NQ verification 2023–24 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	English and Communication
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H2WT 73	National 3	English: Understanding Language
H2WV 73	National 3	English: Producing Language
H23W 73	National 3	Literacy
H23H 74	National 4	English: Analysis and Evaluation
H23T 74	National 4	English: Creation and Production
H23W 74	National 4	Literacy

Section 2: comments on assessment

Interim evidence

We remind centres that round 1 evidence should only constitute evidence from one unit. Evidence can be complete or interim.

When completing the verification sample form, centres must enter pass or fail to reflect the current position of a candidate's submitted evidence. For example, if a centre only submits listening evidence for the analysis and evaluation unit and feels the evidence is a pass, this should be entered on the form. The absence of a piece of evidence at the time of verification does not mean that a candidate fails, just that the evidence is not complete at this stage.

Assessment approaches

Most centres continue to make effective use of SQA unit assessment support packs to assess reading and listening using current materials from SQA's secure website.

Centres must ensure they access current versions of unit assessment support packs from SQA's secure site rather than relying on archived material.

There were instances of centres using pre-2017 versions of unit assessment support packs. A number of assessment standards were removed in 2017, including the requirement to comment on audience and purpose, and the unit assessment support packs were revised.

Centres should be aware that unit assessment support packs are subject to regular review and revision and must not rely on archived downloads.

This session, revisions have been made to the following packages:

♦ National 3 English: Reading and Listening package 2 unit-by-unit approach
♦ National 4 English: Listening and Talking package 2 combined approach

There were some effective centre-devised assessments for reading and listening related to the wider context of learning and teaching.

Some centre-devised materials did not offer candidates the opportunity to achieve assessment standards 1.2 and 2.2 as candidates did not have the opportunity to select and comment on at least two examples of language.

Note: SQA offers a free prior verification service to centres who devise their own assessments. This gives the centre confidence that their assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

English: Producing Language (National 3)
English: Creation and Production (National 4)
Literacy (National 3 and National 4): writing

At both levels, there were some very effective centre-devised assessments that allowed candidates personalisation and choice of both topic and genre for writing.

Assessment judgements

English: Understanding Language (National 3)
English: Analysis and Evaluation (National 4)
Literacy (National 3 and National 4): reading and listening

Most centres' judgements were valid, reliable and in line with national standards. Centres clearly indicated on candidate scripts where assessment standards were evidenced and/or provided detailed assessment commentaries as part of their internal verification processes.

There were some instances where candidates were incorrectly judged to have met assessment standards 1.2 and 2.2, even though they had not successfully selected and commented on at least two features of language.

Most centres gave clear indications and quotation of responses within their detailed checklist as part of their evidence.

Some submissions were too broad in nature and centres had to give further evidence of how assessment standards for talking had been met.

Section 3: general comments

Centres must ensure that they are using the most up-to-date assessment materials and unit assessment support packages. These can be downloaded from SQA's secure website through an SQA co-ordinator.

When devising their own assessments, centres must ensure that all assessment standards can be fully met by candidates. We recommend centres to make use of SQA's free prior verification service.

Most centres made submissions with very clear presentation and annotation of candidate scripts by individual assessors, which supported the process of arriving at and confirming assessment judgements.

Many centres went further than this and evidenced how their internal verification was carried out on candidate scripts and/or additional documentation. As a result, most centres' assessment judgements were able to be easily verified. A record of professional dialogue between assessors and verifiers greatly helps the verification process.

However, not all centres provided an overview of their internal verification procedures, and it was not possible to comment on its effectiveness.

Centres should review their internal verification processes to ensure that they are effective. It is good practice to use SQA's Internal Verification Toolkit prior to submission.

NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	**English and Communication**
Verification activity:	**Event**
Date published:	**July 2024**

National Course components and National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H23Y 74	National 4	English Assignment Added Value
H23W 75	National 5	Literacy
H23T 75	SCQF level 5	Creation and Production
H23T 76	SCQF level 6	Creation and Production
H23H 75	SCQF level 5	Analysis and Evaluation
H23H 76	SCQF level 6	Analysis and Evaluation
HK57 75	National 5	Performance–spoken language
J00T 76	Higher	Performance–spoken language

Section 2: comments on assessment

Centres should ensure that selections for round 2 verification comprise of National 4 added value or National 5 and/or Higher performance–spoken language.

This session, centres submitted material from freestanding SCQF level 5 and 6 units, for example Introduction to Literature and Communication, which are verified using a different process by a different SQA team.

Assessment approaches

English assignment added value unit

Most centres verified this session for the National 4 English Assignment (added value unit), offered candidates personalisation and choice in the topics chosen. These topics covered a

wide range of written texts, for example newspaper articles (print and online), poems, songs, reviews and online media.

Most centres used, or made appropriate adaptations to, the learning log in the National 4 unit assessment support pack as part of the planning process. Centres included these logs alongside the final write-up in their submission, which is very helpful in the verification process.

