



Common questions about National 3, National 4, National 5 and Higher Administration and IT

Unit assessment

The following guidance on unit assessment applies to National 3, National 4 and Higher courses. There is no unit assessment in the National 5 course, only for freestanding units at SCQF level 5. For further guidance on changes to National courses, please visit

www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges

Do the freestanding SCQF level 5 units count towards the overall award at National 5?

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

How can I re-assess candidates?

You can re-assess candidates using materials from one of the other unit assessment packs or by producing your own assessments to meet the assessment criteria. Where appropriate, oral questioning is acceptable for re-assessment, but you must document this for verification purposes.

If evidence does not meet the standards required, or if it is incomplete for an individual outcome or assessment standard, you only need to re-assess that specific outcome or assessment standard.

It would not be acceptable to re-assess candidates using the original assessment task.

Can I produce my own assessment materials?

Yes. If you are making major changes to the questions/activities within the unit support packs or writing your own, it is advisable to get your materials 'prior verified' by SQA before you use them. We will check your assessment to make sure it is fit for purpose and meets national standards. Please note that we will not edit your assessment in any way, but will contact you to advise if it is fit for purpose. Once prior verified, we can make your materials available on the secure site for other teachers to refer to, if you give us your consent.

Find out more about [SQA's prior verification service](#).

Do all units in the National 3, National 4 and Higher courses assess keyboarding skills?

No. Keyboarding skills are not assessed in the National 4 'Administrative practices' unit or the Higher 'Administrative theory and practice' unit.

However, keyboarding skills are part of the error tolerance for all other units/outcomes, as follows:

- ◆ National 3 — 1 error per 10 words
- ◆ National 4 — 1 error per 15 words
- ◆ Higher — 1 error per 25 words

For SCQF level 5 freestanding units — 1 error per 20 words

Course assessment — National 5 and Higher

Does the maximum time for the assignments include printing time?

No, additional time for printing is allowed for both the National 5 and Higher course assignments.

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

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

When are the assignment uplifted?

National 5 assignments are uplifted in March and Higher assignments in April, each year. To find out the specific uplift dates, please speak to your SQA co-ordinator.

Do centres have to send in the e-files with the assignments?

No.

Where can I find past papers and e-files from previous years?

Past papers and e-files are available from the [Administration and IT web pages](#) for each level, under 'Assessment support'.

Is there a question paper at National 5 and what does it assess?

Yes. Candidates complete a question paper that assesses IT functions in spreadsheet and database applications, and administration theory. During the exam diet, candidates complete all tasks in the question paper using ICT applications. The exam lasts 2 hours (excluding printing time) and is worth 50 marks.

Can a teacher, lecturer and/or technician be in the room during the National 5 exam?

No. Once the question paper packet is open, only the invigilator can be in the room. A teacher, lecturer and/or technician should be available to assist with any technical issues that may occur. If necessary, they may enter the exam room to deal with the issue at the request of the invigilator, but then they must leave.

What e-files will candidates be able to access during the National 5 exam?

Candidates will have access to the e-files for the question paper issued by SQA.

Can candidates have access to the internet during the National 5 exam?

No.

When are the e-files available for the National 5 exam?

SQA release the e-files approximately 3 days before the exam. This allows teachers, lecturers and/or technicians to check that the files are compatible with the system used by candidates for the exam.

How long do candidates have to complete the National 5 assignment?

Candidates have 3 hours to complete the assignment (excluding printing time). They must complete it in a maximum of two sittings, under a high degree of supervision and control.

Where additional printing time is required, candidates should complete this immediately after each sitting. The assignment will assess word-processing/desktop publishing, communication and theory, and is worth 70 marks. This is a closed-book assignment.

How long do candidates have to complete the Higher assignment?

Candidates have 2 hours to complete the assignment (excluding printing time). They must complete it in one continuous sitting, under a high degree of supervision and control.

Where additional printing time is required, candidates must complete this immediately after. Everyone in your centre must complete the assignment on the same day. If not, a letter of explanation must be included with the completed assignments when you return them. This is a closed-book assignment.

Course content

Where can I find information about course content for National 5?

Information about course content is in the course specification (including appendix: course support notes), available on the [Administration and IT subject level page](#).

Are ‘meetings’ included in the Higher course?

Yes. Questions from past papers include content about ‘meetings’ that could be assessed. Refer to the course and unit support notes for specific details.

General

In a spreadsheet question, would it be acceptable to name the cell where an absolute cell reference is required?

Yes, naming a cell is one way of using an absolute cell reference.

What should candidates include for e-diary printouts?

Candidates should print daily or weekly diary printouts, as specified in the task. However, if the printout is truncated, they should print the event in such a way that enables keyboarding skills to be assessed.

What other resources are available?

[An audio presentation and materials](#) from the Understanding Standards event held in September 2017 are available for National 5 Administration and IT.

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