Handbook for NQ External Verifiers

Contents

Introduction

Acknowledgement

At SQA, we are reliant on the services of Senior Verifiers and Verifiers, and we would like to thank you and all our appointees for your professionalism and co-operation.

Confidentiality

Verification decisions, and the performance of centres and individual candidates, are confidential and must not be discussed with or revealed to anyone not officially involved in the verification procedures in the qualification concerned. In particular, details of marks and results must not be made available to unauthorised persons (including members of other verification teams).

1 Notes for Senior Verifiers

1.1 Introduction

This section has information to assist you while preparing for, and when supervising, verification activities.

1.2 General instructions

As a Senior Verifier, you should ensure that all members of the verification team are aware of the purpose of the verification procedure (whether a visit or a central event), and of how it will be carried out.

For visiting verification, you should organise a training event before Verifiers begin to plan their visits, if required. This event will allow you to brief your team on the verification procedure, as well as to conduct standardisation activities. Your National Qualifications Verification and Visiting Examining (NQVVE) Supervisor can help you organise this event. Contact details for the NQVVE team are available in section 3.7 of this handbook.

At the beginning of a central verification event, the team should have the opportunity to discuss standards. A random sample of candidate materials is often used as a means of agreeing appropriate standards.

Verifiers must not verify work from their own centre or from exception centres (eg centres where they have previously worked and/or where they have a personal interest in the candidates and/or staff).

You will be required to monitor the performance of each Verifier in your team and note his/her suitability for a future appointment as a Verifier. An *EX59 Form* will be provided at the event for this purpose.

When verification has been carried out for all the centres selected, you should ensure that your team members have signed and dated each *External Verification Report Form* (for National Units/Courses).

SQA staff will provide you with a memory stick at verification events. Please save all of your teams' *External Verification Report Forms* onto the memory stick and leave it with the Events Servicing team at the end of the event. There will be specific instructions on how to save the *External Verification Report Forms* onto a memory stick provided at the start of the central verification event.

For any 'Not Accepted' centres, you should make sure that:

♦ you agree with the Verifier's decision
♦ you accept the Verifier's wording on the *External Verification Report Form/Worksheet*, and his/her explanation of what the candidates/centre must do to have the 'Not Accepted' decision moved to 'Accepted After Review'
♦ you decide, along with your team, whether it will be you (the Senior Verifier), or an appropriate Verifier who will re-verify the material supplied by the centre to have the 'Not Accepted' decision moved to 'Accepted After Review'

Then, make sure that:

♦ any other relevant issues that have arisen during the verification event have been brought to the attention of the appropriate NQVVE Supervisor
♦ you have advised the Events Servicing team that your event has finished (Events Servicing staff will tell you how to do this at the start of the event)
♦ an internal assessment report for your subject area is written and submitted to SQA's NQVVE team in accordance with agreed timescales

1.3 Senior Verifier's duties

Principal service to be provided

Senior Verifiers should work in close co-operation with the NQVVE team, Qualifications Managers and the Principal Assessor to prepare for and supervise assessment verification procedures of qualifications in their subject area.

Outline of duties

1   Lead central verification events (if applicable), carry out verification visits, participate in postal verification, accompany new Verifiers on visits, and visit centres where assessments were 'Not Accepted' at central verification events.
2   Participate in prior verification of centres' internally-devised instruments of assessment.
3   Assist with enquiries from centres, Verifiers and SQA Supervisors.
4   Participate in Verifier training events and in the monitoring of Verifier decisions.
5   Provide an annual report for assessment panels.
6   Act as a Vetter for the National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials in the subject area concerned.
7   Carry out approval, post-approval, and development visits (if applicable).
8   Participate in events organised by SQA (if applicable).
9   Respond to subject-specific enquiries.
10 Provide guidance and support to centres.
11 Compile and complete the internal assessment report.

1.4 Verifier's duties

Principal service to be provided

Verifiers should carry out assessment verification procedures for qualifications in their subject area.

