



National
Qualifications

Geography

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of National 5 Geography 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 National 5 Geography assignment.

This assignment is worth 20 marks out of the total of 80 marks. This is 25% 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 assignment Component of this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

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 Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 25% of the total marks for the Course.

This assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate geographical topic or issue
- ◆ collecting information from a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ processing the information gathered, using geographical skills/techniques
- ◆ drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence about the topic or issue studied

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of an assignment.

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate challenge and application by requiring the candidate to draw on and apply higher order cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a geographical topic or issue. This may be related to areas they have studied in class if they wish, but they are free to research any topic or issue including aspects of their local environment.

Assessment overview

This assessment has a researching stage and a production of evidence stage.

Candidates should choose a topic or issue which allows them to explain and analyse a geographical issue. They should research the issue and organise and process their findings to address the topic or issue. Candidates should use the specified resources (Processed Information) collected during their research to support them in the production of evidence.

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of topic or issue which will enable candidates to meet all of the requirements of this Component. They may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic or issue.

Candidates should work on their research with minimum support from the Assessor.

Assessment conditions

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

This assignment has two stages:

- ◆ A researching stage which will include choosing a topic or issue, collecting evidence, organising, processing information, and preparation time for the production of evidence. This stage has been designed to be capable of completion over a notional period of eight hours.
- ◆ A production of evidence stage which must be completed within one hour.

Candidates should undertake the research stage at any appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have developed the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding. Candidates should undertake the production of evidence stage in time to meet the submission date set by SQA.

During the researching stage of this assessment, there are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

During the final production of evidence stage of the assessment, candidates should have access only to the specified resources (Processed Information) which will consist of material collected and processed during the research stage of the assignment on up to two single-sided sheets of A4.

Candidates must undertake the production of evidence independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the production of evidence 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 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.

In the researching stage of this assignment, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ directing candidates to the Instructions for Candidates
- ◆ clarifying instructions/requirements of the task
- ◆ advising candidates on the choice of a topic or issue
- ◆ advising candidates on possible sources of information
- ◆ arranging visits, including fieldwork, to enable gathering of evidence
- ◆ interim progress checks

In preparing for the production of evidence stage of this assignment, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ advising candidates of the nature and volume of specified resources which may be used to support the production of evidence

At any stage, reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the topic or issue for the candidate
- ◆ directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers
- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

The **research 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 that the research is the candidate's own work, for example:

- ◆ interim progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ questioning
- ◆ candidate's record of activity/progress
- ◆ assessor observation

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the research stage. However, there must be clear evidence for each candidate to show that the candidate has met the evidence requirements.

The **production of evidence stage** will be conducted under a high degree of supervision. This means that:

- ◆ candidates must be in direct sight of the assessor (or other responsible person) during the period of the assessment
- ◆ candidates must not communicate with each other
- ◆ candidates should only have access to the specified resources (Processed Information)

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ Specified resources (Processed Information) which are limited to two single-sided sheets of A4
- ◆ Candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision

General marking instructions

General marking principles for National 5 Geography assignment

This information is provided to help understanding of the general principles that will be applied when marking candidate responses in this assignment.

These principles are reflected in the detailed marking instructions that will be used to mark the assignment.

- a) Marks for each candidate response will always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions.
- b) Marking will always be positive, ie marks will be awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.
- c) Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which are not covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions.

In presenting their findings, candidates should show the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

A Describing two research methods used to collect information about the topic or issue

- ◆ Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks.
- ◆ A maximum of 4 marks may be awarded for any one method.
- ◆ For full marks, reference must be made to two research methods.

B Describing and explaining, with reference to Processed Information, findings about the topic or issue and reaching a well-supported conclusion about the topic or issue

- ◆ Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 14 marks.
- ◆ A maximum of 3 marks may be awarded for description with remaining marks being awarded for valid explanatory and concluding points.
- ◆ A candidate may achieve all 14 marks for explanatory and concluding remarks.
- ◆ Processed Information is evidence that candidates have gathered during the research phase of the assignment. If they do not make reference to this Processed Information in their descriptions and explanations, or if no Processed Information is included, they can achieve up to a maximum of 10 marks for Section B.
- ◆ Marks should be awarded according to the level of detail given, the quality of the description and explanation about the main findings and references to the Processed Information used during the assessment.
- ◆ Marks should not be awarded for direct copying from the Processed Information.
- ◆ Marks should be awarded for detailed interpretation, explanation and analysis of their main findings.

Specified resources to be taken into assessment

Candidates should take Processed Information collected during the research phase of the assignment into the production of evidence stage.

This evidence should consist of no more than two single-sided sheets of A4. Candidates should process, annotate, or highlight relevant sections of this information before the production of evidence stage. This Processed Information must be submitted to SQA along with the candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision.

The nature of the information taken into the assessment should show evidence of primary or secondary research carried out by the candidate. Candidates should process this information prior to the controlled assessment. This Processed Information may include, for example: evidence gathered during fieldwork; statistical, graphical or numerical data; survey results; information gathered from interviews and questionnaires; a list of internet search engine results; a newspaper article or extracts; notes taken from a visit or talk; notes taken from a written or audio visual source.

Candidates may be advised by assessors as to information which would be appropriate for the assignment at this SCQF level.

While no marks are awarded for the Processed Information, candidates must make reference to the results of their research contained in this Processed Information in the descriptions and explanations of their research findings. Otherwise they will not be able to achieve full marks.

Total marks available	20
A Describing two research methods used to collect information about the topic or issue	6
B Describing and explaining, with reference to Processed Information, findings about the topic or issue Reaching a well-supported conclusion about the topic or issue	14

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Removal of requirement for fieldwork and/ or maps; clarification of marking instructions	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
1.2	Marking instructions amended.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015
1.3	Marking instructions amended.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

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