



NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	German
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	June 2024

National Course components verified

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

Note: the performance–talking is an internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA).

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres verified in round 2 used the performance–talking coursework assessment task, as set out in the National 5 and Higher course specifications.

Verifiers noted that most candidates had prepared well for the task, and this was reflected in the quality of their 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 to the chosen topics.

National 5 presentation and conversation

At National 5 level, most candidates performed well when the topics chosen for the presentation were covered in detail with well-structured content that included opinions, an introduction and conclusion.

A few candidates prepared a presentation using a range of topics, which did not allow them to cover the topics in any depth. The content was repetitive, lacked structure, and the level of language was not detailed, as is appropriate for the level.

We recommend that centres guide candidates to choose one topic and use a range of structures, tenses and vocabulary appropriate to the level and the task. At National 5, candidates must use detailed language as in the productive grammar grid, in appendix 2 of the course specification.

At National 5, long lists of nouns (for example places in town and school subjects) or repetitions 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. When guiding candidates in their choice of topic, centres should avoid topics that are more appropriate for Higher.

The presentation should last between 1 and 2 minutes at National 5, although candidates are not automatically penalised for presentations that are on the shorter side of the recommended length. However, if presentations are too short, candidates may not be able to demonstrate their full potential.

All candidates covered a different context in the conversation. 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. The German verification team noted a very small number of centres used questions that were not appropriate for the level. This resulted in candidates being unable to answer these questions beyond *ja*, *nein* or *ich weiß nicht*.

Assessors were generally supportive and most asked open-ended questions. More natural and spontaneous conversations were produced where assessors were aware of the candidates' interests.

Higher discussion

All candidates chose at least two contexts for the discussion at Higher and for most centres, the type of questioning allowed candidates to use detailed and complex language. A few centres asked questions that were similar to those asked at National 5 and there was no clear difference in the level of language, range of structures and range of vocabulary used. At Higher level, candidates should avoid lists of nouns (for example places in the town, pets and school subjects). At this level, assessors should encourage candidates to express their ideas and opinions and, where appropriate, give reasons for these.

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

We recommend assessors use the initial 1 to 2 minutes of the discussion to focus on general, less demanding questions to allow the candidate to settle into the task. Open-ended questions allow candidates scope to expand on their answers using detailed and complex language.

National 5 and Higher performance–talking: important aspects for consideration

- ◆ Assessors should avoid using closed questions, as it does not allow the candidates to provide sufficient detail. Candidates should be allowed some time to think so they can formulate their answers or correct themselves.
- ◆ A number of conversations and discussions were unnecessarily long or too short, which was sometimes to the detriment of some performances. Particularly, when conversations (National 5) and discussions (Higher) 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 and discussion to ensure that candidates are able to meet the demands of the performance–talking as outlined in the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) Modern Languages course specifications.
- ◆ A small number of centres were overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation or used the same questions for all candidates, which did not allow candidates any personalisation and choice. As the conversation at National 5 and the discussion at Higher should contain spontaneous and natural language, centres should avoid overly rehearsing conversations and discussions. A wider variety of questions in the conversation allows candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected.
- ◆ We remind centres that candidates should prepare for their performance–talking assessment independently and select their own topics of interest, vocabulary and grammatical structures to personalise their performance.
- ◆ The [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) Modern Languages course specifications outline the resources candidates may use. During the assessment (this applies to the presentation only at National 5), candidates may use brief notes and/or visual aids. They may refer to up to five headings of not more than eight words each to help them. The headings are prompts and are not to be read out word for word. They may be in the modern language or English.
- ◆ Although at Higher level, candidates may use extended answers, 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 may not allow candidates to meet the criteria for the top pegged marks in the performance, and it does not prepare candidates for the demands of Advanced Higher or real-life situations.
- ◆ Assessors should give candidates opportunities to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability at both levels. It is important to encourage differentiation through topics and sub-topics and question styles to ensure the assessment task is tailored to the interests of candidates.
- ◆ Although it is good practice for the assessor to engage actively in the conversation, if candidates ask them questions, they should keep answers short.
- ◆ A small number of native or near-native speakers were among the verification sample. We remind assessors that these candidates need the same level of support and guidance as non-native speakers do.

Assessment judgements

Most centres applied the marking instructions in line with national standards at National 5 and Higher. Where centres were ‘accepted with recommendations’, this was because the application of the marking instructions was either severe, lenient, or inconsistent for some candidates. In this instance, centres should make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 and Higher German performance–talking published on SQA’s secure website.

Assessors should use the marking instructions in line with the productive grammar grid to ensure that the performance–talking provides candidates with opportunities to produce detailed language (National 5) and detailed and complex language (Higher).

Assessors should refer closely to the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions in the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) Modern Languages course specifications.

We remind assessors that the performance–talking can be uneven and some variation in the performances is to be expected, even within the pegged marks. Performances should be marked holistically and positively and do not need to be perfect to be awarded the highest mark. All aspects of the performance should be taken into consideration: content, accuracy, language resource and interaction (conversation only at National 5).

When explaining assessment judgements, it is useful if assessors refer closely to the language used in the detailed marking instructions and provide exemplification. This helps external verifiers in understanding how assessment judgements were reached.

Section 3: general comments

Most centres submitted candidate evidence (audio files) in a physical format using USB drives; other centres submitted their evidence digitally. The evidence, both physical and digital, was clearly labelled with candidates’ names, and most of the tracks were audible.

We remind centres, in the absence of audio files we are unable to proceed with external verification. Centres can access information and documents on the evidence required for external verification in each subject on the [National Qualifications - external verification](#) web page. Further information is in the [‘Preparation of the sample for external \(SQA\) verification’](#) section below.

In a small number of recordings, the candidate was not always clearly heard. To support marking and internal and external verification, we remind centres that the audio recording device should be placed near enough to the candidate to ensure their responses can be heard. Centres should record the performance–talking in an appropriate location with minimal background noise.

The German verification team found it useful where centres provided a commentary on a candidate’s performance using the detailed marking instructions and productive grammar grid in terms of content, accuracy and language resource.

Some centres provided robust internal verification evidence, including assessment judgements and 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. The German verification team also observed collaborative approaches between centres, and this is exemplary practice.

The internal verification for some centres was less robust. Centres should include their internal verification policy, which should demonstrate how the policy was applied in the context of the performance–talking.

We recommend centres include some commentary from the internal verifier about the discussion around each judgement. Some internal verification notes did not include any detail and included brief comments, such as ‘I agree with the marks.’ This did not provide the German verification team with an insight into any professional dialogue involved in awarding the marks.

Centres must include a breakdown of marks for National 5 candidates (presentation; conversation, sustaining the conversation) which should be recorded on the candidate assessment record or alternative document for each National 5 candidate.

Centres should enter the agreed total mark on the verification sample form for both National 5 and Higher candidates and ensure this matches the marks included in the candidate assessment record, or equivalent. It is important that centres accurately transfer the marks onto the verification sample form.

Preparation of the sample for external (SQA) verification

We request centres to thoroughly check their sample submission and all related documents.

For preparation of future samples for external (SQA) verification, centres should refer to the key publications for verification of the performance–talking available on the [SQA National Qualifications - external verification](#) web page.