Reasonable assistance

A few centres were offering candidates levels of support that went beyond reasonable assistance. This is outlined in the 'Assessment conditions' section in the English Assignment (National 4) Added Value unit assessment support pack on SQA's secure site, where it notes:

♦ Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.
♦ Although candidates are expected to work independently when undertaking assessment, reasonable assistance may be given to them throughout the process. The requirements of the assessment should be made clear to candidates at the outset. Assessors can clarify with candidates how to approach the assessment and to guide them in producing their response. Assessors may also prompt candidates where appropriate to clarify the requirements of the assessment but should not direct them as to any specific response. For example, assessors should not provide specific advice on how to improve responses or provide model answers.

Changes to added value from session 2024–25 onwards

We remind centres of the changes to the added value unit next session, as published on the National 4 English web page.

The updated unit assessment support pack is available on SQA's secure site. You can access this through your SQA co-ordinator.

National 5 and Higher English: performance–spoken language

Most centres made effective use of the performance–spoken language assessment checklist to provide detailed comments on the contributions made by candidates.

Centres generated evidence from both individual presentations and group discussions – often a combination of both. Centres made effective links to wider contexts of learning, such as presentations linking to folio work, and group discussions linking to the texts and contexts of literature studied in class.

We remind centres that the evidence for the performance–spoken language can be gathered and evidenced over a range of spoken language opportunities throughout the course, rather than during one assessment event.

Freestanding units

Literacy (National 5)
Creation and Production (SCQF levels 5 and 6)
Analysis and Evaluation (SCQF levels 5 and 6)

All centres submitting freestanding English and Literacy units made use of existing SQA unit assessment support packs, or centre-devised assessments based on these.

There were occasions where centre-devised materials did not fully allow candidates to meet the assessment standards. This was particularly the case with assessment standards 1.2 (reading) and 2.2 (listening) where candidates did not always have the opportunity to select and comment on at least two examples of language in their responses.

There were instances where centre-devised material required candidates to comment on audience and purpose. We remind centres that, following revision to units in 2017, candidates no longer have to comment on audience and purpose.

We encourage centres creating their own assessments to make use of SQA's free prior verification service. This gives the centre confidence that their assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

Assessment judgements

Most centres indicated clearly how they carried out their internal verification on candidate scripts and/or additional documentation. As a result, most centres' assessment judgements were able to be easily verified.

English assignment added value unit

There were some instances where it was not possible to verify the assessment judgements made by a centre, as they did not provide a detailed checklist of candidate responses to questions as evidence for assessment standard 1.4.

We remind centres that evidence for assessment standard 1.4 should be in the form of detailed observation notes, a detailed checklist of a candidate's oral response(s) and/or a recording of a candidate's oral response(s).

National 5 and Higher English: performance–spoken language

Centres offered a wide range of engaging tasks for the performance–spoken language, often linked to the wider context of learning. For example, presentations linked to discursive essay topics being covered in the portfolio–writing, or group discussion linked to aspects of literature being studied for the critical reading exam. These integrated approaches to assessment were examples of good practice.

For verification purposes, centres should submit a detailed checklist with comments making clear the basis for assessment decisions for the National 5 and Higher performance–spoken language. For example, centres might provide an indication of the topic and/or question being addressed by the candidate, how they responded or the original point, and how it was developed or disputed by giving detail of some of the content and language of their response.

Some centres inadvertently assessed the performance–spoken language using the Creation and Production talking criteria and checklist for National 5 and Higher, rather than the performance–spoken language criteria and checklist. The talking outcome does not cover the performance–spoken language element, 'Demonstrates listening skills by responding to detailed and complex spoken language.' Centres should ensure they are using the appropriate checklist for assessment.

Exemplification

Exemplification of added value units (and other freestanding units) is available on SQA's secure site. You can access this through your SQA co-ordinator.

Additional candidate evidence and commentaries for the performance–spoken language are available on the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) English Understanding Standards web pages.

This material is for teachers, lecturers and assessors only and must be kept securely. You can access these through your SQA co-ordinator.

Section 3: general comments

We remind centres that, as part of the verification process, we are looking to confirm assessment judgements, and make reference to the effectiveness of the centre's internal verification processes in the final verification report. The teacher or lecturer must first assess all work to be submitted for verification and ensure the centre's internal verification processes are evident throughout the sample.

Many centres make effective use of annotation of candidate scripts to indicate the focus of verification discussion — often this was matched to the individual assessment standards.

Most centres presented materials for verification clearly. Simple but effective annotation of candidate work by assessors helped evidence the basis on which assessment judgements were made.

Most of the documentation accompanying oral evidence was in line with that exemplified on the Understanding Standards website, and centres should look to these exemplars when preparing candidates and conducting internal verification.

It was positive to see that most candidates were engaged in tasks that offered both personalisation and choice, and the opportunity to deepen learning.