



# NQ verification 2023–24 round 2

## Qualification verification summary report

### Section 1: verification group information

<b>Verification group name:</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
<b>Verification activity:</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>Date published:</b>	<b>June 2024</b>

### National Course components verified

<b>Course code</b>	<b>Course level</b>	<b>Course title</b>
C869 75	National 5	Spanish: performance–talking
C869 76	Higher	Spanish: performance–talking

Note: the performance–talking is an internally assessed component of course assessment (IACCA).

### Section 2: comments on assessment

#### Assessment approaches

All centres selected for verification in round 2 used the performance–talking coursework assessment task, as set out in the National 5 and Higher Modern Languages course specifications.

Verifiers noted that the quality of the performances sampled at both levels was generally very good. Assessors had guided candidates well in the selection of topics, allowing many candidates to use a range of structures, vocabulary, and tenses appropriate to each level.

## **National 5 presentation**

Many presentations evidenced well-organised and appropriate content, and candidates were generally more accurate in this section. Centres should allow candidates personalisation and choice in the topic of their presentation and encourage them to choose topics that give them scope to demonstrate their full ability to use the language at this level.

Some candidates used the National 5 job application writing assessment as the basis of their presentation; however, some of the content relating to the job application was more appropriate for the follow up conversation questions.

## **National 5 conversation**

Assessors were extremely supportive of their candidates and prompted them at appropriate points during the conversation where hesitation occurred. A few conversations would have benefitted from intervention from the assessor to avoid lengthy pauses. Open-ended questions such as ‘tell me about...’ were effective in producing detailed language from candidates but an over-use of closed questions in some performances did not help candidates fully develop their answers.

Assessors should avoid the use of closed questions and avoid answering their own questions ahead of the candidate. Where this happened, candidates were less likely to develop a fuller answer and simply responded with an agreement, for example ‘Yes... or No...’

In a few conversations at National 5, the link between the presentation and conversation was tenuous or missing. Assessors should try to bridge the two sections with some linking questions.

Assessors should give candidates appropriate thinking time in the conversation so that they can frame their own answers and, in some instances, self-correct. A few conversations would have benefitted from the assessor intervening less. Further information is in the [National 5 Modern Languages course specification](#), in the performance–talking ‘Assessment conditions’ section.

Candidates may attempt to use extended answers in places, but we remind assessors to discourage candidates from answering with ‘mini presentations’. Some of these longer answers can appear overly rehearsed and any sense of spontaneity in the conversation is lost. Ideally, candidates should use a mixture of shorter and longer responses in the conversation.

We remind centres to provide candidates with a variety of questions and ensure that they give candidates opportunities to demonstrate their ability to cope with an element of unpredictability.

Assessors should avoid using the same questions for all candidates as this may prevent some candidates from demonstrating a wide variety of language resource appropriate for the level. Where candidates select comparable topics for the performance, centres should phrase questions in a range of ways or focus on different aspects of a topic with different candidates.

## **National 5 sustaining the conversation**

Examples of how candidates could demonstrate their ability to sustain the conversation can include:

- ◆ a mix of extended and shorter answers (not mini presentations or monologues)
- ◆ appropriate thinking time
- ◆ natural interjections, for example: *bueno, pues, déjame pensar, no sé pero...*
- ◆ acknowledgement that they have understood the question: *sí, estoy de acuerdo...*
- ◆ asking questions that are relevant to the conversation and at relevant times
- ◆ asking for repetition or clarification, for example *¿Cómo has dicho...? ¿Puedes repetir? ¿Qué dices...?*

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

## **Higher discussion**

Some discussions sounded more natural when candidates answered with a combination of longer and shorter answers, and it was clear that it was not excessively rehearsed. Overly rehearsed discussions do not prepare candidates for the demands of Advanced Higher or real-life situations. Instead, candidates could prepare for their discussion by thinking about the type of questions the assessor is likely to ask on their chosen topic and thinking about which key words the assessor is likely to use in their questions.

