NQ verification 2023–24 round 1

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	**Geography**
Verification activity:	**Event**
Date published:	**June 2024**

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H27G 73	National 3	Geography: Physical Environments
H27H 73	National 3	Geography: Human Environments
H27H 73	National 3	Geography: Global Issues
H27G 74	National 4	Geography: Physical Environments
H27H 74	National 4	Geography: Human Environments
H27J 74	National 4	Geography: Global Issues
H27K 74	National 4	Geography Assignment Added Value Unit
J6MV 74	National 4	Geography: Global Issues in the Context of Climate Change

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

More centres devised their own assessments to meet the needs of candidates. Some centres used SQA unit assessment support packs and current prior verified assessments.

Submissions from centres were mainly separate unit approaches and included interim and complete unit evidence. All the interim evidence submitted had sufficient assessment standards included to allow verification to proceed.

Assessments were mainly written test submissions. Posters and leaflets were also submitted.

Since the beginning of session 2016–17, centres have been required to assess candidates against the revised outcomes and assessment standards. To help centres, the SQA unit

assessment support packs currently published on SQA's secure site were updated to take account of these revisions and to ensure that the packs were valid. Centres should assess candidate evidence as outlined in the judging evidence tables in these packs.

Centres should ensure that any prior verified assessments they are using are current and in line with the revised outcomes and assessment standards. Prior verified assessments are no longer valid after a unit has been revised. The prior verified assessments on SQA's secure site are all current and valid. A number of prior verified assessments were removed from SQA's secure site following the revisions in 2016. These are listed below the current assessments and centres should no longer use them. Note: assessments labelled 'prior verified' by organisations such as schools and local authorities are not prior verified assessments as only SQA has responsibility for this.

Advice for centres:

♦ centres should check that any assessments they have had prior verified are dated after the revisions of 2016
♦ when centres devise their own assessment tasks, they must include both the assessment task and the judging evidence table in the materials sent for external verification; the judging evidence table must include the 'possible responses'
♦ prior verification is a free service provided by SQA and centres are encouraged to use this service for centre-devised assessments, including those obtained from other centres that have not been prior verified

Assessment judgements

Almost all assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Centres are only required to submit evidence for one unit per candidate at each level. Only one unit is verified for each candidate at the external verification event. A number of centres included evidence for two, three or four units.

There was much less over-assessment this year. Each assessment standard needs to be assessed once only. While asking two questions about an assessment standard can reduce the need for re-assessment, this strategy should be used proportionately so as not to make the process too burdensome for both candidates and assessors.

It is helpful if assessors indicate where the candidate has overtaken an assessment standard across the entirety of the candidate's evidence and not just at the first applicable comment. Candidates may overtake assessments standards in more than one place in their evidence and this should be identified and credited wherever it occurs.

It was helpful, for verification, when ticks and, for example 1.1, 1.2, were placed at points on the candidate work where an assessment standard was overtaken. This helps external verifiers to locate the evidence in candidates' work. Nearly all centres used this approach.

The following good practice was identified during verification:

♦ many centres included detailed and helpful comments about assessment judgements, which helps external verifiers to locate and review the evidence in candidates' work

- most centres indicated on candidate scripts where assessment standards were overtaken by annotating the scripts with, for example 1.1, 1.2
- some centres used 'd' for description and 'e' for explanation in this round of verification
- many centres included a summary grid to indicate which assessment standards had been overtaken by each candidate. The comments made by assessors were detailed and informative, which helped to make internal and external verification more straightforward
- many centres used the candidate assessment record effectively
- re-assessment of assessment standards was clearly indicated on candidate scripts
- where candidate evidence was generated orally or via presentations, assessors included notes to indicate what the candidate had done or said to overtake the assessment standard
- some centres amended and scaffolded materials to support candidates for whom English is not their first language or when candidates have additional support needs
- some assessors digitally shared evidence with other centres for cross-marking when this was not possible within their own centre

Section 3: general comments

Most centres were 'accepted' or 'accepted*' in this round of verification. When assessors organised a coherent submission of materials, the verification process was straightforward. Centres are to be commended on the time and effort taken to gather evidence.

