



Questions & Answers

Changes to assessment in National 5 Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking

1 Events and webinars

Will there be more National 5 course events for Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking? The events currently scheduled are fully booked.

Yes. In addition to the National 5 course events arranged for the start of September 2017, we will arrange an additional event for the start of October 2017.

Is SQA planning to run more webinars for National 5 Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking?

No further webinars are planned at the moment, although we may review this if there is demand. Schools and colleges can continue to request CPD support for any areas of concern that are not already addressed by our webinars, events and support materials. More information is available from our website.

2 Support materials

Where can I access source material to help me generate a prelim paper?

The specimen question paper is an ideal starting point: it provides examples of the types of questions that are likely to appear in the live question paper, explains the number of available marks, and provides details of what we would expect as a response.

Will SQA be providing a guidance document to help centres produce prelim questions?

No, we won't be providing additional guidance on producing prelim questions.

Will there be exemplars of the new practical tasks?

No, we will not be providing exemplars of the practical activity because of the practical nature of this assessment.

When will the specimen question papers be available?

Specimen question papers will be available by the end of September 2017 on the National 5 subject pages of our website.

3 Course assessment — practical activity

Will the new marking instructions for the practical activity be introduced before candidates begin the task?

Yes, we will publish the new marking instructions for session 2017-18 and beyond before candidates begin their practical activity.

Can staff enhance the resolution of working drawings?

Centres must not alter or enhance the working drawings in any way as this would be considered a change to the assessment and would invalidate the candidates' responses. We will endeavour to make all the working drawings as clear as possible

Can the working drawings be issued in A3 format so that they are easier to read?

Drawings cannot be altered or changed in size.

Centres can request a larger format as an assessment arrangement for candidates with additional support needs. Further information on assessment arrangements can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

How much time should be allocated for the practical activity?

We have not set a time limit for the practical activity as centres can decide how much time to allocate for completing it. Candidates can begin the practical activity at any time once content delivery is complete.

With the removal of units and unit assessments, can the range of joins/joints be built into the practical activity rather than individual practice join/joint exercises?

Our practical activity will sample course content (including the range of joins/joints that are to be covered in the course).

Will we receive a log book to give to the candidates?

Yes, the log book will be published on our secure website and can be completed electronically or printed and completed manually. However, if selected for verification, the log book must be made available to the verifier (either in electronic or paper format). To ensure fairness for all candidates, the format of the log book cannot be altered.

Will SQA cover the printing costs for log books?

No, we will not cover the printing costs for log books.

If candidates do not achieve 5 out of 5 for safety in the log book, surely that is an issue?

Safety is paramount in the delivery of these courses and in the workshop environment, which is why we have allocated specific marks to this in the practical activity. Candidate safety is the responsibility of centres. Centres should adhere to their own health and safety policies when candidates are carrying out the practical activity.

Will this year's practical activity have the same marking criteria even though it is now worth 70% of the overall mark?

No. New marking instructions for session 2017 will be provided and these must be used from session 2017–18 onwards.

Will there be mandatory wood joints that the candidates must know how to do every year?

No, the wood joints that are assessed will vary each year, eg a given joint may feature in the session 2017–18 practical activity but not in the session 2018–19 practical activity.

Are working drawings only issued as assemblies and not part drawings?

We are still finalising the details of the annually issued practical activity, however the drawings provided will allow candidates to create the object.

Will the working drawings for the assessment be to British Standard?

Yes, we will create our working drawings to be consistent with British Standard conventions.

Can the mortise machine be used to manufacture the product in the practical activity?

No, the course specification does not stipulate use of the mortise machine. Only tools (hand, power or machine) that are stipulated in the course specification can be used for the purposes of the practical activity. Centres are free to demonstrate the use of anything beyond the content of the course specification as an extension of learning, however this must not be used for assessment.

Will SQA be considering payment for teaching staff to carry out the practical activity?

No. In session 2016–17, SQA introduced a payment for some subjects where coursework was being marked during teachers' free time and not within contracted school hours (eg during the school holidays). The practical activity in National 5 Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking courses can only be undertaken in the workshop environment during school hours so is not eligible for payment.

4 Course assessment — question paper

Why is the set time for the 80-mark Design and Manufacture question paper 1 hour 45 minutes whereas the set time for the 60-mark Practical Woodworking question paper is only 1 hour?

The time allocated for the Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking question papers is appropriate to the content of each question paper. Both question papers have been designed to ensure they assess skills, knowledge and understanding for the required topics, as outlined in the course specification.

