



NQ verification 2022–23 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	German
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	June 2023

National Course components verified

Course code	Course level	Course title
C834 75	National 5	German: performance–talking
C834 76	Higher	German: performance–talking

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres selected for verification in round 2 used SQA’s coursework assessment task for the performance–talking, as set out in the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) course specifications.

Most candidates were well prepared for the task, and this was reflected in the high quality of most performances. Assessors had guided candidates well in the selection of topics, allowing most candidates to use a range of tenses, structures and vocabulary appropriate to each level and the chosen topic.

National 5

Candidates performed well when the topics chosen for the presentation were covered in detail with well-structured responses and opinions, including an introduction and conclusion.

A small number of candidates prepared a presentation using topics that did not allow for any in-depth coverage. The content was repetitive, lacked structure, and the level of language was more appropriate to National 4.

Some candidates used a range of topics for the presentation, or it was clear they had used their job application as the basis for their presentation. Centres should guide candidates to cover one topic in detail and use a range of structures, tenses and vocabulary appropriate to the level, including the use of subordinate clauses.

At National 5, candidates must use detailed language as described in the productive grammar grid. At this level, long lists of nouns (for example school subject, places in the town and personal qualities) or repetition of straightforward descriptions (for example names, ages, pets and descriptions of hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary to access the higher pegged marks.

The presentation should last between approximately 1 to 2 minutes at National 5, and no automatic penalty is to be applied to performances which fall outwith this duration.

All candidates covered a different context in the conversation at National 5. Assessors should make a natural link between the presentation and the candidates' choice of context for the conversation. Starting the conversation with a question not related to the presentation does not help the natural flow of the performance.

A few centres used a number of questions in the conversation, which the German verification team felt were not appropriate for the level. This resulted in candidates being unable to answer these questions beyond *ja*, *nein* or *ich weiß nicht*. Assessors should ask open-ended questions to allow candidates scope to provide detailed answers.

Higher

All candidates chose at least two contexts for the discussion at Higher, and most centres used questioning that allowed candidates to use detailed and complex language.

A few centres asked questions that were similar to those at National 5 and there was no clear difference in the level of the language, the range of structures and range of vocabulary used.

At Higher, candidates are not expected to use straightforward or detailed language. They should avoid using lists of nouns (for example places in the towns, pets and school subjects). Candidates should give their opinions, including expanding on reasons for their opinion.

Overall, most candidates coped well with the discussion at Higher, although some candidates found it difficult to sustain the discussion as it progressed. Most assessors were skilled in their interactions and prompted, supported or moved on when candidates were unable to answer a question.

Centres should note that the first 1 to 2 minutes of the Higher discussion should be used to focus on general questions to allow the candidate to settle into the task. Open-ended questions provide candidates with scope to expand on their answers using detailed and complex language.

National 5 and Higher

Most assessors were supportive and used mostly open-ended questions. More natural and spontaneous conversations were produced where assessors were aware of candidates' interests.

Assessors should avoid over-using closed questions, as it does not allow candidates to provide sufficient detail. Candidates should also be allowed some time to think so they can formulate their answers or correct themselves.

Candidates do not benefit from conversations and discussions that are unnecessarily long or too short. Where conversations and discussions were short, candidates were unable to demonstrate detailed language (National 5) and detailed and complex language (Higher).

Centres should refer to the information regarding the recommended length of the conversation or discussion to ensure that candidates are able to meet the demands of the National 5 and Higher performance–talking as set out in the course specifications for [National 5](#) and [Higher](#).

A few centres were overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation or discussion or used the same questions for all candidates, which did not allow candidates any personalisation and choice. The conversation at National 5 and the discussion at Higher should contain spontaneous and natural language, and centres should avoid overly rehearsing conversations and discussions.

A wider variety of questions in the conversation or discussion allows candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected, as set out in the performance–talking task in the course specification.