Outline of duties

1   Participate in central verification events, carry out verification visits, and participate in postal verification.
2   Visit centres where assessments were 'Not Accepted' at central verification events.
3   Participate in the prior verification of centres' internally-devised instruments of assessment.
4   Attend Verifier training events.
5   Carry out approval, post-approval and development visits (if applicable).
6   If required, assist with vetting of NAB items.
7   Respond to subject-specific enquiries.
8   Participate in events organised by SQA (if applicable).
9   Provide guidance and support to centres.

1.5 Code of Conduct for Verifiers

Introduction

This Code of Conduct for Verifiers sets out the standards of conduct that are expected of all Verifiers appointed by SQA. Senior Verifiers must highlight this Code of Conduct to all members of their team(s).

You should familiarise yourself with the code before carrying out any verification-related duties. By accepting the appointment as Verifier, you agree to abide by this code.

Confidentiality

Observing confidentiality is a fundamental duty of the Verifier. This does not end with the passage of time. Information learned or obtained from centres or from SQA must always be maintained in absolute confidence.

You should **not**:

♦   discuss any aspect of a centre's organisation/activity or its SQA provision with anyone not directly concerned with, or taking part in, this provision unless that centre has given permission to do so
♦   duplicate for distribution or make use of materials received from a centre unless that centre has given permission to do so
♦   participate or assist in activity which would reveal the identity of stakeholders without their expressed wish or consent

♦ discuss any confidential information given by SQA to third parties unless given permission to do so

Conflict of interest

You must always act in the best interest of SQA, its stakeholders and in accordance with the law, professional practice rules and the principles of good professional conduct. You must not permit your own personal interests or those of your profession to influence your behaviour.

Involvement with centre staff during visits and in other oral/written communication should pertain to SQA procedures, products and services.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

To maintain the level of knowledge and skill required to guarantee the quality of SQA provision, and to ensure consistency of approach, Verifiers must attend SQA training courses and seminars. You should also be aware of ongoing changes in your area of expertise, and be familiar with improved learning materials and training techniques.

Additional guidelines

If you believe you are being required to act in a way which:

♦ is illegal, improper, or unethical
♦ may involve possible maladministration
♦ is otherwise inconsistent with this code of conduct

then you should report the matter to the NQVVE Team Leader. Similarly, if you observe inappropriate activity or behaviour in the normal course of your duties, you should discuss the matter with the NQVVE Team Leader.

Declaration of interest

Senior Verifiers and Verifiers are required to inform SQA which centres they are currently or have recently been employed at, together with details of any candidates known to them in the current academic year. If, exceptionally, there is any centre that a Senior Verifier/Verifier would prefer not to visit, brief details should be provided to SQA for consideration.

Duration of appointment

This invitation relates only to the period specified, and there is no obligation on the part of SQA to renew this appointment for future years. Accordingly, verification work for a subsequent period should not be undertaken until, and unless, an invitation for that specific period is received. Either party may terminate appointments by one month's notice in writing.

Data protection

SQA holds records of your personal and appointment details on a computer database. Personal data held for appointment purposes will not be used or disclosed in any manner that is incompatible with that purpose.

2　Instructions for visiting Verifiers

2.1　General

It is important that both centres and visiting Verifiers make assessment decisions in a consistent manner. As a visiting Verifier, you should always begin from the premise that the centre has made assessment decisions correctly and that the purpose of the verification exercise is to confirm the centre's decisions. It will be assumed that all candidates entered for the same qualification in a centre are assessed to a common standard.

Verification will take place on completed candidate evidence and will focus on how the NAB materials have been applied, and the reliability of the centre's assessment decisions.

For most Units/Courses selected for verification, SQA will have notified centres, via the *VS00 Form*, of which candidates' work will be sampled. Where a centre has more than 12 candidates entered for a Unit/Course with the same completion date, 12 will be selected at random. Where there are fewer than 12, all candidates will be selected.

2.2　Arranging your verification visit

Approximately four to six weeks before visiting verification begins, we will send you:

♦　an itinerary indicating the centres to be visited. This includes:
  — details of the SQA Co-ordinator
  — the Unit/Course to be externally verified
  — the timescales within which you should carry out your visits

♦　where appropriate, a copy of the *Verification Sample Form* showing the names and entry details of the (12) candidates in the sample to be verified for each Unit/Course

NB For visits where you will be sampling incomplete evidence, you should negotiate the sample size and content with the centre, as no *Verification Sample Form* will have been generated for these cases.