The question paper for Design and Manufacture is designed to meet the requirements of this subject and is separate to the Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking question papers.

Will models have to be kept for evidence in exceptional circumstances or will photographs of the model suffice?

The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service applies to exams only therefore there is no need to retain the object or photographs of the object produced in the practical activity. If the candidate is unable to sit the exam due to an exceptional circumstance, we would review prelim question papers, class tests and any other form of evidence that relates to what is being assessed in the question paper. We will consider this along with your internally assessed mark for the practical activity, to determine a grade for each candidate on a case by case basis.

5 Bi-level teaching of National 4 and National 5

What is the suggested method for teaching split National 4/National 5 classes??

We do not give specific advice on the way the courses are delivered as this is a matter for individual centres.

Will National 4 versions of the practical activity be issued at the same time so that, in bi-level classes, we do not have two different practical activities running together?

No. Centres are free to choose which assessment to use for the added value unit, as long as it provides sufficient opportunities for the assessment standards to be met. You can use the SQA produced unit assessment support packs, adapt them to suit your needs or devise an assessment of your own. If you devise your own assessment it should be submitted to SQA for [prior verification](#).

6 Units

With the removal of units, what will candidates be awarded if they fail the National 5 question paper and practical activity?

Candidates who achieve a combined mark of less than 40% in the National 5 course will receive a 'no award' result.

Why change National 5 to reduce assessment and not National 4?

At present, SQA has been asked to take forward the nationally-agreed revisions to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher only.

The Assessment and National Qualifications Group (ANQ) has begun to consider the approach to assessment in National 4 courses. Its initial focus is on the value of a form of external assessment, and a means of differentiation through grading.

Is it still okay to use the existing unit assessment projects (ie the bathroom corner unit, toolbox and stool) in preparation for the practical activity?

Centres are free to make use of the SQA-produced unit assessment support packs for course delivery purposes. However, please note that the units and unit assessments are no longer part of the course and will not contribute to the achievement of the National 5 course award.

If centres deliver the units on a freestanding basis, do they have to use the present tasks or prior verified tasks?

If a centre is delivering the freestanding units rather than the courses, they will be required to assess the units. However, centres are free to use the SQA-produced unit assessment support packs, adapt the packs to suit their needs or use them as a basis to develop an assessment of their own. The current unit assessment support packs are still valid and are available from our secure website.

If candidates complete the units and then complete the course successfully, will they be accredited for the units in addition to achieving the full course award?

The units no longer contribute towards the courses at National 5. They were removed from National 5 courses to reduce the volume of assessment and teacher workload. As the Scottish Government advises in its policy statement on the changes to National Courses, schools should decide whether learners are entered for units or the full course award.

What will happen to the candidates if they complete the coursework, but don't complete the question paper?

The grade, at National 5, is determined by adding the question paper mark (which will be scaled) to the practical activity mark. If one of the assessment components is missing (ie no mark is submitted for the practical activity or the candidate doesn't sit the question paper), then the candidate would get zero marks for that component. If the candidate achieves less than 40% in the course assessment overall, they will receive a 'no award' result.

Do pupils still need to produce a log book for National 5 units only?

The units are no longer National 5 units, they will be available as freestanding SCQF level 5 units. Candidates will only need to produce a log book for a unit if it is a requirement of the assessment standards of that particular unit.

Do centres have to state at the start of the year whether they are offering units?

Schools are required to advise SQA of their initial entries for units and courses by the end of November 2017 and colleges by the end of January 2018. Centres are free to change these throughout the session up until the end of March (after which, changes can still be made but through a different process that may incur a charge).

If candidates do just the units in session 2017–18 and beyond will the threshold pass still be applied?

Yes, this will still apply. If delivering units, you must give candidates an opportunity to meet all assessment standards. If the number of assessment standards met is below the threshold for that unit, the unit would need to be re-assessed. Once the threshold has been met, this is enough to achieve a 'pass'.

Will we be able to deliver units as stand-alone units beyond session 2017–18?

The units will stay on the SQA catalogue for the foreseeable future. After a few years, we may review them to ensure that they are still fit for purpose.

Will National 4 candidates be able to use the National 5 practical activity for the added value unit?

No. The National 5 practical activity does not cover the assessment standards of the National 4 added value unit as this is set at a higher level of difficulty and includes joins/joints that are not covered in the National 4 course. Centres could, however, use the object in the National 5 practical activity as a basis for developing an assessment to cover the National 4 added value unit.

If a candidate is participating in the National 5 course but fails the course assessment, would they receive any accreditation for unit passes?

No, they will receive a 'no award' result only.