



Common questions about National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Accounting

Unit assessment

The following guidance on unit assessment applies to Advanced Higher courses. There is no unit assessment in the National 5 or Higher courses, only for freestanding units at SCQF level 5 and 6. For further guidance on changes to National Courses, please visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges.

Do freestanding units count towards the overall award at National 5 or Higher?

No. To achieve the National 5 or Higher award, candidates must complete both the assignment and the question paper in the same session. Freestanding units at SCQF level 5 and 6 do not contribute to the achievement of a National 5 or Higher course.

Can units be assessed under open-book conditions?

Yes. You can assess units under open-book or closed-book conditions. This is a decision for teachers and lecturers.

Where a candidate has failed just one part of a unit assessment, do they need to undertake a complete re-assessment?

No. If the candidate's evidence does not satisfy the standard required, or if it is incomplete, for an individual outcome, you only need to re-assess that specific outcome or assessment standard.

Where assessment standard thresholds apply, they are detailed in the unit specification. If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of assessment standards they will be judged to have passed the unit overall and no further re-assessment is required.

Is oral re-assessment acceptable?

Yes. Where appropriate, oral questioning is acceptable for re-assessment, but you must document this for verification purposes.

Course assessment – National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

Will the National 5 and Higher Accounting assignments be different every year?

Yes. We will provide topics for the National 5 and Higher assignments each year. They will be available from the [Accounting web pages](#) for each level.

When does SQA release the National 5 and Higher assignments to centres?

We release both assignments in February when they will be available on SQA's secure website. You can arrange access to the assignments through your SQA co-ordinator.

Can the Accounting assignments be completed open book?

No. The assignments must be conducted in centres under a high degree of supervision and control as detailed in the course specification for National 5 and Higher.

Must candidates use absolute cells references for the formulae in the National 5 accounting assignment?

No. Candidates will not be penalised if there are no absolute cell references. It is good practice and can save time, but the main thing is that candidates use a formula whenever they perform a calculation.

Must candidates use absolute cells references for the formulae in the Higher accounting assignment?

Yes. Candidates must use absolute cell references to be awarded marks at this level.

Are formulae provided to candidates during the external assessment?

Yes. We provide a formula sheet for the National 5 and Higher external assessments only.

Will topics included in the assignment at National 5 or Higher appear in the final exam?

Perhaps. SQA would not assess the same topic in the same way in both the assignment and question paper in any one session. If there is a practical question in the assignment there will not be a practical question on the same topic in the question paper. However, there may be a theory question.

What type of paper will candidates be provided with in the external exam?

We provide candidates with bespoke booklets which may contain templates for some questions at all levels.

We provide National 5 candidates with lined paper booklets. We provide Higher and Advanced Higher candidates with accounting paper booklets for answering questions without templates.

Course content

Where can I find information about course content?

Information about course content for National 5 and Higher can be found in the course specifications (including an appendix containing course support notes), available on the [Accounting web pages](#).

Information about course content for Advanced Higher can be found in the Course Assessment Specification and the Course and Unit Support Notes, available on the [Advanced Higher Accounting web page](#).

Do candidates need to be taught the topic of petty cash for National 5?

No. The topic of petty cash is not part of the course and not listed in the course specification. Petty cash may be referred to as part of ledgers.

Will candidates need to learn the different types of error — for example omission, principle — at National 5?

Yes. Knowledge of the different types of error will be assessed and so candidates need to know omission, principle and so on for theory marks.

Will candidates need to create a suspense account?

No. Suspense accounts will not be assessed.

Do Higher candidates need to know the National 5 formulae?

No. Higher candidates will not be assessed on National 5 formulae.

For investment appraisal Rate of Return, do candidates need to be familiar with both formulae relating to initial investment and average investment?

No. Candidates will be directed towards the use of the initial investment formula.

When marking a cash budget, if the candidate has a figure wrong in all three columns, for example Cash or Credit sales, how many errors would this be?

This would be three errors. It would be one error **each time**, for example 20% instead of 30%, or if information is inserted in the wrong month.

If a candidate does not write the required labels on a Financial Statement, how many errors would this be?

Assessors should refer to the marking guidelines. Where a mark is allocated to more than one label, all labels must be evident to gain the mark.

General questions

What other resources are available?

As part of our Understanding Standards programme, we provide a range of online resources to help you develop your understanding of the standards required in the course assessments for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Understanding Standards materials are available from www.understandingstandards.org.uk.

National Qualification questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.