♦　a supply of:
  — *EV10a* and *EV10b* postcards to allow you to confirm the date of your visit with the centre and SQA
  — Visit plans (available on SQA Academy)
  — *NQ External Verification Report Forms* (available on SQA Academy)
  — envelopes and labels
  — *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*
  — *Expenses Claim Form*

You should contact the SQA Co-ordinator in each centre by telephone to agree a suitable date and time for your visit as soon as possible after you receive your itinerary. The visit should take place at a time when the centre staff responsible for the Unit/Course being verified will be available — and within the timescales indicated by SQA. Once the visit date and time have been agreed with the centre, you should complete an *NQ Visit Plan*, and send it to the centre's SQA Co-ordinator to confirm your visit.

When you have arranged each visit, please complete and send postcards *EV10a* and *EV10b* to confirm the dates with the centre and SQA.

If you experience any difficulties in contacting the centre's SQA Co-ordinator or in arranging a visit, please contact your NQVVE Supervisor as soon as possible. If you are unable to carry out a scheduled visit or you need to alter the visit date, you must also notify your NQVVE Supervisor of this.

2.3 The visit

All visits should be undertaken in accordance with SQA's Code of Conduct for Verifiers (Section 1.5 of this handbook).

On arrival at the centre, you should contact the SQA Co-ordinator who will arrange for you to be directed to the department where the evidence for the sample candidates is available. Where a sample form is used, each sample should be accompanied by the centre's completed copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*, which will indicate the centre's result for each of the candidates in the sample.

Centres must record one of the following results against each candidate in column A of the centre's result section:

P Pass
F Fail — this result should be recorded where the candidate has completed the Unit but has failed to demonstrate achievement adequately at the point of assessment.
W Withdrawn — ie the candidate has withdrawn from the Unit.

Enter your results in the 'Ver' column.

For levelled National Units, centres will enter 'pass', 'fail' or 'withdrawn' in column A. Column B should only be completed where a candidate has changed level since entry.

The following levels/codes are available:

Level	Code
Level	**Code**
Access 1	07
Access 2	08
Access 3	09
Intermediate 1	10
Intermediate 2	11
Higher	12
Advanced Higher	13

The NAB or assessment exemplar pack (AEP) details should be recorded on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. Centres that have not used NABs or AEPs have been asked to supply you with a copy of the assessment scheme used. Centres using their own assessment schemes should indicate on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* whether or not the assessment scheme has been used in a previously successful verification exercise. Any previously 'Accepted' prior-verified material will have been stamped or have a certificate provided by SQA.

2.4 Candidate sample

You should first check to ensure that the evidence provided for scrutiny is that of the candidates listed. Each candidate's work should be presented along with a Flyleaf, which will show the candidate's name and entry details.

If evidence is missing, or if substitutions have been made, please check that sufficient evidence is available for verification by following this table:

Sample	Missing evidence	Action required
Full sample of 12 candidates (ie 12 or more candidates entered for Unit/Course)	Evidence for one or two candidates is missing.	The centre should provide an adequate explanation and, where possible, provide substitute evidence.
	Evidence for between three and six candidates is missing.	The centre should provide an adequate explanation and, where possible, provide substitute evidence. Note the number of omissions and/or substitutions on the *External Verification Report Form*.
	In each of the above cases, you should continue to verify the Unit/Course using the candidate evidence that is available.	
	Evidence for more than six candidates in the sample is unavailable.	Due to the lack of suitable candidate evidence for this Unit/Course, verification should not proceed and you should complete the *External Verification Report Form* to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit/Course must be 'Not Accepted' (see section 2.6 'Result of verification').
Fewer than 12 candidates (ie fewer than 12 candidates entered for Unit/Course)	Evidence for a significant number of candidates listed on the *Verification Sample Form* is missing (notionally, more than half of the total candidates).	The verification exercise for this Unit/Course should not proceed and you should complete the *External Verification Report Form* to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit/Course must be 'Not Accepted' (see section 2.6 'Result of verification').