It was pleasing to see centres submitting the National 4 Global Issues in the Context of Climate Change unit, which is part of the National Progression Award in Climate Change and Sustainability.

Many centres had clear internal verification policies to show how quality assurance ensures national standards had been applied. These were effective as they provided the centre with a clear and systematic process. A small number of centres, however, did not include any evidence of internal verification of candidate evidence. Centres should always include evidence of internal verification processes along with the candidate evidence. This may be in the documentation provided or in written comments on candidate scripts. Some centres devised quality assurance templates to give a clear staged protocol for quality assurance.

Most centres completed the verification sample form appropriately. If evidence is interim, centres should indicate if the candidate has an interim pass or interim fail. An interim pass is when candidates have passed all the assessment standards completed but still have other assessment standards to attempt (some centres recorded this as a fail).

Centres should ensure that the pass or fail result on the verification sample form matches the results written by assessors on the candidate evidence.

All 'not accepted' outcomes related to the National 4 Geography: Physical Environments unit. Reasons for the 'not accepted' outcomes were as follows:

- using a prior verified National 4 Geography: Physical Environments assessment that is no longer valid since the amendments in 2016 and has been removed from SQA's secure site

- using a local authority 'prior verified' assessment that was not valid
- assessment standard 1.1 states 'interpreting geographical information from two sources, including a map, in order to describe any patterns which are found'. The assessments:
  — did not include two sources
  — did not include a map
  — did not as ask candidates to describe a pattern (for example land use)
- assessment standard 1.2 states 'presenting geographical information in at least two straightforward ways, one of which must be related to a map'. The assessments did not ask candidates to present information in a way that is related to a map (for example labelling a map, labelling a cross section using the map)
- assessment standard 2.1 states 'describing one key feature found in one landscape type in the United Kingdom'. The assessments did not include a question that asked candidates to describe a key feature of a landscape. Sometimes this was joined in a question with a 2.2 'explaining briefly the formation of one landscape feature found in the United Kingdom', so candidates just explained formation. Separate questions for assessment standards 2.1 and 2.2 worked best for candidates
- assessment standard 2.3 states 'explaining briefly the factors affecting weather in the United Kingdom'. Candidates must give two brief explanations. The assessments asked candidates for only one explanation of a factor affecting the weather
- assessment standard 2.4 states 'giving brief descriptions of the possible land uses and brief explanations of a possible land use conflict for one landscape type in the United Kingdom'. Candidates must give descriptions 'of at least two distinct, relevant land uses'. The assessments asked candidates for only one description of a land use

NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Geography
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	June 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
J2ED 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Physical Environments
J2EH 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Human Environments
J2EK 75	SCQF level 5	Geography: Global Issues
J2EF 76	SCQF level 6	Geography: Physical Environments
J2EJ 76	SCQF level 6	Geography: Human Environments
J2EL 76	SCQF level 6	Geography: Global Issues

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Centres used SQA unit assessment support packs, adapted unit assessment support packs, and prior verified assessments. Some centres devised their own assessments to meet the needs of candidates and used their local area as the case study.

Submissions from centres were all separate unit approaches and included interim and complete unit evidence. All the interim evidence submitted had sufficient assessment standards included to allow verification to proceed.

Assessments were mainly written test submissions. A small number of centres used an 'open book' approach to assessment. This is an acceptable approach for gathering evidence.

Since the beginning of session 2016–17, centres have been required to assess candidates against the revised outcomes and assessment standards. To help centres, the SQA unit assessment support packs, currently published on SQA's secure site, were updated to take

account of these revisions and to ensure that the packs were valid. Centres should assess candidate evidence as outlined in the judging evidence tables in these packs. Not all centres used the up-to-date packs in round 2.

Centres that used a prior verified assessment submitted their 'NQ Prior Verification Certificate'. Centres should ensure that any prior verified assessments they are using are current and in line with the revised outcomes and assessment standards. Prior verified assessments are no longer valid after a unit has been revised. The prior verified assessments on SQA's website are all current and valid. A number of prior verified assessments were removed from SQA's secure site following the revisions in 2016. These are listed below the current assessments and should no longer be used by centres.

