



NQ verification 2023–24 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23C 73	National 3	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
H23G 73	National 3	Modern Studies: International Issues
H23F 73	National 3	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
H23C 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
H23G 74	National 4	Modern Studies: International Issues
H23F 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

Section 2: comments on assessment

Overall, the majority of evidence submitted was valid and in line with national standards.

Most evidence submitted was complete, with a small number of centres choosing to submit interim evidence of candidate progress. The most common approach was in the form of written responses to assessment questions. The majority of evidence was in hard copy, with a small number of digital submissions. There were some issues with the quality of scanning and copying, with some digital submissions photocopied to a standard that made it very difficult to read or interpret candidate work and specific centre judgements. Centres are reminded that if they are submitting candidate evidence digitally, they must ensure it is legible and of sufficient quality.

The most common assessment approach used by centres was SQA-generated unit assessment support packs. Some centres submitted adapted or centre-generated

assessments, which largely corresponded to the appropriate assessment standards for the specific level being assessed. Centres are reminded that if they are producing their own assessment materials, they can submit these to SQA to be prior verified. This ensures that assessment materials are appropriate and fully in line with the national standard for the level being assessed.

Some centres continue to either inflate or misunderstand assessment standards for some outcomes, often by using question prompts such as 'in detail' and by allocating numerical marks to determine candidate progress and attainment. Centres are reminded that the use of the prompt, 'in detail' is a differentiator between a National 4 and National 5 assessment. Centres should not use this prompt for any National 4 assessments. Additionally, as these assessments are pass or fail, based on the candidate meeting the individual assessment standard and overall outcome, marks should not be used in any centre's approach to assessment for units. The impact of this is that centres often apply their own standards and incorrectly judge the candidate to have not achieved the assessment standard or met the overall outcome when they may have done so. Alternatively, the centre may judge the candidate to have achieved a pass when they have not due to centres not following SQA's national standard and, instead, applying their own standard.

Centres are reminded that they should follow the specific assessment standards and apply the relevant judging evidence table when assessing candidate performance, and that it is these standards that the candidate should be judged against. Effective use of the judging evidence table ensures greater consistency of judgement between assessors and across candidates.

If centres are amending SQA unit assessment support packs, they should state which pack is being amended.

Assessment judgements

The centre and candidate evidence submitted indicates that the national standard is being applied across most candidates and between most colleagues for each of the levels and units that were sampled.

Centres are continuing to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidate evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and outcomes. These judgements are mostly being correctly verified as part of the centre's internal verification procedures with, for some centres, a high level of professional dialogue and discussion taking place with regards to assessment judgements as evidenced on candidate scripts and candidate assessment records or pupil progress logs.

There was evidence from most centres that SQA documentation (assessment and judging evidence table) was being applied effectively. In some cases, centres were successfully adapting the judging evidence table to meet the specific demands of the centre's assessment tasks. This personalisation should ensure consistent assessment judgements being made between colleagues and across candidates within centres.

Centres used the judging evidence table effectively in articulating the assessment standard to markers and verifiers. Centres that had clear and specific judging evidence tables often had greater consistency of judgement between assessors and across candidates.

Centres continue to use annotations effectively at the specific section in candidate submissions where they achieved the relevant assessment standard. This is considered good and effective practice as it can facilitate consistent judgements between colleagues and across candidates. There was evidence of this approach being used by centres on a much more consistent basis, which led to greater consistency of judgement between colleagues.

Within some centres, there was evidence of cross-marking and random sampling of candidate evidence tied to robust and consistent internal verification policies and procedures. These measures ensure consistency of assessment judgement across not just all candidates but also between markers and the centre's verifier.

Centres should ensure that they are consistent in applying their internal verification procedures. If they state on their verification policy that they randomly sample candidate work or cross-mark, then this needs to be evidenced within the centre submission. Some centres submit detailed internal verification statements and policies but, in some cases, it appears that what they say they intend to do is often not put into practice as robustly as they intended. Centres should ensure that there is greater consistency between centre policy and centre practice.

While some centres clearly had effective internal verification policies and used these to inform assessment judgements, a minority of centres did not submit any statement or policy of internal verification. Centres are reminded to follow SQA guidance in relation to internal verification and, if they need further support, access SQA's [NQ internal verification toolkit](#) for advice on how to create and implement an effective internal verification process within the centre.

Some centres produced and made good use of workbooks or logbooks to effectively support candidates to achieve the assessment standards. These approaches highlighted the high level of dialogue and discussion occurring between colleagues and candidates, particularly where remediation was necessary to allow specific candidates to achieve assessment standards and overall outcomes.

There was some evidence of the candidate assessment records being used very effectively when recording candidate progress and achievements. However, the candidate assessment record should be used more consistently by all centres to log any verbal remediation between candidate and assessor and the outcome of this discussion should be recorded on the candidate assessment record. If centres are using verbal remediation, they should note when this is the case and follow their own internal verification processes and ensure that the candidate's verbal response is noted, assessed, and the assessment judgement agreed by the centre's verifier. If a positive outcome is agreed during this two-stage process, this should be recorded, and the candidate assessment record updated to reflect any further progress and attainment.

Centres are reminded that the National 4 threshold approach for re-assessing candidates remains valid and should be applied where relevant. The SQA threshold guidance states:

'If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of assessment standards they will be judged to have passed the unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.'

The specific requirements for this unit are as follows:

- ◆ 3 out of the 4 assessment standards must be achieved

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all assessment standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment where that is required.'

