



National 5 Geography

Course code:	C833 75
Course assessment code:	X833 75
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	80	2 hours and 20 minutes
Component 2: assignment	20	See course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level, or the National 4 Geography course, or the National 4 Environmental Science course, or the National 4 History course, or the National 4 Modern Studies course, or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Higher Geography course◆ Higher Environmental Science course◆ further study, employment or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

The National 5 Geography course builds on the principles and practices for social studies and for science. Candidates develop a framework of geographical knowledge and increase their understanding of the environment, sustainability and the impact of global issues.

The course emphasises the development and application of skills. The emphasis on the interpretation of sources, including maps, develops thinking skills. Candidates gain experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own through taking part in investigative and critical thinking activities. They also progressively develop their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Through the study of geography, and the acquisition of techniques of geographical analysis, candidates develop an understanding of aspects of the contemporary world. Their confidence grows as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and learn about different countries and cultures. The course encourages them to reflect on the impact of the environment on health and wellbeing.

The course encourages candidates to develop an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others.

Purpose and aims

The study of geography introduces candidates to our changing world, its human interactions and physical processes. Candidates develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute to their local communities and wider society. The study of geography fosters positive life-long attitudes of environmental stewardship, sustainability and global citizenship. Practical activities, including fieldwork, provide opportunities for candidates to interact with their environment.

The contexts for study are local, national, international and global.

Candidates develop:

- ◆ a range of geographical skills and techniques
- ◆ detailed understanding of the ways in which people and the environment interact in response to physical processes and human interactions at local, national, international and global levels
- ◆ detailed understanding of spatial relationships and of the changing world in a balanced, critical and sympathetic way
- ◆ a geographical perspective on environmental and social issues

- ◆ an interest in and concern for the environment, leading to sustainable development

Transferable skills include:

- ◆ using and interpreting a range of geographical information
- ◆ interpreting and explaining geographical phenomena
- ◆ using a range of maps and other data to process and communicate geographical information
- ◆ researching skills, including fieldwork

There may be an opportunity for candidates to develop an awareness of a limited range of geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

Who is this course for?

The course is appropriate for a wide range of learners, but is primarily aimed at those in the senior phase of the curriculum.

Course content

There are three areas of study. Each area focuses on particular skills.

Physical Environments

Candidates develop geographical skills and techniques in the context of physical environments, together with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within physical environments. Key topics include: location of landscape type, formation of key landscape features, land use management and sustainability, and weather. Candidates study a selection of landscape types from contexts within Scotland and/or the UK. Landscape types are chosen from: glaciated upland, upland limestone, coastal landscapes, and rivers and their valleys. Personalisation and choice is possible through the landscape types and areas chosen for study.

Human Environments

Candidates develop geographical skills and techniques in the context of human environments, together with a detailed knowledge and understanding of the interactions at work within human environments. Candidates compare developed and developing countries drawn from a global context. Key topics include: contrasts in development, world population distribution and change, and issues in changing urban and rural landscapes.

Global Issues

Candidates develop skills in using numerical information in the context of global issues, together with a detailed knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues. Key topics include: climate change, natural regions, environmental hazards, trade and globalisation, tourism, and health. Personalisation and choice is possible through the issues selected for study.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ developing and applying skills and detailed knowledge and understanding in geographical contexts
- ◆ with guidance, researching and using information collected from a range of sources about geographical issues which are mainly familiar
- ◆ using a range of mapping skills, including the use of Ordnance Survey maps
- ◆ using a range of research skills, including fieldwork skills
- ◆ using and interpreting a range of numerical and graphical information
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the physical environment of Scotland and/or the United Kingdom by giving detailed descriptions which are mainly factual with some theoretical content, and giving detailed explanations
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the human environment in a global context by giving detailed descriptions which are mainly factual with some theoretical content, and giving detailed explanations
- ◆ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of selected global issues by giving detailed descriptions which are mainly factual with some theoretical content, and giving detailed explanations

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

Component 1: question paper

The question paper will sample from the knowledge and understanding below. However, this should not be seen as a guide to the format of the question paper, nor as a recommended teaching order, or a guide to teaching and learning approaches.

