



## Question & Answers

### Changes to assessment in National 5 and Higher English

#### National 5 and Higher English: performance–spoken language component

**Is it a compulsory requirement that all candidates complete the new performance–spoken language component?**

Yes. The new performance–spoken language component is a mandatory part of the National 5 and Higher English courses. All candidates must successfully complete this component to achieve the course award at either National 5 or Higher.

**Where do I find details about the new performance–spoken language component?**

Please refer to both the course specification, which has detailed marking instructions, and the coursework assessment task, which includes the assessment checklist. These documents can be downloaded from the [National 5](#) and [Higher](#) English webpages.

**Is there any exemplification of the standards required?**

Yes, video footage of candidates undertaking both individual presentations and group discussions, with accompanying checklists and commentaries at National 5 level are available on our Understanding Standards website: <http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk>. Exemplification materials for the Higher English performance–spoken language component will be made available in September 2018.

**Will evidence gathered for the performance–spoken language component be subject to verification?**

Yes, verification will be carried out on a sample basis, as is the case for all internally assessed course components. Given that standards for talking and listening at SCQF levels 5 and 6 are already well established, it is likely that verification activity will be relatively light touch.

## **What evidence do I need to gather/retain?**

A detailed checklist and/or a video recording of candidate performance is required.

A video recording may be useful for internal moderation and/or staff development, and would also be acceptable for the purposes of verification as an alternative to, or in addition to, a detailed checklist.

## **How much detail should the performance–spoken language checklist contain?**

The checklist must contain comments on all four aspects of a candidate’s performance and should indicate how the assessment judgements have been arrived at. Some examples of the candidate’s spoken language should be included.

Examples of appropriately detailed checklists will be made available on our [Understanding Standards](#) website.

## **Do we have to use SQA’s performance–spoken language checklist?**

No. SQA has produced a checklist which covers all mandatory aspects of assessment for the performance–spoken language component, however should you wish to create your own checklist, you must ensure that it covers all four aspects of assessment.

## **Would evidence gathered for the performance–spoken language component also meet the requirements for the National 5 Literacy freestanding unit?**

It is highly likely that evidence gathered for the performance–spoken language component will also meet the assessment standards for outcome 4 (talking) within the freestanding Literacy unit at SCQF level 5. However, assessment of listening in literacy is analysis-based and would have to be treated separately.

## **Is there a minimum amount of time that candidates’ presentations/group discussions should last for?**

There is no specified time requirement. Candidates should be given sufficient scope to produce detailed spoken language and to achieve all four aspects of assessment.

## **Do candidates need to achieve all four aspects of the performance–spoken language component at one time?**

No, assessment can be holistic and evidence can be gathered naturally over several occasions. Candidates should be assessed at an appropriate time when they have acquired all of the necessary skills.

### **Do all candidates have to deliver a presentation?**

You have the freedom to decide which approach to assessment best suits your candidates. Presentations and discussions are equally acceptable.

### **Is there a minimum number of participants required for group discussion?**

Group composition should suit the needs of all candidates. It may be appropriate to vary group numbers according to need. Please note that group discussion is defined as a discussion involving the candidate and at least one other person; the other person could be the teacher or lecturer.

### **Can the performance–spoken language component be approached in a cross-curricular way?**

Content for the performance–spoken language component (presentations or discussions) can be generated from any curricular area to suit the interests and needs of candidates.

### **Can we assess a candidate’s listening skills by the questions they ask as an audience member during a presentation?**

Yes. As long as the questions are relevant to key points from the presentation, then this approach would be valid.

### **What assessment arrangements are available for the performance–spoken language component?**

For advice on assessment arrangements, please contact SQA’s dedicated assessment arrangements team by emailing: [aarequests@sqa.org.uk](mailto:aarequests@sqa.org.uk). Information on assessment arrangements is also available from our website at [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

### **Do I need to enter my candidates separately for the performance–spoken language component?**

Yes, the performance–spoken language component does requires a separate entry. The appropriate code can be found on the front page of the National 5 or Higher English course specification. Please contact your SQA co-ordinator for further information.

**Does the performance–spoken language assessment need to take place in the same year as assessment of the other external components?**

Yes. The performance–spoken language is a course component so must be achieved in the same year as the other external components (question papers and portfolio).

**Can candidates do the performance–spoken language component but not the rest of the exam?**

No. Candidates will only be certificated for this component when they achieve the National 5 or Higher English course.