



National
Qualifications

English

Portfolio-writing

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the portfolio-writing Component of Advanced Higher English Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) 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 English portfolio-writing.

This portfolio is worth 30 marks out of the total of 100 marks. This is 30% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

This is one of four Components of Course assessment. The other Components are a Literary Study question paper, a Textual Analysis question paper and a project-dissertation. There is separate documentation for the dissertation Component (task and general guidance).

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 portfolio of writing is worth 30 marks and will contain two writing pieces worth a maximum of 15 marks each.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the portfolio-writing 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

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 30% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the portfolio-writing in the *Course Assessment Specification*.

These are:

- ◆ writing in different genres for a range of purposes and audiences

The Added Value consists of challenge and application: the candidates will build on the skills they have acquired in the *Creation and Production* Unit and apply them with greater independence.

Assessment

Purpose

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

Assessment overview

The portfolio-writing consists of two written texts which will be the evidence for assessment. The Added Value consists of the ability to apply language skills in the creation of texts.

This portfolio will give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ skills in writing in different genres
- ◆ skills in writing for different purposes and audiences

The portfolio will comprise two written texts that address the main language purposes: creative and/or discursive writing.

Each piece should be at least 1,000 words, with the exception of poetry which may be shorter.

The assessor will support the candidate to choose the focus, theme and genre for his/her writing.

Assessment conditions

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

This portfolio-writing is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.
All marking will be quality assured 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 when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.

This assessment has three stages:

- ◆ A planning stage which should be completed over a period of time.
- ◆ A development/research stage which should be completed over a period of time.
- ◆ A writing stage which should be completed over a period of time.

The length of the writing pieces should be appropriate to purpose and genre (poetry may be significantly shorter).

This assessment is likely to involve redrafting pieces of work.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access, for example, spellcheckers and dictionaries.

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, 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, for example, advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated (eg detailed commentary on drafts) there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Assessor comments on the selection of a task/topic is appropriate before the candidate starts the task.

Assessors should not provide specific advice on how to re-phrase or improve responses, or provide model answers specific to the candidate's task. It is not acceptable for the assessor to provide key ideas, to provide a structure or plan, to suggest specific wording or to correct errors in spelling and/or punctuation. This would go beyond reasonable assistance.

Once work on the assessment has begun, the candidate should be working independently.

The **writing stage** will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence.
For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress

Group work approaches, as part of the preparation for assessment, can be helpful to simulate real-life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, group work is not appropriate once formal work on assessment has started.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ two pieces of writing from a choice of genres

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 candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

General Marking Principles for Advanced Higher English portfolio-writing

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidates' submissions for this portfolio. 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) Assessment should be holistic. There will be strengths and weaknesses in every piece of writing; assessment should focus as far as possible on the strengths, taking account of weaknesses only when they significantly detract from the overall performance. Marks should be awarded for the quality of the writing, and not deducted for errors or omissions. Writing does not have to be perfect to gain full marks.

Detailed Marking Instructions for Advanced Higher English portfolio-writing

Consistent technical accuracy is a requirement for the piece to meet the minimum requirements for the 9-7 band.

Consistent technical accuracy means that few errors will be present: paragraphs, sentences and punctuation will be accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood; and spelling errors will be infrequent.

As appropriate to genre, assessors should assess each piece of writing in terms of content, structure, stance/tone/mood and expression and arrive at a final mark. The following grids should be used in helping assessors arrive at a mark.

For each of the texts, the marker should select the band containing the descriptors that most closely describe the piece of writing.

Once that best fit has been decided, then:

- ◆ where the evidence fully meets the standard described, the highest available mark from that band range should be awarded
- ◆ where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from that band range should be awarded
- ◆ otherwise the mark from the middle of that band range should be awarded

Advanced Higher English portfolio-writing: Creative (drama, prose fiction, poetry, reflective)

Range of marks	15-13	12-10	9-7	6-4	3-1	0
<p><u>Content</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<p>♦ treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings/experiences which reveals sustained thoughtfulness, insight and/or imagination throughout</p>	<p>♦ treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings/experiences which reveals thoughtfulness, insight and/or imagination throughout</p>	<p>♦ treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings/experiences which reveals some thoughtfulness, insight and/or imagination</p>	<p>♦ treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings/experiences which reveals limited thoughtfulness, insight and/or imagination</p>	<p>♦ treatment of central thematic concerns/ideas/feelings/experiences which reveals little thoughtfulness or insight and/or imagination</p>	<p>♦ no evidence of the skills required in terms of content, structure, tone/mood or expression</p>
<p><u>Structure</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<p>♦ skilful shaping and sequencing which contributes significantly to impact</p>	<p>♦ consistent shaping and sequencing which contributes to impact</p>	<p>♦ shaping and sequencing with some impact</p>	<p>♦ shaping and/or sequencing with limited impact</p>	<p>♦ minimal shaping and/or sequencing with little impact</p>	
<p><u>Tone/mood</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<p>♦ a tone/mood which is skilfully created and rigorously sustained revealing a committed and clearly distinctive authorial voice</p>	<p>♦ a tone/mood which is created and generally sustained, revealing a distinctive authorial voice</p>	<p>♦ a tone/mood which is discernible at various points revealing an identifiable and appropriate authorial voice</p>	<p>♦ a tone/mood which is unsustained revealing a limited authorial voice</p>	<p>♦ little control of tone/mood revealing little discernible authorial voice</p>	
<p><u>Expression</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<p>♦ a skilful use of style, technique and language, and a high degree of originality</p>	<p>♦ a confident use of style, technique and language with a degree of originality</p>	<p>♦ a consistently accurate use of style, technique and language with some originality</p>	<p>♦ a use of style, technique and language with limited originality</p>	<p>♦ a use of style, technique and language with little originality, and some errors</p>	

Advanced Higher English portfolio-writing: Discursive (persuasive, argumentative, informative)

Range of marks	15-13	12-10	9-7	6-4	3-1	0
<p><u>Content</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ treatment of central thematic concerns which reveals sustained thoughtfulness, and insight throughout ◆ judicious selection and use of source material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ treatment of central thematic concerns which reveals thoughtfulness and insight throughout ◆ judicious selection and use of source material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ treatment of central thematic concerns which reveals some thoughtfulness and insight ◆ appropriate selection and use of source material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treatment of central thematic concerns which reveals limited thoughtfulness and insight ◆ limited selection and use of source material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ central thematic concerns that demonstrate little thoughtfulness or insight ◆ little selection and use of source material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no evidence of the skills required in terms of content, structure, stance/ tone/ mood or expression
<p><u>Structure</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ skilful shaping and sequencing which contributes significantly to impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ consistent shaping and sequencing which contributes to impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ shaping and sequencing with some impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ shaping and/or sequencing with limited impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ shaping and sequencing of the line of argument is employed with little discernible impact 	
<p><u>Stance/tone/mood</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a committed and clear stance ◆ a tone/mood which is skilfully created and rigorously sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a clearly identifiable stance ◆ a tone/mood which is consistently sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a discernible and relevant stance ◆ a tone/mood which is mostly sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a limited stance ◆ a discernible tone/mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a stance which is not always apparent ◆ little control of tone/mood 	
<p><u>Expression</u> The piece of writing demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a skilful use of style, technique and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a confident use of style, technique and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a consistently accurate use of style and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a use of structure, style and language to limited effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a use of structure, style and language to little effect 	

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Updated information on technical accuracy.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016
1.2	Minor typographical changes made to 'content' within the portfolio-writing detailed marking instructions.	Qualifications Manager	September 2018

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