2.5 The verification exercise

Where a suitable sample of evidence is available, you should proceed to verify the sample. Follow the verification decision-making flowchart (section 8 of this handbook) and take notes.

During the verification visit you should be aware that, in certain Units/Outcomes, assessment can be made on a holistic basis. Where this is the case, you should check to ensure that both the approach and any cut-off score are appropriate. Conversely, where holistic assessment is appropriate and the centre has not used this approach, it is worth bringing this to the centre's attention by noting it on the *External Verification Report Form*. However, centres should not be

penalised for making their assessments on the basis of Performance Criteria (ie using a PC-by-PC approach).

If, at an early stage, you identify an issue with the instrument of assessment or the marking guidelines, and this (according to the decision-making flowchart in section 8) warrants a 'Not Accepted' result, you should continue to scrutinise the candidate evidence, where possible, to make optimum use of your time at the centre. This may identify additional issues which you can usefully include in your *External Verification Report Form*.

2.6 Result of verification

The verification result for each Unit/Course will be either '**Accepted**' or '**Not Accepted**'.

You must indicate the result on your *External Verification Report Form*. The report is also a means of providing formal written feedback to the centre, so please ensure that what you write in it is clear, concise and constructive.

'Accepted'

Where you have decided that the centre is 'Accepted' and **no issues** have been identified with either the validity or the reliability of its assessments, you should complete:

♦   the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
♦   an *External Verification Report Form*, giving positive feedback and drawing attention to good practice, where this is appropriate

Where you have identified **minor issues** with either the validity or the reliability of the centre's assessments, but these do not warrant a 'Not Accepted' result, you must judge the centre to be 'Accepted' and complete:

♦   the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
♦   an *External Verification Report Form*, indicating the minor issues and providing appropriate guidance

'Not Accepted'

Where you have decided that the centre is 'Not Accepted' as issues have been identified with the validity or the reliability (or both) of the centre's Unit/Course assessments, you should:

♦   complete the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Not Accepted' box
♦   provide information and reasons for your decision on an *External Verification Report Form (Not Accepted)*, including specific advice on how the centre can

resolve the identified issues and what action you expect the centre to take — eg assessment review

♦ where you disagree with the centre's assessment decisions for specific candidates, please highlight this on the *Verification Sample Form*. Under the 'Ver result' heading, enter your verified candidate results in column A and, where appropriate, the revised class in column B.

2.7 Advising the results of verification

When you have completed the verification exercise for all Unit/Courses, you should contact the centre's SQA Co-ordinator (or nominated member of staff) to inform him/her of the result of external verification and provide verbal feedback on the visit.

If all externally-verified Unit/Courses were '**Accepted**' you must:

♦ send the following to SQA within five days of the visit:
  — a copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*
  — a copy of the *External Verification Report Form* (this must always be sent by e-mail)
  — a completed *Expenses Claim Form* — please ensure that your National Insurance number is shown on this copy
  — *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*

If any Unit/Course is '**Not Accepted**' you must discuss the specific issues and any action the centre will be required to undertake to have the '**Not Accepted**' decision revoked. If any issues can be resolved during the visit — eg by providing additional candidate evidence (**for the sample candidates only**), this may enable you to overturn a 'Not Accepted' result on the day itself.

When you have completed the verification exercise for all Unit/Courses, you should contact the centre's SQA Co-ordinator (or nominated member of staff) to inform him/her of the result of external verification and provide verbal feedback on the visit.

Where externally-verified Unit/Courses are '**Not Accepted**' you must:

♦ leave the following with the centre:
  — a copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*

♦ send the following to SQA within five days of the visit:
  — the *Verification Sample Form VS00*
  — a copy of the *External Verification Report Form (Not Accepted)* (this must always be sent by e-mail)
  — a completed *Expenses Claim Form* — please ensure that your National Insurance number is shown on this copy
  — *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2)*

Assessment review

On receipt of the *External Verification Report Form (Not Accepted)*, SQA will send the centre an *Assessment Review Form* and a formal 'Not Accepted' letter. The centre will be required to undertake an assessment review for each 'Not Accepted' Unit/Course. The form of review and your subsequent involvement will depend on the issues that have been identified and the centre's subsequent action.

