



NQ verification 2022–23 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Modern Studies
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	June 2023

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23C 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
H23F 74	National 4	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
H23G 74	National 4	Modern Studies: International Issues
J2A3 75	SCQF level 5	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
J2A5 75	SCQF level 5	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
J2A7 75	SCQF level 5	Modern Studies: International Issues
J2A4 76	SCQF level 6	Modern Studies: Democracy in Scotland and the United Kingdom
J2A6 76	SCQF level 6	Modern Studies: Social Issues in the United Kingdom
J2A8 76	SCQF level 6	Modern Studies: International Issues

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

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

There was an increase in the number of centres submitting their evidence digitally rather than physical evidence. Where centres submit evidence digitally, they should ensure that the format allows for it to be viewed in its entirety during the event. Some centres submitted candidate evidence that appeared to be 'digital jotter' type evidence that showed evidence and responses but not centre comments or assessor judgements on candidate scripts. To

overcome this, centres should ensure that centre judgements on candidate performance are clearly annotated or written on candidate scripts.

The most common assessment approach used by centres was SQA-generated unit assessment support packs. Some centres submitted adapted or centre-generated assessments, which mostly corresponded to the appropriate assessment standards for the specific level being assessed.

Centres are reminded that if they are producing their own assessment materials that 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.

Within the submissions, the most common approach was in the form of written responses to assessment questions.

Some centres continue to inflate the assessment standards for some outcomes, often by using question prompts such as 'in detail' and the allocation of numerical marks to ascertain student progress and attainment.

Centres are reminded that the prompt, 'in detail', is a differentiator between a National 4 and National 5 assessment and centres must not use this prompt for any National 4 assessments. Additionally, as these assessments are a simple pass or fail criteria based on the candidate meeting the individual assessment standards, any allocation of marks should not form the basis of any centre approach to assessment for units.

While some centres allocate marks to support wider candidate progress, they should not be used as an indicator of candidate attainment 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. Similarly, the centre may judge the candidate to have achieved a pass when they have not because they have applied their own standard rather than SQA's national 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 candidates should be judged against.

If centres are amending SQA unit assessment support packs, they should state which specific one is being amended and outline the amendments that have been made. They should also update any judging evidence table to reflect these amendments.

Assessment judgements

There is evidence from most submissions of national standards being applied across candidates and between colleagues in centres for each of the levels and units that were sampled.

Centres continue to make appropriate and valid assessment judgements of candidates' evidence for each of the specific assessment standards and outcomes. 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 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 are made between colleagues and across candidates within centres.

Centres used the judging evidence table effectively in articulating the assessment standard to markers and verifiers. The judging evidence table should be used by centres to ensure consistency of assessment judgements.

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 to be 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 judgement across all candidates, and between markers and the centre's verifier.

Centres are reminded that, where possible, candidates should give up-to-date, relevant, real-world or real-life examples for assessment standards 2.1 and 2.2 rather than vague and non-specific examples. Some centres are accepting vague and non-specific examples in their judgements. Much of the divergence between centre judgement and SQA judgement related to the use of real world or real-life examples.

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 in the centre.

There was evidence of continued and ongoing professional discussion and dialogue taking place within some centres in relation to the judging of assessment standards in line with a robust internal verification process and procedure. Some centres produced and made good use of workbooks or logbooks in effectively supporting 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 increased 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 to 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 threshold approach for re-assessing candidates is still valid for National 4 and SCQF levels 5 and 6 and should be applied where relevant. Details of the thresholds can be found in the appropriate unit specification.

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 candidate presentations being made at the appropriate level. From the centre submissions it is apparent that most centres clearly understand the specific assessment standards, and 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. This increases the likelihood of consistency of judgement across candidates and between colleagues.

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 their 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.

Overall, there was strong evidence of good and consistent practice occurring within centres, particularly with regards to record keeping, script annotation, thorough professional dialogue, as well as effective moderation and verification strategies and processes.