



NQ Geography Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Geography
Verification activity:	Event
Round:	1
Date published:	July 2025

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H27G 73	National 3	Geography: Physical Environments
H27J 73	National 3	Geography: Global Issues
H27G 74	National 4	Geography: Physical Environments
H27H 74	National 4	Geography: Human Environments
H27J 74	National 4	Geography: Global Issues
H27K 74	National 4	Geography Assignment
J2ED 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Physical Environments
J2EH 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Human Environments

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Centres used SQA unit assessment support packs, adapted unit assessment support packs, and prior verified assessments. Some centres devised their own assessments to meet the needs of candidates.

Submissions from centres were all separate unit approaches and included interim and complete unit evidence. Most of the interim evidence submitted had sufficient assessment standards included to allow verification to proceed.

Assessments were mainly written test submissions. A small number of centres used an 'open book' approach to assessment. This is an acceptable approach for gathering evidence. A small number of centres used oral presentations.

A small number of centres did not use the current unit assessment support packs. From session 2016–17, centres have been required to assess candidates against the revised outcomes and assessment standards. The SQA unit assessment support packs published on SQA's secure site were updated to take account of these revisions and to ensure the packs were valid. Centres should assess candidate evidence as outlined in the judging evidence tables in these packs.

Centres should ensure that any prior verified assessments they are using are current and in line with the revised outcomes and assessment standards. Prior verified assessments are no longer valid after a unit has been revised. The prior verified assessments on SQA's secure site are all current and valid. A number of prior verified assessments were removed from SQA's secure site following the revisions in 2016. These are listed below the current assessments and centres should no longer use them. Centres should include the certificate sent by SQA or the prior verified number from SQA's secure site.

Centres should note the following advice:

- centres should check that any assessments they have had prior verified are dated after the revisions of 2016
- when centres devise their own assessment tasks, they must include both the assessment task and the judging evidence table for external verification; the judging evidence table must include 'possible responses'
- centres are encouraged to use the free prior verification service provided by SQA for centre-devised assessments
- centres can access prior verification resources from [SQA's website](#)

Assessment judgements

Most assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Centres are only required to submit evidence for one unit per candidate at each level. Only one unit is verified for each candidate at the external verification event. A small number of centres included evidence for two or three units.

There was some over-assessment this year. Each assessment standard needs to be assessed once only. While asking two questions about an assessment standard can reduce the need for re-assessment, this strategy should be used proportionately so as not to make the process too burdensome for both candidates and assessors.

It is helpful if assessors indicate where the candidate has overtaken an assessment standard across the entirety of the candidate's evidence and not just at the first applicable comment. Candidates may overtake assessments standards in more than one place in their evidence and this should be identified and credited wherever it occurs. Most centres effectively applied this approach.

Nearly all centres used the approach of placing ticks at points on candidates' work where an assessment standard was overtaken, which helps external verifiers locate the evidence.

When centres adapt a unit assessment support pack to cover a different level, they should make sure that the command words match the assessment standards.

Verifiers identified the following good practice:

- many centres included detailed and helpful comments about assessment judgements; this helps external verifiers locate and review the evidence in candidates' work
- most centres indicated on candidate scripts where assessment standards were overtaken — for example by adding 1.1, 1.2
- most centres included a summary grid to indicate which assessment standards had been overtaken by each candidate. The comments made by assessors were detailed and informative, which helped make external verification more straightforward, and were also often helpful for candidates
- most centres used the candidate assessment record effectively
- centres carried out the re-assessment of assessment standards effectively and clearly indicated instances of re-assessment on candidate scripts
- where candidate evidence had been generated by fieldwork or orally, assessors included notes to indicate what the candidate had done or said to overtake the assessment standard
- centres provided video evidence of oral presentations, which was an effective way to confirm assessors' judgements

Section 3: general comments

Most centres were 'accepted' in this round of verification. The high quality of some submissions made the verification process straightforward. These centres are to be commended on their time, effort and organisation of submissions.

Many centres had clear internal verification policies to show how quality assurance ensured national standards had been applied. These were effective as they provided the centre with a clear and systematic process. Centres should always include evidence of internal verification processes along with the candidate evidence. This may be in the

documentation provided or in written comments on candidate scripts. Some centres devised quality assurance templates to give a clear staged protocol for quality assurance. Centres that have just one geography teacher or lecturer should consider if teachers or lecturers in another department, school or college could assist in internally verifying their candidates' evidence.