2.8 What to do when Unit/Courses are 'Not Accepted'

a   Your action

If issues are identified with the **validity** of the instrument of assessment (IA) and/or the marking guidelines, you must advise the centre to:

♦ make appropriate changes to the IA/marking guidelines as instructed by the *External Verification Report Form*
♦ re-assess **all** candidates where these IAs/marking guidelines have been used and indicate any revised results on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* (instructions to the centre will advise them to mark the revised results in **red ink**)
♦ where appropriate, advise the centre to send the re-assessment material to SQA's NQVVE team

Where there are issues with the **reliability** of the centre's judgements, you must advise the centre to:

♦ review the assessments of **all** candidates (or those specifically identified — eg if an issue is identified which affects Intermediate 2 candidates only) in line with your comments/recommendations
♦ send the re-assessment material to SQA's NQVVE team, where appropriate

b   Centre's action

Once the centre has taken action in response to your recommendations, a member of their senior management will be required to sign the declaration in part 1 of the *Assessment Review Form* to confirm that the assessment review has been carried out, and to indicate whether the centre will follow Option A or Option B. These are described as:

Option A   The centre completes part 1 of the *Assessment Review Form* to confirm that the re-assessment/review has been undertaken. The centre will send the candidate evidence and supporting documentation to SQA's NQVVE team who will then pass it to the Verifier for further scrutiny.

Option B   The review requires a change to candidate results. The centre must revise the results, in line with the visiting Verifier's changes to the marks for the sampled candidates, and submit them to SQA.

As the Verifier, your involvement will continue only where the centre follows Option A.

c   Option A — What you have to do next

SQA will return the *Assessment Review Form* to you, the Verifier, along with the assessment scheme, the candidate evidence and the *Verification Sample Form VS00* (which will have been annotated with the centre's revised results in **red ink**). You should then proceed to evaluate this material.

If the assessments are now 'Accepted':

♦ tick the 'Accepted after Assessment Review' box on part 2 of the *Assessment Review Form*, providing comments where appropriate
♦ return a copy of the *Assessment Review Form* along with the candidate evidence to SQA's NQVVE team, for noting on the centre's record. SQA will then return the materials, to the centre and inform them of the updated verification outcome — 'Accepted'
♦ retain a copy of the *Assessment Review Form*

If there are still issues with the assessments that you cannot resolve with the centre:

♦ send all documentation and evidence immediately to your NQVVE Supervisor. At this stage a further visit is often suggested

3 Instructions for central Verifiers

3.1 General

It is important that all Verifiers review the reliability of a centre's assessment decisions in a consistent manner. As a central Verifier, you should always begin from the premise that the centre has made assessment decisions correctly and that the purpose of the verification exercise is to confirm the centre's decisions. It will be assumed that all candidates entered for the same qualification in a centre are assessed to a common standard.

Verification will take place on completed candidate evidence and will focus on the validity of the assessment instruments, how they are applied, and the reliability of the centre's assessment decisions.

For each Unit/Course selected for verification, SQA will have notified centres, via the *VS00 Form*, of which candidates' work will be sampled. Where a centre has more than 12 candidates entered for a Unit/Course with the same completion date, 12 will be selected at random. Where there are fewer than 12, all candidates will be selected.

3.2 Verification arrangements

Central verification events will take place in SQA's offices in December/January and April/May on dates set by SQA. You may also be expected to undertake postal verification duties.

At the verification event, the following will be provided:

♦ envelopes containing candidate evidence, copies of the assessment and marking scheme used and the *Verification Sample Form VS00* which shows the names and entry details of the candidates in the sample to be verified
♦ *Verifier's Worksheets* to record all working notes, comments and decisions in connection with the verification of each centre
♦ *External Verification Report Forms* (electronic versions are available)

3.3 The verification process

You should first check to ensure that the evidence provided for scrutiny is that of the candidates listed on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*, and that the form has been completed to indicate the centre's result for each of the listed candidates.

Centres must record, against each candidate, one of the following results in column A of the centre's result section:

P Pass
F Fail — this result should be recorded where the candidate has completed the Unit but has failed to demonstrate achievement adequately at the point of assessment.
W Withdrawn — ie the candidate has withdrawn from the Unit.

