



NQ Practical Metalworking Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: Verification Group Information

Verification group name:	Practical Metalworking
Verification activity:	Visit
Round:	Round 2
Date published:	July 2025

National Course components verified

Course code	Course level	Course title
C861 75	National 5	Practical Metalworking practical activity

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All verified centres used the mandatory, annually issued practical activity. Almost all centres reported that both assessors and candidates liked the format of this year's practical activity model.

A minority of centres had issued candidates with different material thicknesses to those specified in the practical activity. This is acceptable if there is a supplier issue, but centres must ensure that any change to thickness does not change the validity of the assessment by making it harder or easier. If the thickness of material changes, centres must update the working drawings to ensure candidates have the correct information. While most of these centres had correctly updated the drawings to suit these changes, a minority of centres had not. Centres do not need to inform SQA if a change in material thickness is necessary.

A minority of centres used different materials than those specified in the practical activity task, (using brass in place of the required mild steel). The practical activity has been designed to allow for possible changes to be made each year to joining methods. If centres have purchased the wrong type of material, then candidates may not be able to join some components as required by the practical activity task.

Centres must not alter or adapt the drawings in any way apart from the exceptional circumstances relating to material thickness identified above. A minority of centres had changed sizes where no thickness changes were required. This has the potential to change the standard of the assessment and will result in an automatic 'not accepted' decision at verification.

The use of the practical activity assessment record varied between the verified centres. Using full commentary easily allowed visiting verifiers to see where marks have been awarded and made the verification process straight forward. Some centres had extremely limited commentary, which resulted in some discrepancies between centre-allocated marks and those allocated by visiting verifiers.

The majority of centres were consistent in their approach to assessing functional sizes. They correctly used five of the suggested dimensions from the table in the practical activity, selecting at least one from each area. Assessors had indicated either on the assessment record, or on a pro forma devised by the centre, which functional sizes had been selected for assessment and had shown the awarded mark. These functional

dimensions were consistent for all candidates within the group and candidates were made aware of them before they started the assessment task.

Assessment judgements

Most centres had watched the Understanding Standards practical activity videos. Although the material available was based on the previous version of the practical activity, the information was still applicable to this session's version. Centres reported that they found the videos extremely helpful to view alongside the marking instructions to ensure the correct judgements were being made for each candidate. Updated videos are now available from SQA's Understanding Standards website.

Our visiting verifiers noted that most centres, although slightly lenient, are making fair and accurate assessment judgements. Most centres were confident in judging the evidence and correctly applying the marking instructions to the correct areas of the candidate evidence.

Some centres had incorrectly applied the independence of work marks to their candidates. Centres are reminded that candidates must not be awarded full marks in any section where evidence from that section is incomplete. For example, if the cab component is missing then the candidate cannot achieve full marks in the bench work, fabrication or finishing sections. Furthermore, candidates cannot achieve full marks in the independence of work area within these sections. Another example of this would be that candidates cannot be awarded full marks for independence of work in sections where they have not fully attempted to complete the work. For example, candidates should not be awarded full marks in the finishing section of the marking instructions if they have not fully attempted to finish all components.

A minority of centres marked the log book leniently. At these centres, candidate responses were often too vague and did not reference specific checks for using the machines and tools listed. Some candidates referred to actions that were carried out by the teacher; all checks should be conducted by the candidate. Some candidates also referenced personal protective equipment, where their responses should have been for

the machine and tool care and maintenance. Centres should use Understanding Standards materials and the specimen log book, along with the provided marking instructions when awarding marks in this area.

Many candidates could not gain marks due to a poor standard of preparing the component parts for a finish. It is recommended that centres advise candidates, before assessment takes place, of the standard of finish required at National 5 level, for example, deburring and polishing component parts to remove scratches, process marks. If no attempt has been made by the candidate to prepare the components for assembly, then no marks should be awarded in this area.

Section 3: general comments

Centres should remember that if they are selected for verification, they must ensure that any non-permanent mechanical joints such as internal and external threads can be easily disassembled to aid the verification process.

The majority of centres had evidence of internal verification at most stages. Some centres had comments from both the internal assessor and internal verifier for each section. Where the marks differ, it must be clear which mark has been awarded to the candidate. The agreed mark should be arrived at through discussion and with reference to the marking instructions.