



NQ Modern Studies Qualification

Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

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

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

Assessment approaches

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

Most centres used SQA-generated unit assessment support packs or assessments that had been prior verified by SQA.

If centres produce 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. Centres must include the prior verification code if submitting materials that have been prior verified by SQA.

Centres are reminded that attainment of individual assessment standards is on a pass or fail basis. Some centre submissions had an allocation of marks on some assessment tasks. Centres should not use marks in any approach to assessment. When centres use marks to determine attainment, they 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, centres may judge the candidate to have achieved a pass when they have not by not following SQA's national standard and, instead, applying their own standard.

Some National 4 centre submissions for outcome 2 (assessment standards 2.1 and 2.2) had, within the task prompt, the phrase 'in detail', for example 'Describe, in detail...'. The use of the phrase 'in detail' is a differentiator between a National 4 and National 5 assessment and should not be used in National 4 prompts as this inflates the standard.

Assessment judgements

Evidence shows that centres are applying the national standard across most candidates and between most colleagues for the levels and units sampled.

There was clear evidence that the majority of centres were aware of specific assessment standards and could effectively apply these standards consistently across all candidates. There was considerable evidence of ongoing and effective professional dialogue taking place in centres regarding applying the national standard. This could consistently be seen through script annotation in different coloured pens to show agreement, or otherwise, between centre assessors and verifiers as well as on candidate assessment records and centre documentation. This is to be encouraged and highlights the depth and detail of discussion that occurs in centres when approximating and agreeing candidate attainment and progression.

Centres continue to use annotations effectively at the specific section in candidate submissions where they achieved the relevant assessment standard. This is good and effective practice as it can facilitate consistent judgements between colleagues and across candidates. There was evidence that centres are using this approach much more consistently than in previous years, which led to greater consistency of judgement between colleagues.

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 shown in the centre submission. Some centres submitted detailed internal verification statements and policies but, in some cases, did not put these 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.

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 assessment 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 presented at the appropriate level.

It was clear that the majority of centres understand the specific assessment standards and can apply these standards.

There were many examples of good centre practice, including:

- using different coloured pens on candidate scripts
- script annotation and countersigning at the specific point of candidate attainment
- thorough and detailed candidate assessment records indicating a level of effective professional dialogue, including specific personalised comments about attainment and/or candidate next steps
- using verbal remediation and assessment revisits for candidates who may not initially have passed specific assessment standards
- using booklets and scaffolded write-on sheets to support individual candidate needs
- thorough and detailed feedback to candidates either on candidate scripts, candidate assessment records or workbooks
- effective internal verification processes, policies and procedures



NQ Modern Studies Qualification

Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

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

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. However, some centres used overly-structured templates to record candidate findings and other assessment evidence. Centres should note that they should allow candidates optionality and choice when deciding how to present their findings.

Evidence indicated that centres were applying the SQA documentation (assessment and judging evidence table) effectively. This approach should ensure consistent assessment judgements between colleagues and across candidate evidence within centres.

The majority of submissions were in hard paper copy. However, some centres uploaded digital evidence and 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 must ensure that candidate evidence submitted digitally is legible.

Assessment judgements

The majority of centres made assessment judgements in line with national standards, with candidate scripts clearly showing where each assessment standard was met though annotation at the appropriate point of attainment. Assessment judgements are mostly being correctly verified as part of a centre's internal verification procedures as evidenced on candidate scripts and candidate assessment records or candidate progress logs. This shows the ongoing professional dialogue taking place in centres

with the purpose of ensuring consistency of assessment judgements across all candidates and between centre colleagues, particularly centre assessor and verifier. This is very good practice and is to be encouraged.

A few centres gave helpful feedback to candidates on how to achieve a particular assessment standard, which supported candidates, and is an example of good practice for other centres to consider. Centres used initials and different coloured pens to show cross-marking, which is to be encouraged.

Many centres submitted candidate assessment records that clearly showed where assessment judgements were made. 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. Some centres were very effective in logging remediation discussions and outcomes on candidate scripts and candidate assessment records.

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, with candidates 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 these standards being consistently applied 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.

Many centres showed effective and consistent good practice in their approach to assessment and judgements, and in the robustness of applying their internal verification processes, for example:

- using candidate workbooks to record evidence prior to write-up
- optionality in candidate presentation format
- ongoing professional dialogue shown on candidate scripts, candidate assessment records and internal verification documentation
- using cross-marking, candidate sampling and script annotation to exemplify candidate attainment and progression
- using verbal remediation and recording of remediation conversations within centre documentation
- thorough and detailed internal verification policies that outline named assessor and verifier within the centre and steps undertaken to ensure consistency of judgement between centre colleagues and across all candidates
- high level of consistency between centre internal verification policy and applying this policy on candidate evidence