Enter your results in the 'Ver' column.

For levelled National Units, centres will enter 'pass', 'fail' or 'withdrawn' in column A. Column B should only be completed where a candidate has changed level since entry. The following levels/codes are available:

Level	Code
Access 1	07
Access 2	08
Access 3	09
Intermediate 1	10
Intermediate 2	11
Higher	12
Advanced Higher	13

The centre will have presented each candidate's work inside a clear-faced bag along with a Flyleaf which will show the candidate's name and entry details.

The centre **must** have recorded details of the NAB or Assessment Exemplar Packs (AEPs) used on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. Centres making alterations to NAB materials have been instructed to send annotated copies along with their candidate evidence.

Centres that have not used NABs or AEPs have been asked to supply you with a copy of the assessment scheme used. The NAB or AEP details should be recorded on the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. Centres using their own assessment schemes should indicate on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* whether or not the assessment scheme has been used in a previously successful verification exercise. Any previously 'Accepted' prior-verified material will have been stamped or have a certificate provided by SQA.

3.4 Candidate sample

To check that sufficient evidence is available for verification, follow this table:

Sample	Missing evidence	Action required
Full sample of 12 candidates (ie 12 or more candidates entered for Unit/Course)	Evidence for between one and six candidates in the sample is missing.	The centre must, where possible, provide substitute evidence. You must note the number of omissions/ substitutions on the *External Verification Report Form*. **You should continue to verify the Unit/Course using the available candidate evidence.**
	Evidence for more than six candidates in the sample is missing.	Due to the lack of suitable candidate evidence the verification exercise should not proceed, and you should complete the *Verifier's Worksheet* and *External Verification Report Form* to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit/Course must be 'Not Accepted' (see 3.6 'Result of verification').
Fewer than 12 candidates (ie fewer than 12 candidates entered for Unit/Course)	Evidence for a significant number of candidates (notionally, more than half of the total) listed on the *Verification Sample Form* is missing.	The verification exercise for this Unit should not proceed. Complete the *Verifier's Worksheet*, and the *External Verification Report Form* to this effect. The centre's result for this Unit must be 'Not Accepted' (see 3.6 'Result of verification').

Note: The total number of candidates entered for the Unit/Course/completion date is shown at the top of the *Verification Sample Form VS00*. This will indicate whether or not the centre is in a position to provide substitutes. Use this to inform your decision.

3.5 The verification exercise

Where a suitable sample of evidence is available (3.4 see above), you should proceed to verify the sample, following the verification decision-making flowchart (see section 8) taking notes on the *Verifier's Worksheet* as you work.

You should be aware that, in certain Unit/Courses and Outcomes, assessment can take place on a holistic basis. Where this is the case you should check to ensure that both the approach and any cut-off score is appropriate. Conversely, where holistic assessment is appropriate and the centre has not used this approach, it is worth bringing this to the centre's attention by noting it on the *External Verification Report Form*. Centres should not, though, be penalised for making their assessments on the basis of Performance Criteria (ie a PC-by-PC approach).

If, at an early stage, you identify an issue with the instrument of assessment or the marking guidelines, and this (according to the decision-making flowchart in section 8) warrants a 'Not Accepted' result, you should draw this to the attention of the Senior Verifier. Where possible, you should continue to scrutinise the candidate evidence. This may identify additional issues which you can usefully include in your *External Verification Report Form*.

3.6 Result of verification

The verification result for each Unit/Course will be either '**Accepted**' or '**Not Accepted**'.

You must indicate the result on the *Verification Sample Form VS00* and on your *External Verification Report Form*. The report is also a means of providing formal written feedback to the centre, so please ensure that what you write in it is clear, concise and constructive.

'Accepted'

Where you have decided that the centre is 'Accepted' and **no issues** have been identified with either the validity or the reliability of its assessments, you must complete:

♦ the verification result section of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* by ticking the 'Accepted' box
♦ the *External Verification Report Form*, giving positive feedback and drawing attention to good practice, where this is appropriate

Where you have identified **minor issues** with either the validity or the reliability of the centre's assessments, but these do not warrant a 'Not Accepted' result, you must complete:

♦ the verification result section of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* by ticking the 'Accepted' box

♦ the *External Verification Report Form*, detailing the issues and providing appropriate guidance

In each of these cases, SQA will send the documentation intimating the 'Accepted' result will be sent back to the centre, along with the candidate evidence.

