

Understanding Standards Modern Languages Gathering Evidence

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Gathering evidence, Modern Languages. This presentation relates to the gathering of evidence for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Modern Languages.

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Why gather evidence? Gathering evidence of candidate attainment is something which you do every year, whether by means of formal assessments or by informal observation of classroom activities or homework tasks. This process has two main purposes. The first of these is to allow for quality assurance activities, either at local or national level. The second purpose is to provide a sound basis on which to produce estimates.

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Gathering the evidence. In this presentation, we will be examining the ways in which you can ensure that your candidate's assessment evidence leads to their being assigned estimates in line with national standards. We are going to be looking at devising and sourcing assessments, conducting assessments, judging the evidence and internal quality assurance.

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Devising and sourcing assessments. We would like to remind you of the following requirements. Assessments must be valid. In other words, the approach to assessment is correct. For example, there is an overall purpose question in a reading at Higher and Advanced Higher. Assessments must be practicable. There must not be undue demand on candidates or teachers and lecturers. For example, a listening assessment should not have texts which are too long, or candidates should not be asked to talk for 15 minutes at National 5.

Assessments should be reliable. This means that judgments can be made consistently by all assessors for all candidates. For example, the marking scheme should take account of a variety of responses and should not be left to different interpretations. Assessments should be equitable and fair. This means that these should be accessible to all candidates. For example, where a candidate has difficulty with writing, alternative arrangements such as the use of a scribe, may be appropriate.

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Devising and sourcing assessments.

To assist you in devising assessments which meet these requirements, you can access a range of resources. You can base any assessment on SQA past or specimen question papers, including the SQA national qualifications question papers for session 2020/21. But you must remember that when devising any such assessment, questions must be taken from more than one past paper.

For example, you might choose to do the listening task from 2019 and the directed writing from 2017. Whatever the combination of items you choose, you should ensure you cover the four contexts of Society, Employability, Learning and Culture. You can use any commercially produced papers, including those from previous years, but you would need to apply the same steps as you would for a centre devised assessment. In centre devised papers, questions should reflect as closely as possible the standards of the final course assessment.

You should check, for example, the length of the listening and reading texts and the level of language.

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Conducting assessments.

When conducting assessments, you should ensure consistency of approach. This means that all teachers and lecturers are conducting the assessment in the same way. For example, the performance talking is a one-off single assessment event for all candidates, and this cannot be altered by or for individuals. You should ensure conditions of assessment are clearly understood by the candidate and the assessor. Assessment conditions can be found in the course specifications.

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Judging the evidence.

You can now access three summary documents, one for National 5, one for Higher and one for Advanced Higher on the Understanding Standards main website. The documents summarise all the published Understanding Standards materials for Modern Languages and provide the relevant links to their location, either the public Understanding Standards site or SQA secure. You should ensure that you follow the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions.

The general marking principles apply to question papers whether they are SQA commercially produced, or centre devised. Detailed marking instructions for SQA past and specimen papers are available on the SQA website. Where you and your colleagues accept additional answers from candidates, it is important that these are annotated on the marking instructions provided with the evidence. You should ensure consistency of marking. This means two things. Firstly, that the marking instructions are discussed prior to marking to achieve consistency across all assessors. Secondly, where you and your colleagues agree further candidate responses are acceptable, it is important that you add these and apply the revised marking instructions when reviewing all candidate responses.

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Internally quality assuring judgments. The best way of ensuring consistency in marking in line with national standards is to have in place robust processes for internal quality assurance. To assist with this, you can consult SQA's internal verification toolkit. This includes guidance, templates and documentation for recording internal quality assurance activities. There is also a link to suggested activities in the guide for centres.

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Possible internal quality assurance activities. Possible activities could include, for example, sampling. It is not necessary and indeed not practical to internally quality assure every piece of candidate evidence.

A sample is acceptable, and it is advisable to consider evidence across a range of marks. Cross marking. This is where assessors exchange different pieces of candidate evidence to

review, discuss and agree on the standard. Blind marking. There are two possibilities here. In the first, the evidence is anonymised, so that the candidate's name etc. is not revealed. In the second, two assessors mark the same piece of evidence but are unaware of the mark awarded by the other, followed by a discussion.

Dual Assessment. This is an activity where two assessors assess the same candidate. This works well for the performance talking, when each assessor makes an initial judgment on the performance and they then discuss and reach a consensus.

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Other notable points. When gathering evidence, you should retain the conditions under which evidence has been produced. For example, under exam conditions, class based activity, high degree of supervision, etc. Any assessment arrangements for individual candidates should also be noted. For example, additional time allocation, use of a scribe etc. You should also retain the question papers, transcripts of listening assessments, the marked candidates' scripts and the marking instructions, including annotations where applied and recordings of performance-talking where appropriate. You should also retain any documentation relating to the internal quality assurance processes and activities you have undertaken.

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Other aspects to consider. It is important to note the following. You should ensure that marking instructions have been correctly and consistently applied and that mark totals are correct.

You should indicate the origin of questions when assessments are based on SQA past or specimen question papers. This confirms that a past or specimen paper has not been used in its entirety.