



Common questions about National 5 and Higher Graphic Communication

Question paper

Does SQA publish examples of good and poor candidate responses for the question paper?

Yes, please see the course reports — they include a summary of areas candidates performed well in and areas candidates found demanding. They also contain advice on preparing future candidates and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course reports are available from the subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects.

National 5 and Higher exemplification of candidate responses is available on the [Understanding Standards website](#). National 5 exemplification of the 2017–18 diet will be published shortly. Since we revised the Higher question paper for session 2018–19, some of the marks in the Higher examples may no longer be in line with the revised requirements. However, they remain a useful guide. We will produce further exemplification of Higher candidate responses following the 2018–19 diet.

Assignment

Estimates

Do I need to estimate a grade for my candidates? How can I determine this without marking their assignments?

Yes. An estimate is a condition of offering the qualification. It is necessary for candidates who use of our exceptional circumstances service. You should base the estimate for each candidate on evidence generated throughout the session. This could include prelims, class tests or practice coursework activity.

Assessment arrangements

My candidate has assessments arrangements in place for the question paper, how do I apply these to the assignment?

Please contact the Assessment Arrangements team at aarequestes@sqa.org.uk or call 0303 3330330 to discuss.

Annual issue of the assignment

The National 5 and Higher assignment changes each year, what happens if candidates do the wrong one?

This should not happen as the assignment is only available on our secure website and it clearly shows which session it is valid for. However, if candidates do not use the current assignment, they cannot gain any marks.

When will the National 5 and Higher assignments be published on SQA Secure?

They will be published by 31 January.

Assignment assessment conditions

Can I discuss the content of the assignment on forums or secure groups?

No. The assignment is a secure course assessment (the mark contributes to the overall grade for the candidate). It is available on our secure website and must not be shared or discussed on forums, including social media.

When can I explain the requirements of the assignment to candidates?

We recommend doing this during the last period of class time before candidates begin the assignment. You can take candidates through the instructions and the assignment task. Ensure that they understand the assignment conditions and requirements. However, after this, candidates must undertake the assignment on their own.

Can the class discuss the National 5 and Higher assignment as a group before they begin?

No. No group activity is permitted in the assignment and it must be conducted under a high degree of supervision to ensure that each candidate produces a response to the assignment on their own.

Can I teach some content, have candidates complete part of the assignment, teach more content, and then have candidates finish the assignment?

No. The assignment must be undertaken after all the course content has been delivered and it cannot be interrupted by periods of learning and teaching.

Can I review or provisionally mark a candidate's National 5 or Higher assignment work?

No. Once complete, or when the eight-hour time limit has passed, the assignment must be prepared for submission to SQA for external assessment.

The time allocation for the National 5 and Higher assignment is eight hours. Do candidates have to spend a full eight-hour day completing their assignments?

No, there is no requirement for candidates to complete the assignment in one eight-hour session. However, they do need to undertake the assignment in consecutive periods of subject time. For example, Graphic Communication is on period one on Monday, period three on Wednesday and period five on Friday. The candidate would begin on Monday and then stop to attend their other classes. The candidate would then resume on Wednesday, stopping again, before starting again on Friday, and so on. The teacher or lecturer must ensure that candidates' work (and the assignment) remains secure between class periods.

The assignment has a time limit of eight hours, what happens if a candidate doesn't finish in this time?

Much like a question paper, the assignment now has a fixed duration. If a candidate does not finish in the available time, you must submit the work that they have completed to SQA for marking.

How will SQA enforce the eight-hour time limit?

Centres must ensure that candidates understand what they need to do to comply with the instructions for controlled assessments. Not adhering to the eight-hour time limit is candidate and/or centre malpractice.

It is important that SQA and our centres work together to protect the credibility of the qualifications system. Concerns that assessment standards may not be applied consistently can put the value of our qualifications at risk, and negate the hard work of our candidates.

What should I do if a candidate is caught cheating while undertaking the assignment?

Any instances of candidate malpractice must be investigated and resolved in line with your centre's procedures.

Assignment task

Is there a page limit for the assignment and is there a penalty for exceeding it?

The page limit for National 5 is eight pages and the page limit for Higher is 10 pages. There is no penalty for exceeding the specified number of pages. If candidates produce more (or fewer) pages, these will all be marked.

Do candidates have to create their own drawing frames to BS888?

No, teachers and lecturers may give their candidates CAD drawing frames to work on. The marks assigned to British Standards in the assignment are for the candidates being able to recognise and use the standards correctly and not for being able to set up a drawing template, although this would be useful skill for candidates to have.

Can candidates use a straight edge for sketching and can they use isometric grids and squared paper?

In tasks requiring candidates to sketch, and where the candidates choose to do this manually, they can use a straight edge.

National 5 and Higher candidates should be able to sketch manually without the aid of either straight edges or grid paper. However, if you feel that a candidate (at any level) requires either a straight edge or grid paper, they can use them.

Can candidates use radius aids?

Any radius aid, such as circle or ellipse templates, French curves, and flexi curves, is regarded as drawing equipment. Candidates must not use radius aids for sketching work.

Can candidates sketch manually then scan in and digitally enhance or manipulate?

Yes, but if they do this, they must do it within the eight-hour time limit.

External assessment of the assignments

Will SQA return assignments to centres once they are marked?

No, SQA will not return assignments to centres as a matter of course. However, you can request the return of externally assessed coursework items (such as the assignment) from our [website](#).

Can I receive general feedback on the final assessment for my centre?

We offer a performance report service to centres that have identified a particular performance issue in an external assessment. You can make a request for a performance report between 1 June and 30 November each year.

An experienced examiner will carry out an analysis of your candidate group performance in an external assessment. Their report will provide information on the general performance of your candidate group (but not at the level of individual candidate performance or marks), detail areas in which candidates performed well, detail areas that candidates found demanding, and make recommendations.

For more information, visit the [performance reports](#) section of our website.

Exemplification

Do SQA plan to publish exemplars?

Exemplars for National 5 are available on the Understanding Standards website. We will publish exemplars for the 2019 Higher assignment and question paper after the 2018–19 exam diet.

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