'Not Accepted'

Where you identify issues with the validity and/or the reliability of the centre's Unit/Course assessments, you must complete the *Verifier's Worksheet* accordingly and bring this to the attention of the Senior Verifier. Once your judgement has been agreed with the Senior Verifier, please:

♦ complete the Verification Result section of the *Verification Sample Form* by ticking the 'Not Accepted' box
♦ provide information and reasons for your decision on an *External Verification Report Form (Not Accepted)*, including specific advice on how the centre can resolve the identified issues and what action you expect the centre to take — eg assessment review
♦ ask the Senior Verifier to countersign the 'Not Accepted' report, where appropriate

Where you disagree with the centre's assessment decisions for specific candidates, please highlight this on the *Verification Sample Form*. Under the 'Ver result' heading, enter your verified candidate results in column A and, where appropriate, the revised class in column B.

SQA will send a copy of the *Verification Sample Form VS00* and the *External Verification Report Form* back to the centre, along with the candidate evidence and an *Assessment Review Form*.

Assessment review

If there is a large number of 'Not Accepted' results in your verification area, you may be required to carry out verification on revised materials (ie once a centre with a 'Not Accepted' decision has taken corrective action). At the beginning of the verification event the Senior Verifier and Verifiers should jointly decide who will re-verify 'Not Accepted' centres.

The material will be sent from SQA to the Verifier's home for scrutiny and evaluation. It will include:

♦ reviewed evidence (in line with feedback) for the candidates in the sample
♦ the revised instrument of assessment/marking guidelines (in line with feedback), where required
♦ the *Assessment Review Form* with part 1 completed
♦ the *Verification Sample Form VS00* indicating the centre's reviewed result (in red ink)

If the assessments are now 'Accepted' you must:

♦ tick the 'accepted after Assessment Review' box on part 2 of the *Assessment Review Form* and provide comments where appropriate
♦ return a copy of the *Assessment Review Form* along with the candidate evidence to SQA, who will note the amended assessment decision and return the materials to the centre

If issues with the assessment are not resolved with the centre, please send all documentation and evidence to the NQVVE team immediately with a short explanation.

3.7 Queries at central verification

Matters arising at central verification

Centres will have previously submitted all the candidate materials that are necessary for the verification exercise to SQA's NQVVE team. Members of staff from Events Servicing will be on hand at each event to provide administrative and general support, where necessary. All queries at central events should be made with the Senior Verifier in the first instance. If the Senior Verifier is unable to resolve the query, they should forward the query on to a member of the Events Servicing team, who will then pass the query on to the appropriate member of NQVVE or the Qualifications Manager/Officer if appropriate.

Matters of policy

If you require clarification of aspects of policy relating to these instructions, you should initially approach the Qualifications Manager concerned. Where necessary, the Qualifications Manager will raise the matter with the NQVVE Team Leader.

Contacting the NQVVE team

National Qualifications Verification and Visiting Examining (NQVVE) team

E-mail: nqvve@sqa.org.uk

Tel: 0345 213 6766

Scottish Qualifications Authority
Lowden
24 Wester Shawfair
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1FD

4 Prior verification of assessment scheme

Prior verification is a service offered to centres that devise their own instruments of assessment or which wish to change items from the National Assessment Bank to suit their particular centre needs.

Prior verification will be carried out by e-mail where possible, and you will be asked to carry out this procedure as necessary. When requesting prior verification, centres complete a *Prior Verification Request Form*. Copies of this form will accompany the assessment scheme and any supporting documentation sent to you for validation. A separate form is required for each assessment scheme.

4.1 The role of the Verifier

Your role as Verifier is to make a decision on the validity of the centre-generated IA/marking guidelines. This should be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Unit/Course specification, Arrangements or Standards. You should follow the *Assessment Scheme Checklist* on the front of the *Prior Verification Request Form* to ensure the centre's material meets SQA's validity requirements.

