



NQ Spanish Qualification Verification Summary Report 2024–25

Section 1: verification group information

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

National Course components verified

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

Note: the performance–talking is an internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA).

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

All centres selected for verification in round 2 used the performance–talking coursework assessment task, 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 generally good. Assessors had guided candidates well in the selection of topics, allowing many candidates to use a range of structures, vocabulary, and tenses appropriate to each level.

Many assessors, at both levels, were understanding and encouraging and supported less confident candidates throughout their performances.

National 5 presentation

Many presentations evidenced well-organised and appropriate content, and candidates were generally accurate in this section. Centres should allow candidates personalisation and choice in the topic of their presentation and encourage them to choose topics that give them scope to demonstrate their full ability to use the language at this level.

Candidates should avoid using the National 5 job application writing assessment as the basis of their presentation; however, some of the content relating to the job application was more appropriate for the follow-up conversation questions.

National 5 conversation

Assessors were extremely supportive of their candidates and prompted them at appropriate points during the conversation where hesitation occurred. A few conversations would have benefitted from intervention from the assessor to avoid lengthy pauses. Open-ended questions such as 'tell me about...' were effective in

prompting candidates to produce detailed language. However, an overuse of closed questions in some performances limited candidates in fully developing their answers.

Assessors should avoid the use of closed questions and avoid answering their own questions before the candidate. In these instances, candidates were less likely to develop a fuller answer, instead simply responding with an agreement, for example 'Yes' or 'No'.

In some conversations, the link between the presentation and conversation was tenuous or absent. Assessors should try to connect the two sections with appropriate bridging questions.

Assessors should allow candidates appropriate thinking time to frame their answers and self-correct, as appropriate. Some conversations would have benefitted from less intervention from the assessor. Further information is in the [National 5 Modern Languages course specification](#), in the performance–talking 'Assessment conditions' section.

Assessors should discourage candidates from giving lengthy, rehearsed answers that lack spontaneity. Ideally, candidates should use a mixture of short and long responses for a more balanced conversation.

We remind centres to provide candidates with a variety of questions and to ensure that candidates are given opportunities to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability.

Assessors should avoid using the same questions for all candidates to allow each candidate to demonstrate a wide variety of language resource appropriate to the level. If candidates choose similar topics, centres should rephrase questions or focus on different aspects of the topics for each candidate.

Sustaining the conversation element at National 5

Examples of how candidates could demonstrate their ability to sustain the conversation include:

- a mix of extended and shorter answers (not mini presentations or monologues)
- appropriate thinking time
- natural interjections, for example: *bueno, pues, déjame pensar, no sé pero ...*
- acknowledgement that they have understood the question: *sí, estoy de acuerdo ...*
- asking questions that are relevant to the conversation and at relevant times
- asking for repetition or clarification, for example: *¿Cómo has dicho ...? ¿Puedes repetir? ¿Qué dices ...?*

Note: this list is not exhaustive.

Higher discussion

Some discussions had a natural flow when candidates used a mix of longer and shorter answers, indicating that they were not excessively rehearsed. Overly rehearsed discussions do not prepare candidates effectively for the demands of Advanced Higher or real-life situations. Instead, candidates could prepare for their discussion by considering the types of questions the assessor might ask about their chosen topic and the key words the assessor is likely to use.

Although it is a discussion, the focus should be on the candidates' responses, not on prolonged responses from assessors, which can be an unnecessary barrier for some candidates. Assessors should respond to the candidate's questions succinctly, before moving on to their next question to return the focus to the candidate.

The nature of some of the topics selected or some of the questions asked by assessors did not allow candidates to respond using detailed and complex language (for example holidays, pastimes, types of music, bands).

Duration of the performance–talking

We remind centres to refer to the recommended duration of the performance–talking as set out in the National 5 and Higher Modern Languages course specifications, in the ‘Assessment conditions’ section.

A few performances were significantly shorter than the recommended duration, particularly at National 5, and this was not necessarily to the benefit of candidates. At times, this meant that some candidates did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in using detailed language and a varied range of language structures.

Similarly, at National 5, there were occasions where candidates had not been given the opportunity to engage in a follow-on conversation after their initial presentation. Centres should look for ways to support all candidates to participate in the assessment following the structure of firstly, the presentation, and then the conversation.

Assessment judgements

Most centres applied the marking instructions for the performance–talking accurately and in line with national standards. They did this using the detailed marking instructions for National 5 and Higher performance–talking and the productive grammar grid.

Sustaining the conversation element at National 5

There was some inconsistency in marking, with some centres being too severe and others too lenient in the application of the marking instructions.

Candidates do not have to ask a question in the conversation to gain marks. Some centres incorrectly justified not awarding pegged mark 5 because candidates did not ask any questions.

Candidates can be awarded 5 marks for sustaining the conversation, even if they briefly hesitate but recover successfully.

Some centres included a brief commentary to describe how a candidate showed that they had understood, through non-verbal means, the question or response from the assessor as it would happen in a natural conversation. This is useful for event verifiers who cannot see a recording of the performance.

National 5 and Higher

Some centres included detailed commentaries to justify the marks awarded to each candidate. Some included detailed commentaries from both the assessor and the internal verifier, evidencing productive professional dialogue. This is excellent practice and is very useful for event verifiers.

We remind centres to highlight which mark was finally agreed between the assessor and internal verifier and to note the reason. This mark should also be noted on the verification sample form. Centres should ensure that the marks on the verification sample form match the marks included on the candidate assessment record (or similar document) submitted with the candidate evidence.

Centres should ensure that they are using the most up-to-date documentation.

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. Note: a specialist of the language should conduct internal verification.

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).
- Topics chosen should allow candidates to use detailed language at National 5 and detailed and complex language at Higher. Centres should be aware that there is limited scope for candidates at either level in discussion of topics such as physical descriptions, pets.
- 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 cover a different context in the conversation section. The Spanish verification team noted good practice at National 5 where candidates were given two or three bridging questions to help them to move smoothly from the presentation to the conversation.
- At Higher, the Spanish verification team noted good practice where candidates were initially given a few questions to ease into the discussion before moving into their selected contexts.
- Candidates must cover at least two different contexts at Higher.
- On occasion, there was an imbalance in questions on the different contexts, sometimes with only one question on the second context.
- Pronunciation and intonation continue to be highlighted by verifiers. These can detract from the overall impression of performances and can affect the level of accuracy in delivery. This should be an area for continued focus.
- During recordings, we remind centres that they should avoid background noise during assessments that are close to classrooms or social spaces. Verifiers could hear centre PA systems in some recordings, and these were off-putting for the candidates and assessors. As outlined in the course specification at both levels, centres should ensure that the performance–talking is conducted in appropriate surroundings, eliminating the possibility of disruptions and background noise.