NQ verification 2023–24 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Administration and IT
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H1YW 73	National 3	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY 73	National 3	Communication in Administration
H27Y 73	National 3	Administration in Action
H1YV 74	National 4	Administrative Practices
H1YW 74	National 4	IT Solutions for Administrators
H1YY 74	National 4	Communication in Administration

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The approaches to assessment used by almost all centres verified were valid. Almost all centres used SQA's unit assessment support packs accurately.

The following examples of good practice were observed:

♦ Some centres used the combined approach to reduce the level of assessment for candidates.

♦ Candidate evidence from many centres was well presented, tasks clearly labelled, and assessment approaches were included along with the Judging evidence table.

♦ Many centres had marked candidate work in a clear and logical manner, physically indicating on each candidate's printout every time the candidate had successfully followed the instruction in a task.

♦ Many centres demonstrated good practice in their internal verification processes, for example holding internal verification meetings and discussions; using different coloured pens to annotate scripts when cross-marking; or cross-marking initialled by the assessor and internal verifier.

The following comments are intended as a guide for future practice:

♦ All centres must ensure they are using the most up-to-date unit assessment support pack with the most up-to-date e-files with their candidates.
♦ If centres are using a centre-produced assessment, they should have the assessment prior verified before using it with their candidates.
♦ All centres must ensure there are robust quality assurance measures in place for making assessment judgements. Centres should refer to 'Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres' for advice on internal verification approaches.

Assessment judgements

The majority of candidate evidence submitted was of a good standard, indicating centres had prepared candidates well for the assessment. Generally, assessment judgements were correct indicating centres had a good understanding of the national standard for each assessment standard.

To further support centres, there are some important points highlighted below:

Keyboarding errors

Candidate evidence for all assessment standards at National 3, and all assessment standards at National 4 apart from the Administrative Practices Outcome 1 assessment standards, must be checked thoroughly for all keyboarding and layout errors. All keyboarding and layout errors must be identified on candidate printouts. These errors must be counted up to ensure the candidate is not over the error tolerance for the task.

The error tolerance for each level is:

National 3:   one error for every 10 words
National 4:   one error for every 15 words

Examples of errors included within the tolerance are: typing errors, minor layout errors (for example reference and date in wrong place) and spacing errors (for example one return between paragraphs, inconsistent or incorrect spacing in an e-mail).

The error tolerance applies to each individual task.

The following errors should be treated as one error within a task, no matter how often they occur within that task:

♦ incorrect or inconsistent capitalisation
♦ incorrect or inconsistent spacing after punctuation at end of sentence
♦ incorrect or inconsistent spacing for commas

- incorrect or inconsistent spacing for colons or semi-colons
- incorrect or inconsistent spacing for brackets
- incorrect or inconsistent spacing between paragraphs
- confusion of hyphen and dash
- omission of apostrophe
- highlighted punctuation at the end of a sentence or heading
- missing full stops
- a date without a year
- incorrect date format, for example 12 of February 2024 or inconsistent date formats
- inconsistent time formats

Centres commonly missed keyboarding errors on word processing or desktop publishing, e-mail, spreadsheet and database evidence. Common errors not identified by assessors were:

- inconsistent capitalisation
- incorrect punctuation
- layout or spacing errors

Some centres were lenient in their judgements as they did not identify all keyboarding errors meaning some candidates that were over the error tolerance were recorded as passed when they had failed the corresponding assessment standards.

However, a small number of centres were good at identifying keyboarding errors but were too severe with their assessment judgements as they failed candidates that were within the error tolerance. For example, if a candidate produces an accurate chart but they have two capitalisation errors in the chart title, this is counted as one error across the task and therefore the candidate has passed the assessment standard because they are within the error tolerance for the task (one error for every 15 words at National 4).

Both the assessor and internal verifier must be diligent in checking candidate evidence for keyboarding errors.

Employee responsibilities
Centres are reminded that assessment standard 1.4 of the Administrative Practices (National 4) unit requires candidates to outline **employee** responsibilities for security of people, property and information. Centres must therefore only accept employee responsibilities and not organisational or employer responsibilities.

Spreadsheet formula
When asked to insert a formula, candidates are required to use the most appropriate formula. For example, when asked to insert a formula to calculate the average, =average must be used; when asked to add three or more adjacent cells, =sum must be used. Candidates that use =sum for dividing, subtracting or multiplying for example, have not inserted an appropriate formula.

Mapping judgements to assessment standards
The purpose of external verification is to check centres are passing or failing candidates correctly against assessment standards. A number of centres made it clear how they marked and passed or failed candidates on each task but not against the assessment standards, which by itself is not enough. Some tasks have multiple assessment standards (especially when using the combined approach) and therefore within a task it is possible for a candidate to pass some assessment standards and fail others. Centres must show a record of which assessment standards each candidate has or has not passed, based on their judgements of candidate work. In each unit assessment support pack, there is a candidate record sheet that can be used, or the centre can create their own.

