NQ verification 2023–24 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**
Verification activity:	**Mixed**
Date published:	**June 2024**

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H998 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Reading and Writing
H997 72	National 2	ESOL for Everyday Life: Listening and Speaking
H24H 73	National 3	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24H 74	National 4	ESOL for Everyday Life
H24N 74	National 4	ESOL Assignment Added Value

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Units: National 2, 3 and 4

Most centres selected for verification submitted evidence that followed approaches to assessment, as set out in SQA's ESOL unit assessment support packs.

Some centres adapted assessments to candidates' needs, creating more personalisation and choice, and others used them as a model for producing their own assessments. A task from an SQA Communications unit was used to assess listening and speaking combined at National 3 level. The communications presentations produced evidence that met the assessment standards for outcome 4 (speaking) and there was a short question and answer session that meant candidates could meet the assessment standards for outcome 3 (listening).

Note: if centres use a task from a different unit, the assessment task should be available for verification, and centres should provide details of the assessment in the candidate assessment record.

A prior verified adapted task for National 3 was used to assess outcome 2 (writing). For the free-time activities, candidates had to write an email rather than produce a pamphlet. This approach enhanced an opportunity for personalisation and choice. The assessments selected by the centre were appropriate and useful for candidates.

Centres that wish to produce their own assessments may find it useful to look at the assessments in the unit assessment support packs on SQA's secure website. We recommend that centre-produced assessments are submitted to SQA's [free prior verification service](#) to check that the assessments are valid, reliable and practicable.

Outcome 1 (reading)

Overall, the approach taken by centres to the assessment and re-assessment of outcome 1 (reading) was both valid and accepted.

Assessors should use their professional judgement to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence when a candidate has not met all the assessment standards. For re-assessment of one assessment standard, assessors could check responses orally, or use a different question on the same text. For re-assessment of all the assessment standards, or where a candidate has not produced sufficient evidence, assessors must use a different assessment task.

Outcome 2 (writing)

All centres verified used the drafting process appropriately and in a way that supported candidates.

Centres should adhere closely to the assessment standards and encourage candidates to complete all first drafts of writing by hand. It may be appropriate at National 3 and National 4 level to create the final version electronically.

More detailed guidance on the drafting process is in the [ESOL common questions](#).

Outcome 3 (listening)

Assessors should take advantage of the opportunity to check orally, for example where candidates write more than the required number of words or when something is not clear.

It is useful to check understanding when listening and speaking are combined in one assessment. In the judging evidence table for assessment standards 3.1 and 3.2, it states 'If this has not been clearly demonstrated by the candidate during the conversation, the assessor could check orally'.

When an assessor checks the candidate response orally for outcome 3 (listening), this should be recorded to show clearly the basis on which assessment judgements have been made. Written records of assessors' comments assure reliability, and support both assessors and candidates. Where the evidence clearly demonstrates that a candidate has met the assessment standards, it is not necessary to provide detailed comments.

Outcome 4 (speaking)

Most centres submitted candidate evidence that was well-organised and included clearly identified audio or video recordings of high quality. Candidates appeared comfortable and well-prepared for their assessment.

In the evidence submitted, many centres combined the assessment of outcomes 3 and 4 (listening and speaking). Centres used an assessment task that combined listening and speaking in an interaction with another candidate. The candidates appeared well-prepared and responded to each other appropriately.

To help in identification and in the verification process, candidates should be paired with partners of a different gender and/or nationality or first language, where possible. When two candidates have similar voices and accents, it is helpful for the verification process to have written pointers to help identify which candidate is speaking. Some centres provided video-recorded evidence, which supported the identification of candidates. Where a candidate was paired with the assessor, the assessor participated effectively, and the result was a good example of a well-balanced interaction.

When the assessment task is a roleplay (lost or stolen mobile phone) an interlocutor should take on the part of the roleplay. In the centres verified, interlocutors were effectively managing their role ensuring candidates could participate fully.

ESOL assignment added value unit

In line with the aims and principles of personalisation and choice, centres encouraged candidates to choose topics they were interested in. Centres video-recorded candidates and it was clear that they were familiar with this. The use of video recordings helps candidates focus more on presentation skills, and maximising the skills they develop while doing the assignment.

Centres should encourage candidates to use PowerPoint. If candidates are using slides, they should refer to their slides when appropriate; they should not just appear in the background. Candidates should not read from a script or from the PowerPoint slides, as they are being assessed on their presentation skills.

For this unit, candidates have to provide evidence of their reading, speaking and listening skills by:

♦ selecting relevant information from at least two straightforward texts in English, one of which must be written
♦ making an oral presentation on the topic in English
♦ understanding spoken English by responding orally in English to questions relevant to the topic

For the assignment, candidates should apply their language skills from the other two units at National 4 level to investigate their chosen topic in English.

Assessment judgements

In most centres verified, assessors had a good understanding of the assessment standards. The assessment judgements were in line with national standards and assessor comments were clearly based on the assessment standards.

Centres should refer to the column 'Making assessment judgements' in the judging evidence tables in SQA's unit assessment support packs when making judgements for each assessment standard.

Some centres included adapted candidate assessment records for each outcome, which provided clear and detailed feedback.

Centres must make sure that results are recorded accurately and clearly to avoid any errors on the candidate assessment record and verification sample form.

Section 3: general comments

Internal verification

Some centres provided full and detailed evidence of the internal verification process. These documented clearly that professional dialogue had taken place between the internal verifier and the assessor. This showed how assessment judgements were reached for individual outcomes and complete units through the inclusion of supporting comments relating to assessment standards and highlighted or annotated judging evidence tables. Other centres provided evidence of cross-marking having taken place and/or the internal verifier having signed to confirm agreement with the judgements made.

Centres should pay close attention to the materials required for external verification of units. If unsure about what to submit, please contact NQ Verification for guidance. Verification cannot proceed if centres submit incorrect evidence, or evidence for candidates who have already been certificated.

On the verification sample form, the pass or fail column should reflect the current position within the candidate´s evidence — whether this is complete or interim. Centres should complete it for each candidate as 'pass' or 'fail' only. This applies in situations where the candidate evidence is interim, for example a candidate who has completed two out of four outcomes successfully (for the Everyday Life unit) would be shown as 'pass' on the verification sample form, even though they are yet to attempt two more outcomes before completing the unit. The individual assessment judgements that have been made should be detailed in the evidence.