



Common questions about National 3 National 4 Business and National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Business Management

Unit assessment

The Unit assessment support packs do not have marks allocated to the tasks. Can centres add marks for their own use?

Yes, marks may be added and applied by centres for assessment purposes. However, centres must ensure that every Assessment Standard has been met before a candidate is deemed to have passed a Unit. Where centres have allocated marks, these will not be considered by SQA during the verification process.

Can candidates be assessed over a number of assessment occasions (rather than completing all Outcomes at once)?

Yes, candidates may work through the tasks and be assessed over a number of assessment occasions, for all Unit assessment support packs.

Can Business/Business Management Units be assessed under open book conditions?

Units can be assessed under open book **or** closed book conditions — centres should use their professional judgement to decide which conditions are most appropriate.

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

No, if an Outcome or Assessment Standard is incomplete, the candidate only needs to be re-assessed on the specific Outcome or Assessment Standard in which they have been unsuccessful in demonstrating their attainment.

Is oral assessment acceptable when re-assessing?

Yes, oral re-assessment is acceptable, where appropriate, but this must be documented for verification purposes.

Where can we find the motivational theories that could be assessed at Higher?

These are in the Higher Course Assessment Specification, which can be found on the subject page on SQA's website.

Course assessment

If a candidate achieves the National 4 Units but does not complete the Added Value Unit, can they achieve the National 3 Course?

Yes, as there is a hierarchy in place with National 3. A candidate in this situation would be eligible for the National 3 Course award; however, they must be entered for the National 3 Course.

If a candidate changes level from National 5 to National 4, can the National 5 assignment be submitted, unchanged, as evidence for the Added Value Unit?

No, however, the National 5 assignment may be used to meet some of the evidence for the Added Value Unit (AVU). Although they cannot be directly substituted, relevant aspects of the assignment could be incorporated into a submission for the AVU.

Can an assignment originally submitted for Higher be submitted unchanged for National 5, if the candidate changes level?

No, the assignment for Higher is a different piece of work, with a different set of marking criteria. It is also completed within a different timescale.

Can an assignment that was submitted and marked by SQA in one session be submitted again if the candidate is resitting the Course?

Yes, if a candidate resits the Course, they would need to submit an assignment and this could be the one previously submitted.

Do candidates select the topic or business to be researched in the National 5 and Higher assignments?

Yes, candidates select the topic themselves, with support from their teacher/lecturer.

Can candidates select the same topic/business as others in their class?

Yes, there are no restrictions on using the same organisation but candidates **must** complete the write-up on their own.

Does SQA recommend specific businesses for use in the assignments?

No, however there are some examples given in the General Assessment Information. These are for guidance only.

For the assignment, what criteria should candidates follow when choosing an organisation?

The Business Management assignment can be based on any size and type of company. Candidates should make sure that they choose a business and a topic/area that they are able to research. The research can be primary/secondary or both but, with some companies, finding enough relevant information can be a challenge.

The Coursework assessment tasks for National 5 and Higher Business Management on SQA's secure site have good information about how to approach the assignment and how it will be marked.

Are candidates penalised if they have selected a medium/large business and not a small business?

No, at all levels candidates may select a firm of interest to them, irrespective of size; the most important factor is that the evidence meets the Assessment Standards.

The Added Value Unit (AVU) mentions a small business because candidates prepare and communicate a simple business proposal. Medium/large organisations often provide overwhelming amounts of information which some candidates may struggle to navigate.

If candidates choose a small business at Advanced Higher they may find there is insufficient information available for them to analyse in depth, which could mean that they cannot access some marks.

Should the report writing stage of the National 5 and Higher Business Management assignments be completed under controlled conditions?

Yes, this stage must be carried out under a high degree of supervision. Candidates must not communicate with one another and must be in sight of the teacher/lecturer while they are producing their report. The teacher/lecturer should not give any assistance.

In the introduction, how much detail is required for the purpose and background?

It would be sufficient if the purpose is clearly stated and background information given to enhance the reader's understanding. The candidate should give enough detail to allow the marker to allocate marks throughout the assignment.

Can the research section be presented in table format?

Yes, candidates may present their research methods in any format, including tables. If the content of their answer is sufficient, the candidate will be credited accordingly.

In the research section, can sources be internal or external, as well as primary or secondary?

Yes, sources can be internal or external and primary or secondary. There is no requirement for different types of sources to be used, ie they could all be secondary.

In the research section, can the same value be given for different sources?

Yes, for example, if a candidate states that two of their chosen sources are biased, this is acceptable. However, the candidate's reasons for this choice should be different for each source.

In the analysis and interpretation section, should candidates refer to all of the research methods they have used?

No, candidates should only refer to findings from the research sources they have included elsewhere in their assignment; either in the research section or the appendices.

Are candidates able to provide their own opinions?

Yes, if a candidate states their opinion and goes on to develop it, this can form part of a candidate's analysis.

Do candidates have to include both conclusions and recommendations?

Candidates can be credited for discussing a mix of conclusions and/or recommendations. All marks could be awarded by including only conclusions or only recommendations; however candidates may have difficulty providing enough detail for this approach.

What is the difference between analysis and conclusion?

Analysis should be based on findings. Conclusions need to be linked to analysis.

What is the maximum length of the assignment?

At National 5, candidates should submit a maximum of four sides of A4 paper for the report, with an additional two sides of A4 paper for appendices, if required.

At Higher, candidates should submit a maximum of six sides of A4 paper for the report, with an additional four sides of A4 paper for appendices, if required.

How long do candidates have to complete the assignment?

The National 5 assignment should be completed in two stages; 'planning and research' and 'producing the report'. The recommended time for 'planning and research' is up to 4 hours and the 'producing the report' stage must not exceed 1 hour.

The Higher assignment should be completed in two stages; 'planning and gathering evidence' and 'producing the report'. The recommended time for 'planning and gathering evidence' is up to 6.5 hours and the 'producing the report' stage must not exceed 1.5 hours

Will candidates be penalised for not using link words such as 'compare' or 'both'?

No, candidates will not be penalised but the use of such terms may help them to clarify their work.

Is it essential that candidates mention the exhibit in their answers?

No, but it is helpful if they do so.

Will candidates be required to calculate ratios?

No, they need to understand what the ratios mean, but will not be required to calculate them.

General questions

Are there any new command words?

No, there are no new command words, although the application of some command words has changed slightly. See the general marking principles and Marking Instructions provided with the Specimen Question Papers and Exemplar Papers.

Can you advise on the use of appendices in the Advanced Higher project?

Appendices should be used to complement the report and have concise, relevant information. Their use, however, should be limited to ensure projects are not excessive, for example the following is acceptable:

- ◆ One source per appendix.
- ◆ An appendix with a list of web pages used for research.
- ◆ If a survey is produced, all the findings from the survey should be one appendix.

General Curriculum for Excellence questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.