Combined approach (unit assessment support pack — package 3)
A number of centres used the combined approach. Centres are reminded that with the combined approach, the theory assessment standards are often assessed in the same task as IT-related assessment standards. This means keyboarding must be marked in theory answers. Assessors must identify all keyboarding errors on the candidate's printout. If a candidate is over the error tolerance for that task, they can still pass the theory assessment standards if their answers are correct, however they would fail the IT-related assessment standards.

Reassessment
If a candidate has not achieved an assessment standard they can be reassessed. The candidate must be given a different assessment task for the reassessment. Verbal reassessment is not appropriate for IT assessment standards.

Recording final assessment judgements
A small number of centres did not have clear final assessment judgements, for example:

♦ the annotation on a candidate's printout states the candidate failed an assessment standard, yet the candidate's record sheet shows they had passed that assessment standard
♦ the original assessor judges the candidate as passed on an assessment standard but the internal verifier judges them as failed with no final agreement given

Centres are advised to make sure the final assessment judgement is clear for external verification.

Sufficient interim evidence
The vast majority of centres provided interim evidence. It is important to note that centres must provide sufficient evidence to allow SQA to make informed decisions about whether the centre is assessing candidates in line with national standards. SQA's guidance on minimum requirements for interim evidence is available in verification submission guidance documents on SQA's website. Centres must adhere to this guidance for interim evidence, in order to allow external verification to proceed.

Digital candidate evidence
If digital candidate evidence is submitted, it is vital that centres still show annotations on candidate work so that external verification can see exactly how candidate work has been judged against each assessment standard and what keyboarding errors have been identified.

For example, using digital ink to show annotations on each e-file or scanning candidate printouts that have been manually marked with pen. It is not appropriate to send candidate work with no assessor judgements marked up on tasks.

Section 3: general comments

Overall, many centres had a good understanding of the assessment standards and demonstrated accurate assessment judgements. It was also clear many centres had made a concerted effort to ensure consistent judgements across all candidates at all levels.

We would continue to encourage all centres to ensure staff read the assessment standards carefully along with the information for judging evidence. Assessors not identifying keyboarding errors is a reoccurring issue every year. We would therefore strongly advise assessors to take time to judge candidate assessment work carefully.

All centres are reminded that the column for pass or fail on the candidate sample form should be completed with their assessment judgement. There are only two options for this column — pass or fail. This column is to record the overall final assessment judgement for the evidence that has been included for each candidate. It is not a final judgement on their passing or failing the whole unit. Even if interim evidence has been submitted for a candidate, and that candidate has passed all the assessment standards for the evidence they have submitted, they should be recorded as a 'pass' in this column.

NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	**Administration and IT**
Verification activity:	**Event**
Date published:	**July 2024**

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H201 74	National 4	Administration and IT Added Value Unit — Assignment
J1Y3 75	SCQF level 5	Administrative Practices
J1Y4 75	SCQF level 5	IT Solutions for Administrators
J1Y7 75	SCQF level 5	Communication in Administration
J1YB 76	SCQF level 6	Administrative Theory and Practice
J21V 76	SCQF level 6	IT Solutions for Administrators
J21Y 76	SCQF level 6	Communication in Administration

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

The approaches to assessment used by all centres verified were valid. All centres used SQA's unit assessment support packs accurately.

The following examples of good practice were observed:

♦ Some centres used the combined approach at SCQF level 5 and 6 to reduce the level of assessment for candidates.
♦ Many centres had marked candidate work in a clear and logical manner, showing physical marking on each printout.
♦ Candidate evidence from the majority of centres was well presented, tasks clearly labelled and assessment approaches were included along with the Judging evidence table.

♦ Many centres demonstrated good practice in their internal verification processes, for example holding internal verification meetings and discussions; using different coloured pens to annotate scripts when cross-marking; or cross-marking initialled by the assessor and internal verifier.

Assessment judgements

Some centres demonstrated excellent practice by creating candidate record sheets or checklists. These checklists listed the requirements within each task and therefore helped ensure candidates were correctly recorded as a pass or fail for each assessment standard and helped ensure all candidates across the cohort were marked thoroughly, consistently and accurately.

The majority of candidate evidence submitted was of a very high standard, indicating centres had prepared candidates well and that candidates were presented at the right level.

Generally, marking and assessment judgements across all centres in Round 2 were correct, indicating most centres had a very good understanding of the national standard for each assessment standard.

To further support centres, there are some important points highlighted below:

Digital candidate evidence

If digital candidate evidence is submitted, it is vital that centres have a method of showing their marking on candidate tasks (for example using digital ink to mark a digital file or scanning candidate printouts that have been manually marked with pen) so that external verification can see exactly how candidate work has been marked and what keyboarding errors have been identified.

