (reading)

Overall, the approach taken by most centres to the assessment and re-assessment of outcome 1 (reading) was both valid and accepted.

Assessors should use their professional judgement to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence if a candidate has not met all the assessment standards. Checking responses orally, or a re-assessment using a different question on the same text, could generate sufficient evidence to achieve an unmet assessment standard. For re-assessment of all the assessment standards, or if a candidate has not produced sufficient evidence, then you must use a different assessment task.

Note: please ensure that candidates' responses are in pen — not pencil.

Outcome 2 (writing)

It was clear from the evidence provided that most centres verified are using the drafting process appropriately and in a way that supports candidates.

In a few centres, there was no evidence to show that candidates had the opportunity to redraft their written work. Assessors can give candidates feedback on whether they have completed the task or not.

If the first draft does not meet all the assessment standards, candidates can produce a maximum of two drafts and a final version. Assessors should underline any errors that relate to the assessment standards, allowing candidates to demonstrate their progression throughout the drafting process. The original draft(s), including any notes and comments from the assessor and the final version, must be kept as evidence and submitted for external verification. More detailed guidance is provided in the [ESOL common questions](#).

Some centres created their own assessment tasks, which allowed for personalisation and choice. In one example, a centre provided candidates with a choice between producing a formal or an informal email depending on the different context they chose for their writing assessment.

In another example, a centre's candidates at National 3 level, had to prepare typed and well-presented leaflets for the final version of their writing, having gone through the drafting process appropriately.

Note: please ensure that candidates' responses are in pen — not pencil.

Outcome 3 (listening)

In the evidence submitted, there were some examples of combining the assessment of outcomes 3 and 4 (listening and speaking) effectively and the result was a well-balanced conversation. Centres used an assessment task that combined listening and speaking in an interaction with another candidate. The candidates appeared well-prepared and responded to each other appropriately.

Outcome 4 (speaking)

Most centres submitted candidate evidence that was well-organised and included clearly identified audio recordings of a high quality. Where possible, centres should pair candidates with partners of a different gender and/or nationality or first language, to help in identification in the verification process. If two candidates have similar voices and accents, it is helpful for the verification process to have written pointers to help identify which candidate is speaking. Some centres provided video-recorded evidence, which supported the identification of candidates.

Other aspects of good administration in the approach to assessment that helped the verification process, include:

- ◆ clearly labelled recordings on CDs or memory sticks submitted as evidence
- ◆ the inclusion of Scottish Candidate Numbers, which helped identify candidates

An audio and/or video recording of each candidate's speaking assessment is not mandatory for the unit assessment, but we recommend you retain audio and/or video evidence for verification purposes. If an audio and/or video recording is not retained, you must ensure that detailed observation notes are made and retained for the speaking assessment.

Many candidates appeared well-prepared for the assessment and were comfortable being recorded, both in audio and video format, demonstrating that they were familiar with this as an approach to developing their speaking skills.

Note: the unit assessment support pack speaking assessment task states: 'You may make brief notes.' Candidates must not rely on, or refer to, detailed notes during the interaction.

Assessment judgements

In most centres verified, assessors had a good understanding of the assessment standards. The assessment judgements were in line with national standards, and assessor comments were clearly based on the assessment standards.

ESOL Literacy units: National 2

Assessment judgements were in line with national standards, reliable, and accepted. Candidate assessment records and highlighted judging evidence tables were included and these outlined, in detail, how assessment standards had been met for each of the completed outcomes.

ESOL units: National 2, National 3, and National 4

In some centres, a judgement was made that two outcomes from two different units had been achieved; however, the centres only provided evidence to allow a judgement to be made for one outcome. Centres must ensure that candidates meet all the assessment standards to achieve an outcome, and that they complete all outcomes to pass the unit. Centres should use the candidate assessment record or a similar document to record assessment. The candidate assessment record in a unit assessment support pack can be adapted to suit the candidates and the centre.

Outcome 1 (reading) and outcome 3 (listening)

For outcome 1 (reading) and outcome 3 (listening), most centres made good use of the judging evidence tables and combined this with professional judgement against the assessment standards, accepting candidate responses that clearly met the assessment standards.

Outcome 2 (writing)

Most centres used the drafting process very effectively and made appropriate judgements against the assessment standards at each stage of the drafting process. Clear and appropriate feedback was given to candidates, which resulted in consistent and reliable judgements.

Candidates who meet the assessment standards in their first draft are not required to produce a second draft. There were some examples of candidates producing second drafts and final versions when they had clearly met the assessment standards in the first piece of writing. Candidate writing does not have to be error-free to meet the assessment standards. It helps the verification process if 'first draft' or 'final version' is written on the different drafts.

In some centres, not all assessment judgements were in line with national standards. For example, the assessment evidence submitted for some candidates was insufficient to support the assessor judgement that candidates had met all the assessment standards for outcome 2 (writing).

Some candidates at National 2 level had not shown evidence of fulfilling the task, either because they did not give a reason for choosing something or because they didn't include one of the main bullet points. In some cases, candidates should have been given the opportunity to produce a second draft and, where necessary, a final version to meet the assessment standards.

Some candidates at National 3 level had not shown evidence of producing a leaflet. The task sheet within the unit assessment support pack asks for the candidate to make a leaflet. Assessment standard 2.3 *Using basic conventions of style and layout, as appropriate* states that 'layout is mainly appropriate for a promotional leaflet'. Centres should pay particular attention to outcome 2.3 related to layout and ensure that candidates produce written work that meets this assessment standard through the drafting process.

Centres should look at the column 'making assessment judgements' in the judging evidence table in SQA's unit assessment support packs when making judgements for each assessment standard.

Outcome 4 (speaking)

Overall, assessment judgements were clearly based on the assessment standards and candidates had been appropriately identified as pass or fail against these.

Some centres made good use of the judging evidence tables, highlighting the third column to clearly show the basis on which judgements were made.

Section 3: general comments

Internal verification

Some centres provided detailed evidence of the internal verification process, showing how assessment judgements were reached for individual outcomes and units by including supporting comments relating to assessment standards, and highlighting or annotating judging evidence tables. These documented clearly that dialogue had taken place between the internal verifier and the assessor. Other centres provided evidence of cross-marking having taken place and/or the internal verifier having signed to confirm agreement with the judgements made.

As well as ensuring national standards are maintained, internal verification ensures that assessors are fully supported throughout internal assessment. Internal verifiers and assessors may find the [NQ internal verification toolkit webpage](#) useful to ensure national standards are maintained, assessors are supported, and paperwork is not excessive. The toolkit is a suggested approach and SQA recognises that many centres have well-developed processes in place.

External verification

On the verification sample form the 'pass' or 'fail' columns should reflect the current position within the candidate's evidence: if it is complete or interim. It must be completed for each candidate as a pass or fail only.

This applies in situations where the candidate evidence is interim, for example a candidate who has completed two out of four outcomes successfully (for the everyday life unit) would be shown as 'pass' on the verification sample form, even though they are yet to attempt two more outcomes before completing the unit. The individual assessment judgements that have been made should also be detailed within the evidence.