Where candidates ask assessors questions during the discussion, assessors must avoid monopolising the discussion with their responses. Although it is a discussion, the focus should be on the candidates' responses, not on prolonged responses from assessors, which can be an unnecessary barrier for candidates. Assessors should respond to the candidate's questions succinctly, before swiftly moving on to their next question to return the focus to the candidate.

The nature of some of the topics selected or some of the questions asked by assessors did not allow candidates to respond using detailed and complex language (for example favourite hobby, pastime, genre of cinema).

## **Duration of the performance–talking**

We remind centres to refer to the recommended duration of the performance–talking as set out in the National 5 and Higher Modern Languages course specifications, in the 'Assessment conditions' section.

Some performances were significantly shorter than the recommended duration, particularly at National 5, and this was not necessarily to the benefit of candidates. At times, this meant that some candidates did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in using detailed language and a varied range of language structures.

## **Assessment judgements**

Most centres applied the marking instructions for the performance—talking accurately and in line with national standards. They did this using the detailed marking instructions for the National 5 and Higher performance—talking and the productive grammar grid.

### **Sustaining the conversation element at National 5**

There was some inconsistency in marking, with some centres being too severe and others too lenient in the application of the marking instructions.

Candidates do not have to ask a question in the conversation to gain marks. Some centres incorrectly justified not awarding pegged mark 5 because candidates did not ask any questions.

In some cases, candidates paused briefly during the conversation to think about their answers: this is a natural part of a conversation. Assessors should give candidates appropriate time to think and respond, as described above in the [‘National 5 sustaining the conversation’](#) section.

Candidates can be awarded 5 marks for sustaining the conversation, even if they briefly hesitate and recover successfully.

Some centres included a brief commentary to describe how a candidate showed they had understood, through non-verbal means, the question or response from the assessor as it would happen in a natural conversation. This is useful for event verifiers who cannot see the recording of the performance.

### **National 5 and Higher**

Some centres included detailed commentaries to justify the marks awarded to each candidate. Some included detailed commentaries from both the assessor and the internal verifier, evidencing productive professional dialogue. This is excellent practice and is very useful for event verifiers.

We remind centres to highlight which mark was finally agreed between the assessor and internal verifier, and to note the reason. This mark should also be noted on the verification sample form. Centres should ensure that the marks on the verification sample form match the marks included in the candidate assessment record (or similar document) submitted with the candidate evidence.

## **Section 3: general comments**

At National 5, personalisation and choice should ensure that candidates can select topic(s) of their choice for their presentation and conversation. Assessors should support and advise candidates in their choice of topic(s) from within the four contexts (society, learning, employability, culture).

In the presentation at National 5, candidates can talk about different aspects of one or more topic(s) developed from at least one context, then cover a different context in the conversation section. The Spanish verification team noted good practice at National 5 where

candidates were given two or three bridging questions to help them to move from the presentation to the conversation seamlessly.

At Higher level, the Spanish verification team noted good practice where candidates were given a few questions to settle them into the discussion before moving into their selected contexts.

Note: candidates must cover at least two different contexts at Higher.

Pronunciation and intonation continue to be something verifiers comment on. These can detract from the overall impression in some performances and can affect the level of accuracy in delivery. This should be an area for continued focus.

During recordings, we remind centres that they should avoid background noise during assessments that are close to classrooms or social spaces. Verifiers could hear centre PA systems in some recordings, and these were off-putting for the candidates and assessors. As outlined in the course specifications at both levels, centres should ensure that the performance–talking is conducted in appropriate surroundings, eliminating the possibility of disruptions and background noise.

Many assessors were understanding and encouraging and supported less confident candidates throughout their performances.

Most centres produced sample materials, which were well-organised and showed evidence of internal verification. It is always useful in the external verification process when centres include detail (for example on a candidate assessment record or equivalent) of the reasons why a candidate was awarded one pegged mark rather than another for any section of the performance–talking.

The Spanish verification team noted good practice of internal verification across clusters and encourage this for smaller or single person departments. Note: a specialist of the language should conduct internal verification.

Digital uploads of verification materials were very successful with a good range of supporting evidence submitted, which allowed for a concise verification process.