



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 and National 4 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.

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.

You must not re-assess candidates using the original assessment task.

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.

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 have 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. 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, with your consent, make your materials available on the secure site for other teachers to refer to.

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

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

No. Keyboarding skills are not assessed in the National 4 'Administrative Practices' 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

Do all SCQF level 5 and 6 units assess keyboarding skills?

No. Keyboarding skills are not assessed in the SCQF level 5 'Administrative Practices' unit or the SCQF level 6 'Administrative Theory and Practice' unit.

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

- ◆ SCQF level 5 freestanding units — 1 error per 20 words
- ◆ SCQF level 6 freestanding units — 1 error per 25 words

Course assessment — National 5 and Higher

Does the maximum time for the assignments and National 5 question paper include printing time?

No. Additional time for printing is allowed for both the National 5 and Higher assignments and the National 5 question paper.

However, it is anticipated that candidates will be printing individual tasks as they work through the assessment.

Can I find past papers, e-files and marking instructions from previous years?

Yes. They are available from the [Administration and IT web pages](#) for each level.

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

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

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

No.

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

Candidates have three 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 two 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, you must include a letter of explanation with the completed assignments when you return them. This is a closed-book assignment.

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 IT applications. The exam lasts two 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 invigilators 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 an 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 will release the e-files to SQA Coordinators approximately three days before the exam to allow teachers, lecturers and/or technicians to check that the files are compatible with the system candidates use for the exam.

Centres should only transfer the e-files one hour before the scheduled start time of the exam.

General

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

Information about course content is in the course specifications (including appendix: course support notes), available on the [Administration and IT web pages](#).

Are 'meetings' included in the Higher course?

Yes. Questions from past papers include content about 'meetings' that could be assessed. Refer to the course specification for specific details.

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 also print the event in such a way that enables keyboarding skills to be assessed.

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 and 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.