Advice for centres:

♦ centres should check that any assessments they have had prior verified are dated after the revisions of 2016
♦ when centres devise their own assessment tasks, they must include both the assessment task and the judging evidence table for external verification; the judging evidence table must include the 'possible responses'
♦ prior verification is a free service provided by SQA and centres are encouraged to use this service for centre-devised assessments

Assessment judgements

Almost all assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Centres are only required to submit evidence for one unit per candidate at each level. Only one unit is verified for each candidate at the external verification event. A small number of centres included evidence for two or three units.

There was very little over-assessment this year. Each assessment standard needs to be assessed once only. While it is understood that asking two questions about an assessment standard can reduce the need for re-assessment, this strategy should be used proportionately so as not to make the process too burdensome for both candidates and assessors.

It is helpful if assessors indicate where the candidate has overtaken an assessment standard across the entirety of the candidate's evidence and not just at the first applicable comment. Candidates may overtake assessments standards in more than one place in their evidence and this should be identified and credited wherever it occurs.

It was helpful, for verification, when ticks were placed at points on the candidate work where an assessment standard was overtaken. This helps the external verifiers to locate the evidence in candidates' work. Nearly all centres used this approach.

When centres adapt a unit assessment support pack to cover a different level, they should make sure that the command words match the assessment standards for the new level.

The following good practice was identified during verification:

- many centres included detailed and helpful comments about assessment judgements, which helps the external verifiers to locate and review the evidence in candidates' work
- most centres indicated on candidates' work where assessment standards were overtaken, for example the use of 1.1 or 1.2
- most centres included a summary grid to indicate which assessment standards had been overtaken by each candidate. The comments made by assessors were detailed and informative, which helped to make external verification more straightforward. These comments were often helpful for candidates
- most centres used the candidate assessment record effectively
- re-assessment of assessment standards was effectively carried out and clearly indicated on candidate scripts
- where candidate evidence was generated by fieldwork or orally, assessors included notes to indicate what the candidate had done or said to overtake the assessment standard
- where cross-marking initially resulted in a difference of opinion between the assessor and internal verifier, it was helpful to have the reasons for the final results confirmed in writing

Section 3: general comments

Almost all centres were 'accepted' in this round of verification. The high quality of most submissions made the verification process straightforward. Centres are to be commended on their time, effort and organisation of submissions.

Many centres had clear internal verification policies to show how quality assurance ensured national standards had been applied. These were effective as they provided the centre with a clear and systematic process. Centres should always include evidence of internal verification processes along with the candidate evidence. This may be in the documentation provided or in written comments on the candidate scripts. Quality assurance templates were devised by some centres to give a clear staged protocol for quality assurance. Centres that have just one geography teacher or lecturer should consider if teachers or lecturers in another department or centre could assist in internally verifying their candidates' evidence.

The verification sample form was completed appropriately by most centres. If evidence is interim, centres should indicate if the candidate has an interim pass or interim fail. An interim pass is when candidates have passed all the assessment standards completed but still have other assessment standards to attempt.

Centres should ensure that the pass or fail result on the verification sample form matches the results written by assessors on the candidate evidence.

Reasons for the 'not accepted' outcomes were as follows:

- In the SCQF level 5 Physical Environments unit, the centre did not include a question that allowed one of the two processing techniques to be related to using a map for assessment standard 1.2.
- In the SCQF level 5 Physical Environments unit, the centre did not include a question on a possible solution to the candidate's identified land use conflict for assessment standard 2.4.

♦ In the SCQF level 5 Global Issues unit, the centre did not include a question to cover assessment standard 1.2: 'evaluating numerical and graphical information to draw a detailed conclusion' and assessment standard 2.1: 'Describing in detail key features of a significant global issue'.

All the 'not accepted' outcomes were centre-devised assessments that had not been prior verified. Further information on the prior verification service is available on SQA's website.