

Practical Electronics

The Qualifications Team

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Changes to assessment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

As announced by the Deputy First Minister in September 2016, units and unit assessments are being removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses on a phased basis over three years:

- National 5 from 2017–18
- Higher from 2018–19
- Advanced Higher from 2019–20

For more information, including a Q&A on the implications of these changes, please visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges

Units that were previously part of National 5 courses

The units that were previously part of National 5 courses are now freestanding units at SCQF level 5. They can no longer be used to contribute to the achievement of a National 5 course.

We will remove all references to National 5 courses from the unit specifications, unit support notes and unit assessment support packs in due course, and the unit support notes will be added to the unit specifications as an appendix. The unit specifications will also be relocated to a new freestanding units web page for each subject.

Further information on the timescales for this will be provided in our weekly Centre News newsletter.

Changes to assessment in National 5

The National 5 Practical Electronics course is now assessed through the following components:

Component	Marks	Scaled marks
Question paper	60	30
Coursework	70	n/a

Clarification of course content in the National 5 course

The course content has been arranged into a suggested teaching order. Centres are reminded that this is only a suggestion and they are free to deliver content in any order they wish. Clarification of depth of treatment has been added to a number of statements within the content, in order to make it clear to delivering centres what content and skills can be assessed in the question paper.

Conditions of assessment for coursework

To ensure fairness for all candidates, it is essential that the specified assessment conditions for coursework are consistently applied in all centres. The following documents detail the specific conditions that must be followed in each assessment:

- course specification
- coursework assessment task

In addition to these documents, you must also refer to the following document, which is available from the coursework section of the National 5 web page:

- [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)

This document provides important information on the time and volume of assessment, the use of resources, and the supervision, control and authentication of assessment — including examples.

Changes to documents

Revised National 5 documents and assessment support materials

Following the removal of units and unit assessments from the National 5 Practical Electronics course, we have strengthened the course assessment to ensure it assesses the full content of the course.

We have published revised course specifications and revised assessment support materials for the National 5 course, which detail the requirements of the revised course assessments from session 2017–18 onwards. The documents are available from the National 5 subject web page at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. Further information on the changes to documents and assessment support materials is provided below.

Course specification

In April 2017, we published a revised course specification which provided detailed information about the National 5 course and course assessment, including the conditions of assessment that must be followed. The revised document was produced by merging the previous course specifications, course assessment specifications and general assessment information into a single, streamlined document. Course support notes have been added to the course specification as an appendix.

The National 5 Practical Electronics course specification is available on the [National 5 Practical Electronics web page](#).

Specimen question paper

A National 5 Practical Electronics question paper has been added to allow sampling of knowledge and understanding and skills. The specimen question paper illustrates the standard, structure and requirements of the question paper candidates will sit. This also includes marking instructions and the relationships/data sheet. This is available on the [National 5 Practical Electronics web page](#).

Coursework assessment task

The National 5 Practical Electronics practical activity allows assessment of skills which cannot be assessed through the question paper.

The practical activity assessment task includes information that centres must use in administering coursework and must be read in conjunction with the course specification. The document is available on the 'Coursework' tab on the [National 5 Practical Electronics web page](#).

Supportive resources

National 5 course event

We are hosting a subject-specific event that focuses on the changes to assessment in National 5 courses. The event is running in November 2017 and provides delegates with the opportunity to participate in workshops and discuss the course documents, as well as have their questions answered by senior examining team members.

To view the event schedule and book your place, visit www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents

Further information and guidance

Approval

Centres who are delivering Practical Electronics for the first time in session 2017–18, or introduce it in subsequent years, must seek approval to do so.

Information on the approval process can be found by following the link under the Information about obtaining approval tab on the [National 5 Practical Electronics web page](#).

National 4 Practical Electronics

Units remain in National 4 Practical Electronics. In session 2016–17 a threshold was introduced to the number of assessment standards that candidates must meet to achieve each unit. Candidates are no longer required to show full mastery of the assessment standards to achieve a unit.

For session 2017–18 centres must use the criteria exemplified in the following guidance document when carrying out assessments.

Practical Electronics: Understanding the next steps for session 2016–17

You can access this document on the Understanding the next steps for Practical Electronics on the [Practical Electronics subject web page](#).

The National 4 Practical Electronics unit specifications and unit assessments are being revised to reflect the revised assessment criteria and will be published in due course.

Course reports

We strongly advise that you read the annual course reports for the subjects and levels you are teaching. These reports are produced following the annual diet of exams and are published by the end of October. The reports provide informed and valuable comment on the assessment for each component in the course, and include a summary of:

- candidate performance in the course assessment
 - areas in which candidates performed well
-

-
- areas which candidates found demanding

The reports also contain advice on preparing future candidates, and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course reports will be available from the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

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