4.2 Recording your decision

Having scrutinised the materials, your decision on the validity of the assessment scheme should be recorded on the *Prior Verification Evaluation Report Form*. Where appropriate, you should provide detailed comments as part of the feedback to the centre. All comments must be professional, constructive and unambiguous. Please note all comments should be confined to the *Prior Verification Evaluation Report Form* — the material from the centre should **not** be annotated in any way.

4.3 Confidentiality

All materials submitted for prior verification must be treated as **confidential** and should not be discussed with anyone other than the originating centre or SQA staff.

4.4 Completion time

The maximum completion period for this work is three weeks from the receipt of materials. You should return all documentation (ie the centre's materials, the completed evaluation form and your fees and *Expenses Claim Form*, where appropriate) to the NQVVE team.

4.5   National Assessment Bank

Material submitted for prior verification for National Qualifications (Access to Advanced Higher) may be suitable for including in the National Assessment Bank. However, the centre must first have indicated its willingness to allow this material to be considered (see the relevant section of the *Prior Verification Request Form*) before any decision is taken. If, in your view, the material may be suitable, you should indicate this on the final page of the *Prior Verification Evaluation Report Form*.

Where NAB materials have been used as a basis for an internally-devised assessment scheme, or have been amended for a centre's particular purposes, centres have been advised that these should only be submitted for prior verification where significant changes have been made to the published NAB. If you receive IAs that are not significantly different, you should return these to the NQVVE team with an explanation. Do not proceed to prior-verify these IAs.

If, at any point during the prior verification process, you encounter an issue you are unable to resolve, you should contact the NQVVE team.

Material that has successfully undergone prior verification will have been stamped by SQA or have a certificate provided by SQA.

SQA's verification service relates to **internal assessment only** and we do not prior-approve any assessment materials relating to external assessment (eg prelim materials).

5   Malpractice

If, in the course of your duties as a Verifier, you suspect any form of malpractice, you must inform the Senior Verifier of your concerns. The Senior Verifier will complete an *Evidence Requiring Further Explanation Form (ERFE)*. SQA will then communicate this to the centre.

In such cases, verification should be completed as normal, and you must **not** contact the centre about the matter. The NQVVE team will contact the appropriate team within SQA and deal with the issue in line with our established processes.

6   SQA booking/travel service

Provided they are requested in line with the appropriate terms and conditions, all rail/air travel arrangements and hotel accommodation should be booked directly by SQA. To make a request, please complete and send a *Travel and Accommodation Request (TARE) form* to SQA's travel booking service. *TARE forms* are available at www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34559.html.

If you have any queries about this service, please call 0345 213 6707 or e-mail **events.servicing@sqa.org.uk**. Once booked, tickets and/or hotel reservation confirmations will be forwarded to your e-mail address.

7   Fees and expenses

Your payment will be processed on completion of the verification event.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses necessarily incurred in the course of verification duties should be made on your *Expenses Claim Form*. All claims must be claimed in accordance with the appropriate terms and conditions, and covered by a receipt.

Release compensation must be claimed by your main employer completing and returning the *Certificate of Absence from Main Employment (TR2).*

You must submit your expenses and TR2 forms within four weeks of the date of the verification activity.

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8 Flowchart: decision-making in verification

START

Is work of listed sample candidates available? — No → Acceptable number available? — No →

Check *Verification Sample Form* has been completed

Yes ↓   Yes ↓

NAB/AEP Materials used? — Yes →

No ↓

Instrument of assessment available? — No →

Yes ↓

Is instrument of assessment valid? — No → Provide specific advice to centre on instrument of assessment

Yes ↓

Are marking guidelines available/ appropriate? — No → Provide specific advice to centre on how marking **guidelines should be** improved

Yes ↓

VALIDITY

RELIABILITY

Look at initial six candidates*

* From the 12 identified candidates on the *Verification Sample Form*, select any six, but ensure that where the sample covers more than one class code/level, your selection includes candidates at each available class code/level.

↓

More than one disagreement? — Yes → Look at next six candidates

No ↓   ↓

CENTRE ACCEPTED ← No — More than three (in 12) disagree? — Yes → Provide specific advice to centre on reliability of judgements → **CENTRE NOT ACCEPTED**