Therefore, if using the threshold approach, candidates should fully attempt all assessment standards and not merely three out of the four of these standards. While it was evident that some centres were fully aware of, and effectively implemented these thresholds, some centres were not, and this had an impact on the veracity and reliability of centre judgements.

Section 3: general comments

Overall, the standard and quality of centre submissions was positive, with evidence of the national standard generally being regularly and consistently applied across candidates and centres, with candidates being presented at the appropriate level.

From the centre submissions, it is apparent most centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards. There was evidence of consistent application of these standards between colleagues, as well as clearly articulated professional dialogue taking place among and between centre colleagues, which increases the likelihood of accurate judgements being made. Some centres provided very effective task booklets and support, which offered effective guidance to candidates about how they should approach each assessment standard.

There was also evidence, in some centres, of thorough and effective internal assessment and verification procedures. These procedures were robust with evidence of cross-marking and annotation of candidate scripts by both marker and internal verifier. Some centres appear to be having ongoing effective professional dialogue and detailed discussions regarding candidate performance and the consistent application of assessment standards, with these discussions being recorded and annotated on candidate scripts, evidence files, and candidate assessment records. It is considered good practice to submit a detailed and thorough candidate assessment record that highlights the decisions reached and the reasons for these.

Some centres however did not submit or indicate the use of an internal verification statement or policy. An effective internal verification process and policy is essential to ensure greater consistency of judgement between colleagues and across candidates. If centres need guidance on internal verification, they should refer to SQA's [NQ internal verification toolkit](#).



NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23R 74	National 4	Modern Studies Assignment

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres used the SQA-generated unit assessment support pack to assess candidate progress and attainment.

There was evidence of individual personalisation and choice in terms of the topics chosen by candidates and methods of presentation, for example PowerPoint presentations, written reports, and posters.

Evidence from centres indicated that the SQA documentation (assessment and judging evidence table) was being applied effectively. This approach should ensure that there are consistent assessment judgements between colleagues and across candidate evidence within centres.

Assessment judgements

There is evidence from most submissions of national standards being applied across candidates and between colleagues in centres.

Centres continue to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidates' evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and the overall outcome. These

judgements are also mostly being correctly verified as part of the centre's internal verification procedures with, for some centres, a high level of professional dialogue and discussion taking place with regards to assessment judgements as evidenced on candidate scripts and candidate assessment records or pupil progress logs.

There was evidence of centres using annotation effectively on scripts at the section in candidate submissions where they achieved the relevant assessment standard. This is considered good and effective practice as it can facilitate consistent judgements between colleagues and across candidates.

In some centres, there was evidence of cross-marking and random sampling of candidate evidence tied to robust and consistent internal verification policies and procedures. These measures ensure consistency of assessment judgements across all candidates, and between markers and the centre's verifier.

While some centres clearly had effective internal verification policies and used these to inform assessment judgements, a minority of centres did not submit or indicate the use of an internal verification statement or policy. There was also evidence within centre submissions of internal verification taking place but without a formal internal verification policy. Centres are strongly encouraged to create and implement their own policy with regards to verification and moderation of candidate evidence. Centres are reminded to follow SQA guidance in relation to internal verification and, if they need further support, access SQA's [NQ internal verification toolkit](#) for advice on how to create and implement an effective internal verification process within the centre.

There was evidence of continued and ongoing professional discussion and dialogue taking place within some centres in relation to judging candidate evidence against assessment standards, in line with a robust internal verification process and procedure. Some centres produced and made good use of workbooks or logbooks to effectively support candidates to achieve the assessment standards. These approaches highlighted the high level of dialogue and discussion occurring between colleagues and candidates, particularly where remediation was necessary to allow specific candidates to achieve assessment standards and overall outcomes. Some centres were very effective in logging remediation discussions and outcomes on candidate scripts and candidate assessment records.

There was evidence of centres using verbal remediation strategies when re-assessing candidate progress, which is to be encouraged. If centres are using verbal remediation, they should note when this is the case and follow their own internal verification processes and ensure that the candidate's verbal response is noted, assessed, and the assessment judgement agreed by the centre's verifier. If a positive outcome is agreed during this two-stage process, this should be recorded, and the candidate assessment record updated to reflect any further progress and attainment.

Candidates in some centres used the National 5 assignment template when writing up their completed work. This template has marks allocated to each section. While in these instances marks were not being used to determine candidate progress, centres are reminded that all the assessment standards are pass or fail minimum competency tasks and, as such, no marks should be used in approximating attainment.

Section 3: general comments

Overall, the standard and quality of centre submissions was good, with evidence of the national standard generally being applied consistently across candidates and centres, and with candidates being presented at the appropriate level.

There was strong evidence of good and consistent practice in centres, particularly in terms of record keeping, script annotation, thorough professional dialogue, and effective moderation and verification strategies and processes.

From the centre submissions, it is apparent most centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards. There was evidence of consistent application of these standards between colleagues, as well as clearly articulated professional dialogue taking place among and between centre colleagues, which increases the likelihood of accurate judgements being made.

There was evidence, in some centres, of thorough and effective internal assessment and verification procedures. These procedures were robust with evidence of cross-marking and annotation of candidate scripts by both marker and internal verifier. Some centres appear to be having detailed discussions regarding candidate performance and the consistent application of assessment standards, with these discussions being recorded and annotated on candidate scripts and evidence files. Some centres are highly effective in the implementation of their internal verification policy, with clear evidence of it being applied thoroughly and consistently across all candidates and between all colleagues. Some centres are effectively recording candidate performance and progress through detailed and specific candidate assessment records. It is considered good practice to submit a detailed and thorough candidate assessment record that highlights the decisions reached and the reasons for these.