



National  
Qualifications

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# Economics

## Project

### General assessment information

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This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the project Component of Advanced Higher Economics Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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# Introduction

This is the general assessment information for Advanced Higher Economics project.

This project is worth 40 marks out of a total of 120 marks. The marks contribute to one third of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the project Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

## Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

# What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes to one third of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the project in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are the ability to:

- ◆ select an appropriate current economic issue to research
- ◆ use suitable economic data/information, related to the context of the issue, from a range of sources
- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding of economic concepts and theories to explain, analyse and evaluate the issue
- ◆ reach valid conclusions based on evidence
- ◆ structure a detailed, well-informed report on the issue
- ◆ organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions

# Assessment

## Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the Added Value of this Course by means of a project.

The project will address challenge and application by assessing skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of carrying out research into a current economic issue. It will assess candidates' ability to apply higher order cognitive skills, such as analysis and evaluation, within an economic context.

## Assessment overview

This assessment has a research stage and a report production stage. It is sufficiently open and flexible to allow personalisation and choice. The project is designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to work independently, apply economic knowledge and understanding and use higher order cognitive skills.

Candidates should identify an economic issue from the last two years which allows them to gather up-to-date research from a range of sources. The economic issue to be researched should be posed as a question.

Candidates should research the issue, and record and organise their findings in a coherent manner, as a report of between 3,500-4,000 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography and appendices.

Examples of economic issues could include:

- ◆ How should the pension crisis, in both the private and public sectors, be tackled?
- ◆ Should the MPC increase interest rates sooner rather than later?
- ◆ How should the ECB act to reduce the deflationary risks in the Eurozone?
- ◆ Do the 'BRICS' need their own development bank?

It may be helpful for candidates to be given information early on in the Course about what they have to do to complete the project; this will allow them time to start thinking about an economic issue they may wish to consider as the Course progresses.

Choosing a suitable economic issue may be daunting for some candidates. Centres should provide reasonable guidance on the types of issue which will enable candidates to meet all of the requirements of this project. They may also give guidance to candidates on the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen issue.

## Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

The project must be carried out:

- ◆ within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control
- ◆ independently by the candidate
- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be after they have started work on the Units in the Course. There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access whilst researching the evidence and preparing the report.

Candidates must undertake this assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Coursework in Advanced Higher may involve candidates undertaking a larger amount of autonomous work without close supervision than they have previously undertaken. Assessors may provide guidance and support as part of the normal teaching and learning process. However, assessors should not adopt a directive role or provide specific advice on how to re-phrase, improve responses or provide model answers.

Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the wording of a brief or specification or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Although this project is completed under some supervision and control, it is possible for candidates to complete it outwith the learning and teaching setting. Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate the candidate's work and ensure that plagiarism has not taken place. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be a report of 3,500-4,000 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography and appendices. The word count should be submitted with the report. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Candidates must make reference to the research evidence within the report, make use of a bibliography and append research, if appropriate. This evidence will support the analysis/evaluation and conclusion sections of the report and give candidates the opportunity to achieve all the marks available for these sections.

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ Completed report.
- ◆ If applicable, a maximum of three appendices can be included.

# General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing learners for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

## General Marking Principles for the project

*This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this project. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.*

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) In producing their report, candidates will be awarded marks for specific skills, knowledge and understanding as follows:

### **Where candidates are required to 'Analyse' . . .**

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to identify/describe/explain relevant parts and the relationship between the parts and/or the whole. Candidates should be able to draw out and relate any implications and/or analyse data.

### **Where candidates are required to 'Evaluate' . . .**

Candidates must demonstrate the ability to make a reasoned judgement in terms of the effectiveness or usefulness of something based on criteria. Candidates should be able to determine the value of something within context.

### **Where candidates are required to 'Conclude' . . .**

Candidates must reach justified conclusions based on a text, scenario or set of information or data.

## Detailed Marking Instructions

Where there is a range of marks available, the assessor should first select the mark range descriptor which most closely describes the evidence demonstrated by the candidate.

Once the mark range has been selected, if 2 marks are available in the range descriptor:

- ◆ the higher mark should be awarded where the evidence **fully or closely** meets the description of the mark range
- ◆ the lower mark should be awarded where the evidence **just** meets the description of the mark range

If 3 marks are available in the range descriptor:

- ◆ the highest mark from the range should be awarded where the evidence **fully** matches the description of the mark range
- ◆ the lowest mark from the range should be awarded where the evidence **just** meets the description of the mark range
- ◆ the middle mark the mark range should be awarded where the evidence **falls between** the above

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Up to 2 marks for clear statement(s) of aim(s).</p> <p>Up to 3 marks for detailed background information justifying the choice of the issue.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the aim of the report is unclear</li> <li>◆ there is no evidence of justification of the choice of issue</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>	If candidates have incorporated 'Terms of Reference' as a heading, this may define the aim(s) and reasons for the choice of title.
<b>Analysis and evaluation</b>	Marks will be given in line with the type of response provided, which will be based on the requirements of each individual report.	<b>12</b>	Analysis and evaluation could use details from research evidence, diagrams, graphs and charts as appropriate which are fully explained.

