NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

Qualification verification summary report

Section 1: verification group information

Verification group name:	Sociology
Verification activity:	Event
Date published:	July 2024

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
J2DE 75	SCQF level 5	Sociology: Culture and Identity
J2DB 75	SCQF level 5	Sociology: Human Society
J2DG 75	SCQF level 5	Sociology: Social Issues
J2DF 76	SCQF level 6	Sociology: Culture and Identity
J2DD 76	SCQF level 6	Sociology: Human Society
J2DH 76	SCQF level 6	Sociology: Social Issues

Section 2: comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Many centres involved in verification this year had used SQA unit assessment support packs to assess candidates, often dividing the assessment standards into sections and assessing continuously throughout the academic year rather than one end of unit assessment.

Several centres devised their own assessments or adapted SQA past papers for assessment purposes. There were some really good examples of diverse assessment methods being implemented by some centres. However, centres are strongly encouraged to submit any centre-devised assessments for prior verification to ensure the assessments meet SQA requirements.

Some centres that adapted past papers included marks as part of their assessments. This should be avoided as it may cause confusion for centre staff and candidates as candidates may achieve high marks but not meet all assessment standards or may meet each assessment standard but achieve lower marks.

One centre sampled had not used up-to-date unit assessment support packs, which resulted in inaccurate assessment standards being used to assess candidates. Centres are reminded that as part of their annual standardisation cycle, they should review all SQA materials to ensure they are current and up to date.

There were a few incidents of suspected candidate malpractice with similarity between candidate assessment submissions. For candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the subject it is important that they are encouraged to provide responses that are in their own words and avoid simple repetition of class notes. Centres may wish to consider introducing a candidate declaration of authenticity for assessments.

Action points
♦ continue to flag assessment standards next to questions and use the candidate assessment record or a centre-devised alternative to record achievement
♦ submit any centre-devised assessments or any SQA unit assessment support pack that has been considerably altered for prior verification
♦ continue to send in evidence of internal verification and evidence of sampling of candidate work. Internal verifiers should clearly annotate candidate evidence or the candidate assessment record to show agreement or disagreement with assessment decisions
♦ keep up to date with published changes to assessments. Assessors should refer to the Sociology subject pages for any changes
♦ ensure candidates are aware of the requirement to provide responses in their own words and of SQA malpractice definitions (see SQA's Malpractice: Information for centres)

Assessment judgements

There was evidence of good practice in many centres where assessors had noted the assessment standards throughout each candidate response. This resulted in evidence that was clear to follow for candidates, internal verifiers and external verifiers. Several centres had provided detailed feedback to candidates which offered candidates commentary on their performance and included identification of their areas of strength, where they had met minimum competence, or required development.

Several centres had not adopted this as standard practice, which made it challenging to identify where assessment decisions had been made. Where centres have used ticks or initials with no explanation of assessment judgements it was difficult to see where the assessor(s) felt the candidate had met minimum competence or excelled in a response.

In more than a few centres there was a lack of evidence to show that remediation had taken place. While some centres demonstrated good practice and remediation was clearly identified and commentary provided, it is advised that assessors include where remediation has been carried out. These would provide clarity for the internal and external verification process.

Internal verification in most centres was very good and included detailed feedback from the internal verifier. There was evidence through internal verification meetings that professional dialogue was being carried between assessor(s) and internal verifier(s). However, this was

not the standard across all centres and in a few instances, it was clear no internal verification had been carried out.

In some centres there was a lack of evidence of what the final decision or action had been when there was a disagreement between assessor and internal verifier. There was also a lack of explanation regarding any actions where the internal verifier did not support the assessor judgement.

Action points
- assessors should provide some commentary on assessment judgements to further assist candidate performance. This would also benefit internal verifiers and external verification.
- Internal verifiers should provide some detail in their feedback to assessor on their agreement or otherwise on judgements
- record remediation activity, for example by tracking this on candidate assessment records, stating what the candidate provided as part of this process, what form it took, and some detailed commentary if this activity was undertaken through oral feedback
- provide more qualitative feedback or where this is not accessible for external verifiers, provide evidence such as annotated scripts to indicate that feedback was given orally or via a digital method
- ensure that assessors and candidates are using the most up-to-date unit assessment support packs available on SQA's secure site, and are familiar with any changes

Section 3: general comments

Centres should take care when transcribing details onto the verification sample form that 'pass or fail' indications match, and that unit codes are entered correctly. On this form, 'interim evidence' relates only to where one outcome from a unit is submitted. If the unit has been completed but still requires remediation, then this is a 'fail' at this time.