Physical Environments

Weather

Within the context of the United Kingdom:

- ◆ the effect of latitude, relief, aspect and distance from sea on local weather conditions
- ◆ the characteristics of the five main air masses affecting the UK
- ◆ the characteristics of weather associated with depressions and anticyclones

Landscape types

Within the context of **two** landscape types, selected from either:

- ◆ glaciated uplands and coastal landscapes **OR**
- ◆ upland limestone, and rivers and their valleys

The identification and formation of the following landscape features (from **two** landscape types):

- ◆ glaciated upland — corrie, truncated spur, pyramidal peak, arête, u-shaped valley
- ◆ coastal landscapes — cliffs, caves and arches, stacks, headlands and bays, spits and sand bars
- ◆ upland limestone — limestone pavements, potholes/swallow holes, caverns, stalactites and stalagmites, intermittent drainage
- ◆ rivers and their valleys — v-shaped valleys, waterfalls, meander, ox bow lake, levee

Land uses appropriate to the **two** landscape types studied should be chosen from:

- ◆ farming
- ◆ forestry
- ◆ industry
- ◆ recreation and tourism
- ◆ water storage and supply
- ◆ renewable energy

In the context of **one** landscape type studied:

- ◆ the conflicts which can arise between land uses within this landscape
- ◆ the solutions adopted to deal with the identified land use conflicts

Human Environments

In the context of developed and developing countries:

- ◆ use of social and economic indicators
- ◆ physical and human factors influencing global population distribution
- ◆ factors affecting birth and death rates

In the context of urban areas:

- ◆ characteristics of land-use zones in cities in the developed world
- ◆ recent developments in the CBD, inner city, rural/urban fringe in developed world cities
- ◆ recent developments which deal with issues in shanty towns in developing world cities

In the context of rural areas:

- ◆ changes in the rural landscape in developed countries related to modern developments in farming such as: diversification, impact of new technology, organic farming, genetic modification, current government policy
- ◆ changes in the rural landscape in developing countries related to modern developments in farming such as: genetic modification, impact of new technology, biofuels

Global Issues

Candidates study **two** global issues from the following:

Climate change

- ◆ features of climate change
- ◆ causes — physical and human
- ◆ effects — local and global
- ◆ management strategies to minimise impact/effects

Natural regions

- ◆ tundra and equatorial tropical forest climates and their ecosystems
- ◆ use and misuse of these environments by people
- ◆ effects of land degradation on people and the environment
- ◆ management strategies to minimise impact/effects

Environmental hazards

- ◆ the main features of earthquakes, volcanoes and tropical storms
- ◆ causes of each hazard
- ◆ impact of each hazard on people and the landscape
- ◆ management — methods of prediction and planning, and strategies adopted in response to environmental hazards

Trade and globalisation

- ◆ world trade patterns
- ◆ causes of inequalities in trade
- ◆ impact of world trade patterns on people and the environment
- ◆ strategies to reduce inequalities — trade alliances, fair trade, sustainable practices

Tourism

- ◆ mass tourism and eco-tourism
- ◆ causes of/reasons for mass tourism and eco-tourism
- ◆ impact of mass tourism and eco-tourism on people and the environment
- ◆ strategies adopted to manage tourism

Health

- ◆ distribution of a range of world diseases
- ◆ causes, effects and strategies adopted to manage:
 - HIV/AIDS in developed and developing countries
 - one disease prevalent in a developed country (choose from: heart disease, cancer, asthma)
 - one disease prevalent in a developing country (choose from: malaria, cholera, kwashiorkor, pneumonia)

Geographical Skills

The following skills are assessed in contexts drawn from across the course:

Mapping skills related to Ordnance Survey maps:

- ◆ grid references (4/6 figure)
- ◆ identifying and locating physical and human features and patterns
- ◆ measuring distance using scale
- ◆ interpreting relief and contour patterns
- ◆ using maps in association with photographs, field sketches, cross sections/transects

Extracting, interpreting and presenting numerical and graphical information which may be:

- ◆ graphs
- ◆ tables
- ◆ diagrams
- ◆ maps

Component 2: assignment

Candidates have an open choice of geographical topic or issue.

