



Common questions about National 3 National 4 Business and National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Business Management

Unit assessment

The following guidance on unit assessment applies to National 3 and National 4 courses. There is no unit assessment in National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. For further guidance on changes to National Courses, please visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges.

If a candidate does not pass one part of a unit assessment, does the whole unit need to be re-assessed?

No, you only need to re-assess the specific assessment standard or outcome they were unsuccessful in meeting.

At National 4 there are thresholds defining the number of assessment standards required to pass each unit. You can find details of the thresholds in the specification for each unit on the [Business subject page](#).

Is oral questioning acceptable for re-assessment?

Yes, where appropriate, but you must document this for verification purposes.

The unit assessment support packs do not have marks allocated. Can centres add marks for their own use?

Yes. You can add and apply marks for assessment purposes; however, you must make sure that candidates meet the minimum number of assessment standards for each unit. During the verification process, we will not consider any marks allocated.

For all unit assessment support packs, can candidates work through the tasks over a period of time, rather than completing them during a single assessment?

Yes.

Can I assess the Business units under open-book conditions?

You can assess the units under open-book or closed-book conditions — this is a decision for individual centres.

Course assessment

If a candidate achieves the National 4 units but does not complete the added value unit, can they achieve the National 3 course?

Yes, as there is a hierarchy in place, however, you must enter your candidate for the National 3 course.

Can the National 5 assignment be submitted, unchanged, as evidence for the National 4 added value unit?

No. Candidates can use the National 5 assignment to meet some of the evidence towards the added value unit but, as they are different, you cannot directly substitute one for the other. You could include relevant parts of the assignment in a submission for the added value unit.

If a candidate changes level, can they resubmit their Higher assignment for National 5, without changing it?

No. The Higher assignment is a separate piece of work based on the Higher course content and has its own marking criteria.

If a candidate is resitting the National 5 or Higher course, can they resubmit an assignment marked by SQA in a previous session?

No. They must achieve all elements of the course assessment (question paper and assignment) in the same session. For the assignment, it may be possible for a candidate to use their previous research material; however, in all cases they must submit a new assignment.

National 5 and Higher assignment

For the assignment, what criteria should candidates follow when choosing an organisation?

Candidates can base their assignment on any size and type of organisation, but should make sure they choose a business and a topic that they are able to research.

The research can be primary or secondary (or both); however, finding the right amount of relevant information can sometimes be a challenge. For example, small businesses (particularly those without a website), may not provide sufficient information, while large organisations often provide overwhelming amounts of information.

Can candidates select the same topic and/or business as others in their class?

Yes. There is no restriction but candidates must complete the research and produce their report on their own.

In the introduction, how much detail is required for the purpose and background?

Candidates must clearly state the purpose of the assignment and give sufficient background information to ensure that the reader understands what the business does.

In the introduction, do candidates need to reference facts about the organisation?

No.

In the research section, can sources be internal or external, as well as primary or secondary?

Yes, sources can be any combination of internal, external, primary or secondary.

In the research section, can candidates get marks for giving the same value for different sources?

Yes. Candidates can gain marks if they give different explanations for each source. For example:

- ◆ 'The newspaper may be **bias** because the journalist may have their own political opinions which influence the information unfairly'. (1 mark)
- ◆ 'The company website may be **bias** because it omits any negative information and markets the company in a positive light'. (1 mark)

Can candidates present the research section in table format?

Yes. Candidates can present their information in any format, including tables, as long as the content is sufficient.

Should candidates use colour in graphs and charts?

No. We scan assignments in black and white ready for marking. It is best if candidates use black and white, so that the detail is clear and legible.

Are candidates able to provide their own opinions?

Yes. If a candidate states their opinion and goes on to develop it, this can form part of a candidate's recommendations or conclusions.

Do candidates have to include both conclusions and recommendations?

Candidates may include any combination of conclusions and recommendations. However, they might find it difficult to gain full marks if only conclusions, or only recommendations, are given.

What is the difference between analysis and conclusion?

An analysis point is a statement about the meaning of a finding. A conclusion is a statement giving a synopsis of a point, or several linked points, in the analysis and interpretation section, and then giving a justification for using it.

Can candidates still use an analytical tool in their Higher assignment?

Yes. Candidates can use an analytical tool to help structure their report, but we do not award discrete mark for using one.

Conditions of assessment for coursework

What is the maximum length of the assignment or project?

The final report **should be no longer than** 1,300 words for National 5, 2,000 words for Higher and 2,500 – 3,500 words for Advanced Higher, excluding references and appendices.

If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

For assignments, there is a limit to the number of pages of appendices — for National 5, no more than two pages and for Higher, no more than four pages.

How long do candidates have to complete the assignment?

Candidates should be able to complete the assignment in a notional 5 hours for National 5, and a notional 8 hours for Higher. This includes time for secondary research and producing the report. We recommend that candidates produce their report over time, as there are no longer discrete research and write-up phases.

Candidates who choose to carry out field research may require additional time to complete their research.

Due to internet access restrictions at some schools, candidates may have to carry out some secondary research outwith the classroom.

Under what assessment conditions do candidates complete the report write-up of their assignment?

Candidates complete their report under 'some supervision and control'. Candidates can complete their research and write-up simultaneously. This means that in a classroom there could be some candidates carrying out research, while others are writing up their analysis. Candidates should be supervised during this time and should not communicate with each other.

You can find further information regarding coursework conditions in the [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#) on SQA's website.

Do candidates need to use the SQA assignment notes document when completing their assignment?

No. It is not mandatory, however, the assignment notes document gives candidates a structure to help them plan and complete their assignment, so that they do not miss anything out.

Do candidates need to use the SQA assignment template?

Yes. We scan National 5 and Higher assignments so they can be electronically marked. To ensure complete accuracy in the scanning process, candidates **must** use the template when submitting their Business Management assignment and appendices. The template, and more detailed guidance for submitting the assignments, is on the relevant subject page under the 'Coursework' tab.

National 5 and Higher question papers

In compare or distinguish questions, will candidates be penalised for not using link words such as 'whereas' or 'both'?

No, but using these terms may help to clarify their work.

Is it essential that candidates mention the stimulus material in their answers?

Only in questions where we specifically ask candidates to refer to the text.

Higher question paper

Are candidates required to calculate ratios?

No, we do not assess this.

General

Where can I find information about course content for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher?

Information about course content is in the course specifications (including appendix: course support notes), available on the subject pages on SQA's website.

What other resources are available?

As part of our Understanding Standards programme, we provide a range of online resources to help you develop your understanding of the standards required in the course assessments for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. Understanding Standards materials are available from www.understandingstandards.org.uk.

National Qualification questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.

Questions and answers on the changes to National Courses can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges.