



Questions & Answers

Changes to assessment in National 5 Graphic Communication

Is there a page limit for the assignment and is there a penalty for exceeding it?

SQA advises on the specific number of pages for each assignment task in the specimen coursework assessment task and also in any live task. However, this is provided as a guide to support candidates. There is no penalty for exceeding the specified number of pages. If candidates produce more (or fewer) pages these will all be assessed.

Will assignments be returned to centres once they are marked?

No, assignments are not returned to centres as a matter of course. However, centres can request the return of externally assessed coursework items (such as the assignment) from our website.

[View information on how to get your coursework back from SQA](#)

How will I determine an estimate grade for my candidates without marking the assignment?

The estimate for each candidate should be based on evidence generated throughout the session and could include prelims, class tests or practice coursework activity. This approach is used in subjects which already have an externally assessed coursework component.

What should I do if a candidate is caught cheating while undertaking the assignment?

Any instances of candidate malpractice should be investigated and resolved in line with your centre's procedures.

When can we tell candidates about the assignment?

We recommend using the last period of class time before candidates begin the assignment. Use this opportunity to take the candidates through the instructions and the assignment task. Ensure that they understand the assignment conditions and requirements, however after this, candidates must undertake the assignment on their own.

Can teachers and lecturers make alterations to the assignment (eg changing images)?

No. The assignment cannot be changed in any way nor can it be presented to candidates in a different format.

Do candidates with additional support needs get an extra 25% of the allotted assignment time as standard?

There is no standard assessment arrangement for candidates with additional support needs. The needs of each candidate are considered and addressed on an individual basis.

For candidates with additional support needs, centres should contact SQA's assessment arrangements team (aarequests@sqa.org.uk). They should provide details of each situation and the assessment arrangements they think are appropriate. Every request is dealt with on an individual basis.

Will SQA provide the assignment in other languages for candidates who have English as an additional language?

As with question papers, all candidates will be provided with the same coursework task in English. All written responses must also be in English. For candidates whose knowledge of English could impair their ability to communicate their attainment, centres should contact SQA's assessment arrangements team (aarequests@sqa.org.uk).

Are templates allowed for CAD drawings?

Yes. Centres can use standard/centre-generated CAD templates.

What do we do if candidates are absent for the assignment because of holidays or sporting activities?

Centres should remind students that the assignment contributes directly to the overall grade for the course. The assignment must be completed before the coursework uplift date. In the case of absences due to holidays or sporting activities, centres would need to look at cases individually and determine whether time can be made for candidates to complete the assignment before the uplift date.

What do we do if candidates miss the assignment because they are unwell or because they have a longer term injury/illness?

All candidates must be given 8 hours of class time to work on the assignment. If a candidate misses a class through illness or injury, they should still be given the equivalent time to work on the assignment when they return. Centres will need to address instances of longer term illness or injury on a case by case basis.

If time cannot be made for candidates to complete the assignment before the uplift date, centres can e-mail aarequests@sqa.org.uk and ask for an extension to the submission date. Every request is dealt with on an individual basis.

Some parts of the specimen assignment don't have particular dimensions or features — can these be disregarded?

The assignment will let candidates know what to do for each part of each task. Candidates should follow these instructions and make use of the information/data sheets/files provided by SQA.

Our software is web-based so we cannot operate machines without internet access — how do candidates undertake the assignment?

The assessment conditions are stipulated in the course specification and are expanded upon in the coursework assessment task. This ensures equity for all candidates undertaking the assignment and must be adhered to.

We acknowledge that some centres will have web-based software, networks that cannot be restricted, or something similar. In such cases, we would ask that centres do the best they can — relative to their situation — to meet the assessment conditions. For example, centres with web-based software may be able to limit internet access to the running of CAD software. Where access cannot be restricted, teachers and lecturers must ensure that candidates are not using the internet to help them carry out their assignment.

Previously candidates had to do an open task without a time limit. If standards for assessment are unchanged, how can SQA expect candidates to do the same work as a closed-book task in 8 hours?

While standards have not changed, the nature of the assignment has. We now have a more restricted activity than before that has been designed to meet our new assessment conditions. The 8-hour time limit is appropriate for the revised assignment.

Why is the assignment a closed-book activity?

Following the removal of units from the National 5 course it was necessary to strengthen the course assessment. Moving to a closed-book activity is one of the ways that we have done this.

We are having major problems with our CAD software. What should we do?

Please escalate this within your centre as a matter of urgency. It will not be possible to deliver the course or undertake the assignment without it.

What would happen if an IT problem caused candidates' work to be lost?

Every centre should have an IT policy and a backup strategy to ensure work can be recovered.

Can candidates work on the assignment at home?

No. The assignment must be undertaken during class time only. Assignment work must be collected from candidates at the end of each class and stored securely until it is returned to candidates at the start of the next class.

Will centres get marking instructions for the live assignment?

The live assignment is externally assessed by SQA. Centres will not have access to the marking instructions until all marking/quality assurance has taken place and results have been received. The assignment and marking instructions are made available on the [SQA past papers and marking instructions](#) website in August each year.

Do candidates have to complete the different assignment tasks in a specific order?

Each live assignment will make clear whether tasks are to be followed in a specific order or not.