Keyboarding errors

Candidate evidence for assessment standards at all levels must be checked thoroughly for all keyboarding and layout errors. All keyboarding and layout errors must be identified on candidate printouts. These errors must be counted up to ensure the candidate is not over the error tolerance for that particular task. The only exception to this requirement is when marking tasks for the following assessment standards:

SCQF level 5   Administrative Practices   Outcome 1
SCQF level 5   Communication in Administration   Assessment Standard 1.2 and 1.3
SCQF level 6   Administrative Theory and Practice   Outcome 1 and 2
SCQF level 6   Communication in Administration   Outcome 1

It is important to note that if using a combined approach to assessment, some tasks can assess both theory and IT-based assessment standards. With such tasks, keyboarding errors do need to be identified. If the candidate is over the error tolerance in one of these tasks, they can still achieve the theory assessment standards but they would fail to meet the requirement for IT-based assessment standards.

The error tolerance for each level is:

National 3   1 error for every 10 words
National 4:   1 error for every 15 words
SCQF level 5:   1 error for every 20 words
SCQF level 6:   1 error for every 25 words

Errors can appear anywhere in a task. Examples of errors that are included within the tolerance are: typing errors, minor layout errors (for example reference and date in the wrong place) and spacing errors (for example one return between paragraphs, inconsistent or incorrect spacing in an email). There is flexibility over layouts, but a sensible business layout must be used.

The error tolerance applies to each individual task. The following errors should be treated as one error within a task, no matter how often they occur within that task:

♦ incorrect date formats, for example '26 of May 2024'

♦ commas after the opening and close in an email

♦ incorrect or inconsistent capitalisation

♦ incorrect or inconsistent spacing after punctuation at end of sentence

♦ incorrect or inconsistent spacing for commas, colons, semi-colons, brackets

♦ incorrect or inconsistent spacing between paragraphs

♦ confusion of hyphen and dash

♦ omission of apostrophe

♦ highlighted punctuation at the end of a heading

♦ missing full stops

Both the assessor and internal verifier must be diligent in checking candidate evidence for keyboarding errors.

Organisational and employee responsibilities
Centres are reminded that assessment standard 1.4 of the Administrative Practices (SCQF level 5) unit, requires candidates to outline **organisational** responsibilities for security of people, property and information. Centres must therefore only accept organisational responsibilities and not employee responsibilities.

Command words
Candidates must correctly address the command word in the assessment standard in order to achieve a pass for that assessment standard:

♦ Describe: if the command word requires candidates to describe, but the candidate identifies or outlines, the candidate cannot be recorded as a pass for that assessment standard.

♦ Explain: if the assessment standard asks candidates to explain, the candidate must have both cause and effect in each point to have adequately achieved the assessment standard.

Communication — internet evidence

It is critical that candidates provide screenshots, snips of websites or printouts directly from the internet when asked to provide internet evidence. Copying or typing information onto a word processing document will not be accepted as internet evidence. For example, Communication in Administration (SCQF level 5) package 3, task 2, asks candidates to find a hotel or B&B in Stirling for less than £85 per night. Candidate A on the left, has typed the information that they found online onto a word processing document, therefore they have not provided internet evidence and therefore they have not achieved the requirement of this assessment standard. Candidate B however has provided a snip of the webpage. This is internet evidence.

Candidate A

Hotel:

King Robert Hotel

Glasgow Road, Stirling, FK7 0LJ, United Kingdom

Price per night, £84

Candidate B

King Robert Hotel ★★★
Stirling   Show on map   1.9 miles from centre
Twin Room
2 single beds
✓ Free cancellation
✓ No prepayment needed – pay at the property
Only 4 rooms left at this price on our site

Very good 8.1
2,735 reviews

1 night, 2 adults
£84
Includes taxes and charges

See availability >

It is also important to highlight that in the task mentioned above, the candidate must provide internet evidence that shows their accommodation matches the three requirements in the task: it is a hotel/B&B, in Stirling and costs less than £85. Candidate C below has provided internet evidence in two separate snips from the internet, however, it is not clear from the snip of the accommodation cost, that this cost is specifically the cost for the accommodation selected, therefore the candidate has not met the requirements of this assessment standard. Candidate D also has two snips but it is clear from their snip of the accommodation cost, that the cost given is specifically for the hotel selected.

Candidate C

Hotel:

William Wallace Hotel
Stirling   Show on map   150 yards from centre
Double Room with Shared Bathroom
1 double bed
Only 6 rooms left at this price on our site

Cost:

Review score 5.4
98 reviews

1 night, 2 adults
£61
Includes taxes and charges

See availability >

Candidate D

Travelodge Stirling City Centre
●●●●◐ 1,052 reviews   #6 of 19 hotels in Stirling
⊙ 1 Goosecroft Road, Stirling FK8 1JA Scotland
✎ Write a review

Travelodge Stirling City Centre   Deals   About   Location   Reviews

£79

Section 3: general comments

Overall, most centres had an excellent understanding of the assessment standards and demonstrated accurate judgements. Some centres had very detailed checklists, helping ensure all candidates from different classes were assessed accurately and consistently.

Some centres also had an internal verification procedure that appeared very robust and was much more holistic rather than just concentrating on assessor marking. Candidates in these centres will benefit from improved consistency and accuracy of both the approach to assessment and assessment judgements.

Assessors not identifying keyboarding errors is a reoccurring issue every year. We would therefore strongly advise assessors to take time to mark candidate assessment work carefully.