



NQ verification 2022–23 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Spanish
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	June 2023

National Course components verified

Course code	Course level	Course title
C869 75	National 5	Spanish: performance–talking
C869 76	Higher	Spanish: performance–talking

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres selected for verification in round 2 used SQA’s coursework assessment task for the performance–talking, as set out in the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) Modern Languages course specifications.

Verifiers noted that the quality of the performances sampled at both levels was good. Assessors had guided candidates well in the selection of their topics, and in many performances, these allowed candidates to use a range of structures, vocabulary, and tenses appropriate to each level.

Digital uploads of verification materials were mostly successful, with a good range of supporting evidence submitted. This allowed for a concise verification process.

National 5 presentation

Many presentations evidenced well-organised and appropriate content. Centres should remind candidates to avoid listing (nouns in particular) at National 5 and Higher and should encourage candidates to take their time in the delivery of their presentation.

National 5 conversation and Higher discussion

Assessors were very supportive of their candidates and prompted at appropriate points during the conversation where hesitation occurred. Some performances were characterised by clever use of interjections and connectors, although centres could encourage candidates to use a variety of interjections and ways of seeking clarification (in Spanish).

Open-ended questions were effective in producing detailed or detailed and complex language from candidates but an over-use of closed questions in some performances did not help candidates fully develop their answers. Assessors should avoid the use of closed questions on a repeat basis.

Assessors should always give candidates appropriate thinking time in the conversation so that they can frame their own answers and, in some instances, self-correct. A few conversations would have benefitted from less quick intervention from the assessor. Centres should refer to the 'Course assessment structure: performance–talking' section in the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) course specifications, in particular the 'Assessment conditions' information.

Candidates may attempt to use extended answers in places, but assessors are reminded to discourage candidates from answering with 'mini presentations.' Some of these longer answers can appear overly scripted and any sense of naturalness in the conversation is lost. Candidates should use a combination of shorter and longer responses in the conversation.

Assessors are reminded to provide candidates with a variety of questions to ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability at both levels.

Assessors should avoid the same conversation questions for all candidates as this may mean candidates do not use a wide variety in language resource. If candidates select comparable topics for the performance, assessors should consider how to phrase conversation questions in a range of ways, or how to focus on different aspects of a same topic area with different candidates.

Centres are advised to refer to the information on the recommended duration of the performance–talking (as set out in the course specification) so that candidates are able to meet the demands of National 5 and Higher performance–talking.

At National 5, some performances were overly long and this was not necessarily to the benefit of candidates. At both levels, some performances were significantly shorter than the recommended duration and this meant that candidates did not always have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in using detailed or detailed and complex language and a varied range of language structures.

At Higher, centres are reminded that the discussion must develop into at least one other context. Occasionally, the second context was covered briefly, and this did not always allow candidates to develop a range in language resource and use different vocabulary and structures.

Assessment judgements

At both levels, most centres were accepted and applied the marking instructions for the performance–talking in line with national standards.

Some centres were too severe and some too lenient in their application of the marking instructions. Centres should make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 and Higher Spanish: performance–talking published on SQA’s secure website.

Some performances went beyond the standards expected at National 5 and Higher. Weaker performances highlighted problems with grammatical accuracy, intonation and pronunciation, and an over reliance on learned material that candidates appeared not to understand and found hard to deliver.

Most centres provided useful commentaries about how marks were awarded. This was especially useful for event verifiers.

Centres are reminded that performances may be uneven and to expect some variation in the quality of performance, including within each pegged mark in the marking instructions.

All four performance aspects should be considered when marking the performance–talking: content, accuracy, language resource and interaction (conversation only). Performances should be marked positively and holistically and do not have to be perfect to be awarded the highest marks.

Assessors are reminded to refer to the general marking instructions along with the detailed marking instructions (pegged marks) within the Modern Languages course specification (at National 5 and Higher).

At National 5, the marking of the presentation section was generally more accurate in session 2022–23. Centres are encouraged to undertake professional dialogue in relation to deciding marks to award in the conversation section. This can be useful where a conversation is uneven in quality and may correspond to more than one pegged mark descriptor.

At National 5, some centres were too severe in the application of the marking instructions in relation to ‘sustaining the conversation’. Candidates do not have to ask questions, and they may demonstrate the ability to recover from hesitation and still achieve full marks in this section.

This year, there was evidence of some centres applying the marking instructions from an out-of-date version of the National 5 course specification for the sustaining the conversation element.

Centres are reminded that the most up-to-date marking information is in the National 5 Modern Languages course specification (version 2.1) on the [National 5 Modern Languages](#) web page. This must be used when assessing candidates.

Section 3: general comments

At National 5, personalisation and choice should ensure that candidates select topic(s) of their choice for their presentation and conversation. Assessors should support and advise candidates in their choice of topic(s) from within the four contexts (society, learning, employability, culture).

In the presentation at National 5, candidates can talk about different aspects of one or more topic(s) developed from at least one context, then going on to cover a different context in the conversation section. Note: candidates must cover at least two different contexts at Higher.

Pronunciation and intonation continue to be something verifiers comment on. These can detract from the overall impression in some performances and can affect the level of accuracy in delivery. This should be an area for continued focus in learning and teaching.

During recordings, centres are reminded that background noise should be avoided where assessments are being undertaken close to other classrooms or social spaces.

Assessors should avoid taking notes during candidate performances, as this can be distracting for candidates.

Many assessors were understanding and reassuring and supported less confident candidates throughout their performances.

Most centres produced sample materials, which were well-organised and showed evidence of internal verification. It is always useful in the external verification process when centres include detail (for example on a candidate assessment record or equivalent) of the reasons why a candidate was awarded one pegged mark rather than another for any section of the performance—talking.

The Spanish verification team noted good practice of internal verification across clusters and encourage this for smaller or single person departments.