



National Qualifications Awards

Qualification Verification Summary Report 2023–24

Scots Language Award

Verification group number:627

National Qualification Award Courses

The Scots Language Award unit being verified this year was the History and Development unit. Some centres were offering this as part of the Scottish Studies Award and some as part of the Scots Language Award.

General comments

Our findings show that centres are offering stimulating, varied and creative programmes of work with Scots Language and that candidates are very engaged with their learning. From previous reports we can see a growing confidence among teachers in this regard. A greater number of centres are offering both the Understanding and Communicating unit and the History and Development unit of the Scots Language Award. However, a pattern we are observing is that centres, teachers and candidates are more confident with the Understanding and Communicating unit than the History and Development unit. We have identified specific areas of the History and Development unit that centres find more challenging, namely outcomes 2.2–2.5 including the **reasons** for links with other languages and specific linguistic features (grammar). Recommendations are provided.

Course arrangements, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

On the whole, centres are making good use of the course arrangements and are judging candidate evidence using SQA or adapted SQA instruments of assessment. Exemplification materials highlight how further improvements can be made by centres.

Evidence requirements

Centres provided a wide range of types of candidate evidence, from written reports, assessment grids of oral presentations and notes from visits to museums and performances. Candidates provided a wide range of relevant factors influencing the development of Scots over time and the influence of these factors. The vast majority of centres provided ample candidate evidence for verification, although we identified some outcomes for which there was insufficient evidence from a small number of centres for us to confidently accept the judgements of the teacher. These include evidence for the reasons for links with other languages and linguistic features.

Administration of assessments

Assessments were administered effectively. There is currently no specific unit assessment support pack for the History and Development unit, although there are many exemplars of successful approaches to assessment by centres on the understanding standards materials. There was a good range of assessment approaches by centres this year including candidate reports, oral presentations and notes from museum visits.

In all cases it was evident that assessment evidence was the product of an extended course of learning and investigation, often involving partners, visitors and engaging activities. Assessment tasks were well matched to the abilities and interests of the candidates and to the outcomes being assessed. There was ample evidence that centres were giving effective and supportive feedback to candidates. In isolated cases there was not quite enough actual pupil evidence to accept the teacher judgements. For oral presentation evidence it is recommended that evidence of content is included, whether detailed teacher notes, candidate presentation notes or recordings, so that we can accurately assess the teacher judgements.

Learning and teaching

Centres demonstrated a flexible approach to the award and evidenced a broad range of learning and teaching styles, methods and resources, including ICT based approaches. In some centres a folio of evidence was presented. Interdisciplinary learning was central to the approaches taken by centres. There was ample evidence of personalisation and choice for candidates, ensuring excellent engagement and meaningful learning. There was ample evidence of excellent feedback provided for pupils, and it was clear that centres provided very engaging experiences for candidates.

Overall assessment

There is clearly growing confidence among centres in offering both units of the Scots Language Award, and more centres are offering the History and Development unit. We have identified specific areas of the History and Development unit that centres find more challenging, namely outcomes 2.2–2.5 including the reasons for links with other languages and specific linguistic features, or grammar, further detailed in the section below on areas for improvement.

Verification

Internal verification, on the whole was carried out robustly by centres. On the whole there was clear evidence of very effective internal verification measures, pupil evidence being clearly marked with different coloured pens or teacher signatures and comments. In some centres this was particularly thorough, detailed and effective, whilst there was no evidence of internal verification in other centres. It is

evident that some schools do not have other teachers with the training to do this, and feedback to centres included a suggestion to identify potential internal verifiers by way of existing support groups on GLOW for Scottish Studies and Scots Language.

Areas of good practice reported during session 2023–24:

Areas of good practice reported included:

- ◆ More centres are confidently offering the History and Development unit, which gives candidates the opportunity of achieving the complete Scots Language Award.
- ◆ Centres are providing candidates with excellent, engaging experiences in the study of Scots Language including expeditions and visits in the community.
- ◆ There is consistent constructive, supportive and effective feedback given to.
- ◆ Centres are making good use of SQA provided instruments of assessment, either using them as they are or adapting them to the needs of their candidates.
- ◆ Centre assessed judgements are in line with national standards and are thorough, providing detailed evidence and reasoning.
- ◆ Internal verification was mostly thorough, detailed and highly effective.
- ◆ Excellent assessment grids are being used to assess pupil evidence.
- ◆ Candidates are being given ample opportunities for personalisation and choice.

Specific areas for improvement reported during session 2023–24:

- ◆ It is recommended that the teachers evaluate the assessment instruments and resources for the History and Development unit at levels 4–6, particularly for outcomes 2.2–2.5 which are quite specific about links with other languages, the **reasons** for those links and (at levels 5–6) describing and giving examples of **linguistic features**. The first recommended resource is the SQA site Award and Support Notes, History and Development unit: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70056.html> and a second resource is Education Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot/resources/features-of-scots/>.
- ◆ Centres should also strengthen the instruments of assessment to enable candidates to more strongly demonstrate their understanding of outcome 1.3 (reaching reasoned conclusions about the impact of each factor on contemporary Scots). Teachers may consider assessing outcome 1.1–1.3 together with 2.3, as in many cases the factors influencing Scots may also include information on the reasons for links with other languages.