Centres are reminded

- ◆ candidates should prepare for their performance–talking assessment independently to personalise their performance, and should select their own topics of interest, vocabulary and grammatical structures
- ◆ candidates may use brief notes and/or use visual aids. Candidates may refer to up to five headings of not more than eight words each to help them (this applies to the presentation only at National 5). The headings are prompts and are not to be read out word for word
- ◆ at Higher level, candidates may use extended answers, although assessors should dissuade candidates from responding to questions with mini presentations. Longer answers can appear to be overly rehearsed, and discussions should include a range of short and long answers
- ◆ overly rehearsed conversations or discussions may not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the higher pegged marks and may not prepare candidates for the demands of Advanced Higher or real-life situations
- ◆ to give candidates opportunities to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability at both levels
- ◆ to encourage differentiation through the choice of topics and/or sub-topics and a range of questioning techniques

- ◆ it is good practice for the assessor to engage actively in the conversation, but they must ensure that answers to candidates' questions do not detract from the purpose of the assessment. If candidates ask questions, assessors should keep their answers short
- ◆ native or near-native candidates need the same level of support and guidance during the performance as non-native speakers

Assessment judgements

At both levels, most centres applied the marking instructions in line with national standards. Some centres were not accepted as their application of the marking instructions was either severe, lenient, or inconsistent.

Centres are reminded:

- ◆ to make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 and Higher German performance–talking, published on SQA's secure website
- ◆ to use the marking instructions in line with the productive grammar grid to ensure that candidates use detailed language at National 5 and detailed and complex language at Higher
- ◆ refer to the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions of the Modern Languages course specifications for National 5 and Higher
- ◆ performances should be marked holistically and positively and do not need to be perfect to be awarded the highest marks
- ◆ all four performance aspects should be considered: content, accuracy, language resource and interaction (conversation only at National 5)
- ◆ performances may be uneven and to expect some variation in the quality of performance, including within the pegged mark in the marking instructions

When explaining assessment judgements, assessors should refer closely to the detailed marking instructions and provide examples of candidate utterances, where possible. This helps event verifiers to understand how assessment judgements were reached.

Section 3: general comments

Most centres submitted performance–talking evidence on USB memory sticks.

Some centres submitted their evidence digitally through SQA Connect. Both physical and digital evidence was clearly labelled with the candidates' information.

Most audio recordings were audible, although in a small number of recordings the candidate was not always clear. Centres are reminded:

- ◆ the audio recording device should be placed near the candidate to ensure that their responses can be heard
- ◆ the performance–talking should be recorded in an appropriate location with minimal background noise
- ◆ assessors should avoid taking notes during the performance as this may distract candidates

- ◆ to ensure they have the technology capable of recording performances and that the audio files are kept securely so they are available for verification
- ◆ the recording must be playable on a variety of devices and not solely on the device it was made

Some centres provided robust internal verification evidence, including evidence of professional dialogue between the assessor and the internal verifier. This allowed the German verification team to gain an insight into how marks were awarded and how any disagreement was resolved. This is good practice and very helpful for event verifiers.

A number of centres with only one German teacher found a creative solution to verification, using a combination of email and online meetings to verify candidates' work. This collaborative approach is an example of exemplary practice.

Centres should include school internal verification policies in their submission, and assessors and internal verifiers should demonstrate how the policy was applied in the context of the performance–talking assessments. Centres should provide some commentary from the internal verifier on the discussion about each judgement. For the purposes of external verification, it is very helpful to have some detail in the verification notes of the reasons why a candidate was awarded one pegged mark rather than another for any section of the performance–talking.

Some centres provided limited internal verification or simple cross-marking and it was not always clear why the marks were awarded. Assessors should use the language in the detailed marking instructions in respect to content, accuracy and language resource as well as the productive grammar grid when justifying their marks.

For verification to proceed, centres must provide the marks awarded for each subsection of the performance–talking at National 5 (presentation, conversation, sustaining the conversation), along with a total out of 30 marks. A total out of 30 marks for the Higher discussion must be provided.

Centres must insert the total mark for each candidate's performance–talking in the 'Mark (centre use)' column on the verification sample form.

Preparation of the sample for external SQA verification

Centres should thoroughly check their sample submission and all related paperwork. SQA generic documentation relating to external verification may refer to internally-assessed components of course assessment at Advanced Higher, however, this does not apply in Modern Languages. The performance–talking at Advanced Higher is externally assessed by a visiting assessor.

For preparation of future samples for external SQA verification, centres should refer to the key publications for verification of the performance–talking. The publication: *Verification guidance for internally-assessed course assessment in 2022–23* (and other documents for the verification of units) are available on SQA's [National Qualifications external verification](#) web page.