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
	<p>10-12 marks for in-depth analytical / evaluative comments, that are made based on the research and clearly linked to the issue/aim(s) of the report.</p> <p>7-9 marks for detailed analytical / evaluative comments, that are made based on the research with an attempt to link it to the issue/aim(s) of the report.</p> <p>4-6 marks for analytical / evaluative comments, that are made based on the research.</p> <p>1-3 marks for limited analytical / evaluative comments, that are made based on the research.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ there is no evidence of analytical or evaluative comments</li> <li>◆ the comments are purely descriptive</li> <li>◆ the comments are not relevant to the issue/aim(s) of the report</li> </ul>		<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ application of economic theory to predict and explain the behaviour of individuals, firms or markets or the outcome of decisions on the whole economy</li> <li>◆ evaluation of the significance of the data/information gathered and a critical appreciation of any limitations of it</li> <li>◆ comparing the impact on differing stakeholders</li> <li>◆ comparing effects of the short run and the long run</li> <li>◆ ranking the relative importance of comments</li> </ul> <p>Candidates could make use of relevant or alternative economic theories, in a manner which clarifies/explains the data or differing interpretations of policy decisions.</p> <p>The candidate's points of analysis and/or evaluation must be clear and based on economic reasoning. A statement on its own is insufficient.</p>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>Marks will be given for reaching detailed and justified conclusions based on the research evidence and analysis/evaluation that are clearly linked to the issue/aim(s) of the report and which are fully explained.</p> <p>5-6 marks for detailed conclusions that demonstrate valid judgements have been reached, are related to</p>	<b>6</b>	<p>Conclusions should be consistent with the data/information, analysis and economic theory presented in the report.</p> <p>Conclusions should demonstrate that a valid judgement has been made by weighing up the evidence gathered.</p>

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
	<p>the issue/aim(s), and are based on the analysis and evaluation of evidence. The reasoning behind the conclusions is fully explained.</p> <p>3-4 marks for conclusions that demonstrate valid judgements have been reached, are related to the issue/aim(s), and are based on the analysis and evaluation of evidence. The reasoning behind the conclusions is explained.</p> <p>1-2 marks for conclusions that demonstrate judgements have been reached, based on analysis and evaluation of evidence, but are unrelated to the issue/aim(s) of the research.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ no conclusions are made</li> <li>◆ the conclusions are not related to the issue/aim(s) of the report</li> </ul>		<p>Where relevant, candidates might explain the limitations of their conclusions and suggest possible areas for further improvement if they had greater time.</p>
<b>Research</b>	<p>Marks will be given for research sources that are up-to-date, relevant, and support the economic arguments put forward.</p> <p>5-6 marks for research sources that are up-to-date, relevant, and strongly support the economic arguments put forward.</p> <p>3-4 marks for research sources that are up-to-date, relevant, and are sufficient to support the economic arguments put forward.</p>	<b>6</b>	<p>Evidence of research will be integrated throughout the report: 'research' should not be a discrete section in the report.</p> <p>All evidence should be gathered from credible sources.</p> <p>Some examples of research sources that could be used are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ interviews/surveys/questionnaires</li> <li>◆ websites</li> <li>◆ newspapers/magazines/journals/books</li> </ul>

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
	<p>1-2 marks for research that is evident, however has limited relevance to the economic arguments put forward or the title of the project.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ there are no research sources referenced</li> <li>◆ the sources are irrelevant to the economic arguments</li> <li>◆ the sources are too historic or factually incorrect</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ audio/visual media</li> <li>◆ field trips or visiting speakers</li> </ul> <p>Where relevant, candidates might explain the limitations of their research.</p>
<b>Structure and coherence</b>	<p>Marks will be given for presenting a coherent line of argument and presenting a logical structure throughout the report, that makes consistent and accurate use of economic terminology and in which diagrams/charts/graphs have been used effectively.</p> <p>Up to 5 marks for clearly demonstrating a coherent line of argument and logical structure throughout.</p> <p>Up to 3 marks for consistent and accurate use of economic terminology throughout.</p> <p>Up to 3 marks for use of diagrams/charts/graphs that have been used effectively.</p> <p>No marks should be given for each of the elements listed above if there is no evidence.</p>	<b>8</b>	<p>Candidates should ensure that any unusual economic terms are fully explained, to ensure their meaning is clear to everybody.</p>

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
<b>Presentation and referencing</b>	<p>Marks will be given for clear presentation and use of full referencing throughout the report.</p> <p>Up to 2 marks for a well presented report that includes an appropriate title, contents page, page numbers, and suitable headings.</p> <p>Up to 2 marks for full referencing, where appropriate, and a bibliography.</p> <p>No marks should be given for each of the elements listed above if there is no evidence.</p>	4	<p>Candidates should use headings that are useful to enable the reader to follow their line of thought.</p> <p>Candidates can use any relevant model of referencing and should use this model consistently within their report.</p>

# Administrative information

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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