

# Brief recap on SQA assessment and verification changes

## Changes in place now

### Marking of unit assessment

To ease the workload burden with regards to reassessment, the SQA introduced thresholds for unit assessment for this session. This means that candidates are no longer required to pass every element of an assessment to pass the unit overall. Thresholds have been applied in three categories as follows:

**Category 1: Maths and Sciences-** application of a 60% threshold score to unit assessment tests in Maths; 50% threshold score to unit assessment tests in Sciences.

**Category 2: Social Subjects, Business and Technical-** application of a threshold to the number of assessment standards that candidates must meet to achieve each unit. SQA has, where appropriate, introduced for each unit, within each subject, a threshold for the number of assessment standards that all candidates must meet to achieve units. Details should be checked on a subject by subject basis.

**Category 3: Performing and Expressive Arts, PE, Languages and English:** application of a threshold judgement within each assessment standard.

**Full subject-specific details in relation to thresholds can be found on the relevant pages of the SQA website.**

**EIS advice – these changes should mean an immediate reduction in the level of re-assessment undertaken, as 100% compliance is not required.**

### Verification

The SQA has suspended random verification for this session and these arrangements will remain in place for Higher in session 2017-18 (Note units will not feature in N5 course awards). Verification will take place only under the following circumstances:

- **Where centres are new to delivery within a qualification group as a whole.** This means centres entering candidates for either a new course in a qualification group for which they have **never previously entered candidates for any course, or**

in qualification groups **where no verification activity has taken place since the inception of the new qualifications.**

- **Where the initial outcome of verification within a qualification group was not accepted in 2015/16**, centres will be eligible for selection for unit verification. Also included are centres who received 'not accepted' within a qualification group in an earlier session (2013/14 or 2014/15), but have not been not verified since.
- Where centres are eligible for selection under the 'not accepted' criteria, they may be selected for any course within the qualification group - often for a different subject than verified previously.

NB Other types of verification besides random verification continue. This includes N4 units, including the added value unit, and verification of internally assessed coursework. Verification will continue as before for all qualifications that are not within the suite of new National Qualifications such as Skills for Work.

**EIS advice – this change should mean that teachers can apply a professional judgement as to whether students have achieved a unit, dropping the need to audit trail performance criteria for the purpose of meeting verification requirements. Any internal cross marking should be at the level teachers deem to be appropriate to support professional needs. School or local authority based approaches, which sought to verify the SQA verification process, should be challenged and dropped.**

#### **Changes to assessment from 2017**

As a result of the recent industrial action by EIS members, unit assessment passes will no longer be required for candidates to achieve National Qualifications that have a final exam. Changes to assessment are being implemented over a 3-year period as follows:

<b>N5</b>	Session 2017-18
<b>Higher</b>	Session 2018-19
<b>Advanced Higher</b>	Session 2019-20

Any content that is assessed currently within units, and which is not covered by externally assessed coursework or by the exam, will be considered for inclusion within one or other of these elements of final course assessment. SQA is currently looking at how this will be done on a subject by subject basis.

**SQA has undertaken to announce by the end of January any significant changes being planned for National 5 in session 2017-18.**

NB Individual units as standalone qualifications will still be available to centres to offer only to candidates for whom a final exam is not an appropriate pathway.