Geographical Skills

Research skills including fieldwork skills:

- ◆ gathering
- ◆ processing
- ◆ interpreting

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.scqf.org.uk).

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work and draw from the following main skills areas:

1 Literacy

1.1 Reading

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

- ◆ draw on and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the course, assessed in the question paper and the assignment
- ◆ demonstrate breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the course, assessed in the question paper
- ◆ demonstrate challenge and application related to an appropriate geographical topic or issue, assessed in the assignment

Course assessment structure: question paper

Component 1: question paper

80 marks

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate application of the following skills and breadth of knowledge and understanding from across the course:

- ◆ using a limited range of mapping skills
- ◆ using a limited range of numerical and graphical information
- ◆ giving detailed descriptions and explanations with some interpretation

The question paper has 80 marks out of a total of 100 marks. The question paper is therefore worth 80% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The question paper has three sections:

- ◆ Section 1: Physical Environments (30 marks) – candidates have a choice of question on landscape type; they must answer all other questions
- ◆ Section 2: Human Environments (30 marks) – candidates answer all questions
- ◆ Section 3: Global Issues (20 marks) – candidates answer two from six options. The options are: climate change, natural regions, environmental hazards, trade and globalisation, tourism, and health. There is parity of demand between the options.

All sections comprise restricted/extended-response questions requiring candidates to draw on the knowledge and understanding and skills described in ‘Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment’.

There is differentiation within each question.

The question paper has a greater emphasis on the assessment of knowledge and understanding than the assignment. The other marks are awarded for demonstration of skills.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete this in 2 hours and 20 minutes.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: assignment

Component 2: assignment

20 marks

The assignment allows candidates to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a geographical topic or issue:

- ◆ 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

The assignment has 20 marks out of a total of 100 marks. The assignment is therefore worth 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

Candidates use specified resources during the production of evidence stage. A structured template is available for the production of evidence; use of the template is not mandatory.

The assignment has a greater emphasis on the assessment of skills than the question paper.

Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment has two stages:

- ◆ researching
- ◆ production of evidence

SQA provides a brief for the generation of evidence to be assessed. Candidates have an open choice of geographical topic or issue. They research the topic/issue and organise and

process their findings to address it, using the specified resources (Processed Information) collected during their research to support them in the production of evidence.

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

Candidates undertake the research stage at any appropriate point in the course, normally 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.

Assessment conditions

Time

The research stage is designed to be capable of completion over a notional period of 8 hours. The production of evidence stage must be completed within 1 hour and in one sitting.

Supervision, control and authentication

The research stage is conducted under some supervision and control. This means that, although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, teachers/lecturers 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. For example:

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

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

The production of evidence stage is conducted under a high degree of supervision and control and should be carried out:

- ◆ independently by the candidate
- ◆ within 1 hour
- ◆ in one sitting
- ◆ with the use of the two single-sided A4 Processed Information sheets or one single-sided sheet of A3 only
- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA
- ◆ when the candidate is ready

If the production of evidence is word-processed, centres must ensure that candidates do not have access to the internet or any other files (either on hard drives or portable storage).

During the period of the assessment, candidates must:

- ◆ be in direct sight of the teacher/lecturer (or other responsible person)
- ◆ not communicate with each other
- ◆ have access only to the specified resources (two single-sided A4 Processed Information sheets or one single-sided A3 Processed Information sheet)
- ◆ not receive any assistance from the teacher/lecturer

Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Resources

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

During the final production of evidence stage, candidates should have access only to the specified resources (Processed Information). This comprises material collected and processed during the research stage on up to two single-sided sheets of A4 or one single-sided sheet of A3.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates must undertake the assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided at the research stage and 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 a candidate requires 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, eg 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. Teachers/lecturers must be aware that this should not go beyond reasonable assistance.

In the researching stage, 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 them 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, 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
- ◆ directing candidate to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers
- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

Evidence to be gathered

The following evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ Processed Information (two single-sided sheets of A4 or one single-sided sheet of A3)
- ◆ candidate evidence produced under a high degree of supervision

Volume

There is no word count.

Grading

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

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/assessmentarrangements

Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [National 5 Geography subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

Administrative information

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History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the course support notes.

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