Most centres completed the verification sample form appropriately. If evidence is interim, centres should indicate if the candidate has an interim pass or interim fail. An interim pass is when candidates have passed all the assessment standards completed but still have other assessment standards to attempt.

Centres should ensure that the pass or fail result on the verification sample form matches the results written by assessors on the candidate evidence.

Centres are reminded that not all assessment standards need to be re-assessed for candidates to pass a unit. Refer to the unit specification documents for specific details for each unit.

For centre-devised assessments it is essential that the assessment and the judging evidence table are submitted with the candidate evidence.

There are a number of assessments being shared by centres that have not been prior verified by SQA. Some of these state that they have been prior verified by, for example, local authority groups, but they do not meet the standard required to be accepted for approach. Assessors are advised to check that any assessments acquired from sources other than SQA's website are valid.

Reasons for 'not accepted' outcomes:

- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Physical Environments unit:
 - some centres did not include a question that allowed patterns to be described for assessment standard 1.1
 - some centres did not include a question that allowed one of the two processing techniques to be related to using a map for assessment standard 1.2

- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Human Environments unit:
 - some centres used an out-of-date assessment and judging evidence table, which made them judge the standard incorrectly
- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Global Issues unit:
 - the sources for outcome 1 were not numerical or graphical
 - some centres gave the conclusion for assessment standard 1.2 as part of the question
 - for assessment standards 2.2 and 2.3, the question did not lead the candidates to provide explanations, for example, asked for descriptions

Note: it would be helpful if internal verifiers not only review assessors' judgements but also check that the assessment and judging evidence tables are valid for centre-devised assessments.

- Judgements — National 4 Geography: Physical Environments unit:
 - some centres did not apply the standards appropriately, for example, accepting one processing technique as a pass instead of two for assessment standard 1.2

Evidence submitted for external verification must include sufficient assessment standards to allow verifiers to review the assessor's judgements. Verification cannot proceed without sufficient evidence and outcomes will be deemed 'not accepted'.

All 'not accepted' outcomes were centre-devised assessments that had not been prior verified by SQA.



NQ Geography Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Geography
Verification activity:	Event
Round:	2
Date published:	July 2025

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H27G 73	National 3	Geography: Physical Environments
H27J 73	National 3	Geography: Global Issues
H27G 74	National 4	Geography: Physical Environments
H27H 74	National 4	Geography: Human Environments
H27J 74	National 4	Geography: Global Issues
H27K 74	National 4	Geography Assignment
J2ED 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Physical Environments
J2EH 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Human Environments

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Centres used SQA unit assessment support packs, adapted unit assessment support packs, and prior verified assessments. Some centres devised their own assessments to meet the needs of candidates.

Submissions from centres were all separate unit approaches and included interim and complete unit evidence. Most of the interim evidence submitted had sufficient assessment standards included to allow verification to proceed.

The National 4 Assignment used a variety of approaches including PowerPoint presentations, reports, leaflets and posters. Assessments for the other units were mainly written test submissions. A small number of centres used an 'open book' approach to assessment. This is an acceptable approach for gathering evidence. A small number of centres used oral presentations.

A small number of centres did not use the current unit assessment support packs. From session 2016–17, centres have been required to assess candidates against the revised outcomes and assessment standards. The SQA unit assessment support packs published on SQA's secure site were updated to take account of these revisions and to ensure that the packs were valid. Centres should assess candidate evidence as outlined in the judging evidence tables in these packs.

Centres should ensure that any prior verified assessments they are using are current and in line with the revised outcomes and assessment standards. Prior verified assessments are no longer valid after a unit has been revised. The prior verified assessments on SQA's secure site are all current and valid. A number of prior verified assessments were removed from SQA's secure site following the revisions in 2016. These are listed below the current assessments and centres should no longer use them. Centres should include the certificate sent by SQA or the prior verified number from SQA's secure site.

Centres should note the following advice:

- centres should check that any assessments they have had prior verified are dated after the revisions of 2016
- when centres devise their own assessment tasks, they must include both the assessment task and the judging evidence table for external verification; the judging evidence table must include the 'possible responses'
- centres are encouraged to use the free prior verification service provided by SQA for centre-devised assessments
- centres can access prior verification resources from [SQA's website](#)

Assessment judgements

Most assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Centres are only required to submit evidence for one unit per candidate at each level. Only one unit is verified for each candidate at the external verification event. A small number of centres included evidence for two or three units.

There was some over-assessment this year. Each assessment standard needs to be assessed once only. While asking two questions about an assessment standard can reduce the need for re-assessment, this strategy should be used proportionately so as not to make the process too burdensome for both candidates and assessors.

