

# Further Guidance on National 5 Business Management Coursework



This document provides further guidance and clarification for teachers/lecturers on the production and supervision of the National 5 Business Management Coursework assignment.

It should be read in conjunction with all information already published by SQA relating to Coursework:

- ◆ *National 5 Business Management Course Assessment Specification*
- ◆ *National 5 Business Management Assignment General Assessment Information*
- ◆ *National 5 Business Management Assignment Assessment Task*

This assignment is worth 30 marks. The marks contribute 30% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A–D.

## General information

The assignment is set by SQA but administered by centres with some degree of supervision. During the planning and research part of the assignment it is expected that there may be limited supervision and some of this work may be undertaken outwith class time or as group work. During this stage, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ advising candidates on the choice of a topic/area to research
- ◆ advising candidates on possible sources of information
- ◆ clarifying instructions/requirements of the assignment
- ◆ feedback on interim progress

The time allocation for planning and research is up to four hours.

The write-up of the assignment must be conducted under supervised conditions in class time and without any input or feedback from the teacher/lecturer.

The time allocation for the write-up is no more than one hour.

There is a free choice of business/topic although:

- ◆ SQA has already provided some suggested businesses which are suitable to be used (see *Business Management Assignment General assessment information*, page 4)
- ◆ it is acknowledged that teachers/lecturers may wish to manage this choice in conjunction with their candidates
- ◆ it is **not** necessary for every candidate in a class to choose a different topic or a different business

The context of the National 5 Business Management Course is small to medium-sized organisations. While it is most appropriate for the assignment to also be set against this context, it is recognised that some candidates may choose larger organisations on which to base their assignment. This is acceptable; however, caution should be exercised to ensure that candidates at this level are not exposed to too much information, which may affect their ability to produce a good assignment.

## **Marking of the assignment**

Teachers/lecturers are not expected to mark the assignment. It is essential that teachers/lecturers do not mark the assignment or give any feedback to candidates at the write-up stage.

The assignment will be uplifted from centres as per the published date, for external marking. Generic Marking Instructions have been published by SQA to help teachers/lecturers understand how the assignment will be marked.

Marks for the report will be awarded for:

- ◆ background information — 4 marks
- ◆ research methods and sources — 6 marks
- ◆ analysis and interpretation — 12 marks
- ◆ conclusion — 5 marks
- ◆ collating and reporting — 3 marks

Teachers/lecturers may wish to advise candidates to use the above as a guide for the layout of their assignment.

SQA provides an electronic template for completion of the assignment and this is available to download from SQA's secure website. It is expected that the majority of candidates will submit a word-processed assignment; however, the use of the electronic template is not mandatory.

## **Assignment length and appendices**

The assignment should be no longer than four sides of A4 paper. Candidates who choose to word process their assignment using the electronic template should use appropriate font size and line spacing, ie a minimum font size of 11 point and a minimum line spacing of 1.5 lines.

The electronic template provides two sides of A4 for appendices. Candidates who use the electronic template are not expected to fill all of this space. Appendices could, for example, comprise a list of URLs.

## Contacting organisations

It is not necessary for candidates to contact organisations in order to complete the assignment successfully. It is recognised that much or all of the research required to produce the assignment may be available from other sources, eg websites. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate or desirable for a candidate to make direct contact with the organisation being researched, eg where there is a pre-existing relationship.

## Suggested approaches

While classroom management is an issue for individual teachers/lecturers, SQA can provide suggestions for the approach and management of the assignment. The following scenarios are neither exhaustive in nature nor prescribed.

### *Scenario 1*

The teacher/lecturer may decide to provide a list of suitable organisations to candidates in the class to choose from. The organisations on the list will have been pre-vetted by the teacher/lecturer to ensure that they are appropriate for the purpose and that there is access to sufficient information on which to base the assignment. In this instance, the suggested approach could result in each candidate choosing a discrete organisation on which to base their assignment.

The main advantage of this approach is that the teacher/lecturer maintains a high degree of control over the choice of an appropriate organisation for each candidate.

### *Scenario 2*

The teacher/lecturer allows a free choice of organisation to each individual candidate. This may result in more management and guidance of the process by the teacher/lecturer, depending on the organisations selected.

### *Scenario 3*

The teacher/lecturer pre-selects a single organisation which will be used by all candidates for the assignment. In this case there will probably be a pre-existing relationship between the centre/teacher/lecturer and the organisation. If possible, the teacher/lecturer could identify topics/areas of the organisation on which to focus in advance, enabling a choice to be made by the candidates. The use of a single organisation may enable candidates to participate in a field visit to enable them to carry out primary research.

In this scenario, although all candidates are using the same organisation, they would have a choice of topic to research. Where several candidates in the same class then choose the same topic area within the organisation, it would be appropriate for them to undertake group research. However, at the write-up stage each candidate must produce their own individual assignment.

This approach is flexible for the candidates but also allows the teacher/lecturer to manage the process effectively, particularly where there is a large class size.