



Modern Studies

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the [title] component of National 5 [subject] 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.

This edition: September 2015 (version 1.2)

The information in this publication may be reproduced to support SQA qualifications. This publication must not be reproduced for commercial or trade purposes. **This material is for use by assessors**

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015

Contents

Introduction	1
What this assessment covers	2
Assessment	3
General Marking Instructions	6

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the National 5 Modern Studies assignment.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 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 assignment has one Section.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component of 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 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 Modern Studies topic or issue
- ◆ collecting relevant evidence from at least two sources of different types
- ◆ evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate
- ◆ applying Modern Studies skills to the evidence collected
- ◆ 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

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for this Component of 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 Modern Studies topic or issue. This may be related to areas they have studied in class if they wish, but they are free to research any contemporary topic or issue.

Assessment overview

Candidates should choose a topic or issue which allows them to analyse a contemporary issue. They should research the issue and organise their findings to address the topic or issue. They should use the specified resources 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 and evaluating information and preparation time for the production of evidence. This stage has been designed to be capable of completion over a notional period of 8 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 research 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 only have access to the specified resources which will consist of material collected during the research stage of the assignment on up to two single sided pages 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 research 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 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

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required to be gathered for submission to SQA for this assessment:

- ◆ Specified resources which are limited to two single sided pages of A4
- ◆ Candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision on the Modern Studies Report template

General Marking Instructions

Part One: General Marking Principles for National 5 Modern Studies assignment

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to questions in this Component. These principles must be read in conjunction with the specific Marking Instructions contained in the assessment task.

- ◆ Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific Marking Instructions. If a specific candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed Marking Instructions or where they have researched an area in which you are unable to verify the knowledge which they have presented, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your Team Leader/Principal Assessor
- ◆ Marking should always be positive, ie marks should be awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.
- ◆ The purpose of the Research Evidence is to help candidates in presenting the findings of their research and applying their skills, knowledge and understanding. The Research Evidence should be no more than two single sides of A4. Marks will not be awarded where information is directly copied from the Research Evidence.
- ◆ The Research Evidence will not be marked. However, it may assist in the marking of the assignment by enabling clarification of points which the candidate has made in the presentation of their evidence, and may allow markers to gain an insight into what the candidate intended.

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

- A. Choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue.
- B. Evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate.
- C. Drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue.
- D. Reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue.

A Choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate Modern Studies topic or issue

While no marks are specifically awarded for this section, an appropriate Modern Studies topic is essential if candidates are to access the full range of marks available in sections B, C and D.

B Evaluating the effectiveness of two research methods used, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses where appropriate.

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks. For full marks they must make reference to two research methods. Up to 6 marks may be awarded for the evaluation of one research method. Candidates must make reference to the research evidence brought into the assessment; otherwise a maximum of 4 marks may be awarded.

C Drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks. Candidates must make reference to the research evidence brought into the assessment; otherwise a maximum of 4 marks may be awarded.

D Reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence, about the topic or issue

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 4 marks. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate modern Studies skills of making decisions, explaining exaggeration or selectivity in the use of facts or reaching conclusions based upon evidence.

Specified resources to be taken into assessment

Candidates may take evidence collected during the research phase into the production of evidence stage.

This evidence must consist of no more than two single sided sheets of A4. Candidates should be encouraged to annotate, process or highlight information on their resources before the production of evidence stage.

This evidence must be submitted to the SQA along with the candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision on the Modern Studies Report template.

The nature of the resources taken into the write up should show evidence of primary or secondary research carried out by the candidate and may include, for example: statistical, graphical or numerical data; survey results; interview questions and/or answers; questionnaire and/or results; list of internet search engine results; newspaper article or extracts; notes taken from a visit or talk; or notes taken from a written or audio visual source. Candidates can receive guidance from their assessor on the type of resources which would be appropriate for the assignment at this SCQF level.

While no marks are awarded for the resources taken into the assessment, candidates must make reference to the results of their research contained in these resources in the Research methods and Research findings section of the Modern Studies Report template. Otherwise they will not be able to achieve all the marks available.

A template will be provided by SQA for the production of evidence stage. This template will allow for structured responses. Additional paper, for the report, may be used, if necessary.

Total marks available	20
Skills	14
Knowledge and Understanding	6

Administrative information

Published: September 2015 (version 1.2)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	General marking principles revised to provide guidance and clarification on the requirements of Research Evidence for the assignment.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
1.2	Changes to the allocation of marks between sections A and B.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by practitioners in SQA approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.

Copyright

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for assessment purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. If it needs to be reproduced for any purpose other than assessment, it is the centre's responsibility to obtain copyright clearance.

Re-use for alternative purposes without the necessary copyright clearance may constitute copyright infringement.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2015