It is helpful if assessors indicate where the candidate has overtaken an assessment standard across the entirety of the candidate's evidence and not just at the first applicable comment. Candidates may overtake assessments standards in more than one place in their evidence and this should be identified and credited wherever it occurs. Most centres effectively applied this approach.

Nearly all centres used the approach of placing ticks at points on candidates' work where an assessment standard was overtaken, which helps external verifiers locate the evidence.

Some centres highlighted in colour where the assessment standards were overtaken for the National 4 Assignment. Again, this was helpful for verification.

When centres adapt a unit assessment support pack to cover a different level, they should make sure that the command words match the assessment standards.

Verifiers identified the following good practice:

- many centres included detailed and helpful comments about assessment judgements; this helps external verifiers locate and review the evidence in candidates' work
- most centres indicated on candidate scripts where assessment standards were overtaken — for example by adding 1.1, 1.2
- most centres included a summary grid to indicate which assessment standards had been overtaken by each candidate. The comments made by assessors were detailed and informative, which helped to make external verification more straightforward, and were also often helpful for candidates
- most centres used the candidate assessment record effectively
- centres carried out the re-assessment of assessment standards effectively and clearly indicated this on candidate scripts
- where candidate evidence had been generated by fieldwork or orally, assessors included notes to indicate what the candidate had done or said to overtake the assessment standard
- some centres provided video evidence of oral presentations, which was an effective way to confirm assessors' judgements
- the standard of candidate evidence for the National 4 Assignment was high and included the use of fieldwork as well as topics based on secondary sources

Section 3: general comments

Most centres were 'accepted' in this round of verification. The high quality of some submissions made the verification process straightforward. These centres are to be commended on their time, effort and organisation of submissions.

Many centres had clear internal verification policies to show how quality assurance ensured national standards had been applied. These were effective as they provided the centre with a clear and systematic process. Centres should always include evidence of internal verification processes along with the candidate evidence. This may be in the documentation provided or in written comments on the candidate scripts. Some centres devised quality assurance templates to give a clear staged protocol for quality assurance. Centres that have just one geography teacher or lecturer should consider if teachers or lecturers in another department, school or college could assist in internally verifying their candidates' evidence.

Most centres completed the verification sample form appropriately. If evidence is interim, centres should indicate if the candidate has an interim pass or interim fail. An interim pass is when candidates have passed all the assessment standards completed but still have other assessment standards to attempt.

Centres should ensure that the pass or fail result on the verification sample form matches the results written by assessors on the candidate evidence.

Centres are reminded that not all assessment standards need to be re-assessed for candidates to pass a unit. Refer to the unit specification for specific information about this.

For centre-devised assessments it is essential that the assessment and the judging evidence table are submitted with the candidate evidence.

There are a number of assessments being shared by centres that have not been prior verified by SQA. Some of these state that they have been prior verified by, for example,

local authority groups but they do not meet the standard required to be accepted for approach. Assessors are advised to check that any assessments acquired from sources other than SQA's website are valid.

Assessors should take care to check the accuracy of figures quoted from the numerical and graphical data collected by the candidate, especially in the National 4 Assignment.

Reasons for 'not accepted' outcomes:

- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Physical Environments unit:
 - some centres did not include a question that allowed patterns to be described for assessment standard 1.1
 - some centres did not include a question that allowed one of the two processing techniques to be related to using a map for assessment standard 1.2
- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Human Environments unit:
 - some centres used an out-of-date assessment and judging evidence table, which made them judge the standard incorrectly
- Approaches — National 4 Geography: Global Issues unit:
 - the sources for outcome 1 were not numerical or graphical
 - some centres gave the conclusion for assessment standard 1.2 as part of the question
 - for assessment standards 2.2 and 2.3, the question did not lead the candidates to provide explanations, for example asked for descriptions

Note: it would be helpful if internal verifiers not only reviewed assessors' judgements but also check that the assessment and judging evidence tables are valid for centre-devised assessments.

- Judgements — National 4 Geography: Physical Environments unit:
 - some centres did not apply the standards appropriately, for example, accepting one processing technique as a pass instead of two for assessment standard 1.2

Evidence submitted for external verification must include sufficient assessment standards to allow verifiers to review the assessor's judgements. Verification cannot proceed without sufficient evidence and outcomes will be deemed 'not accepted'.

All 'not accepted' outcomes were centre-devised or local authority-devised assessments that had not been prior verified by SQA.