



Common questions about National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Economics

Course assessment

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, with its own marking criteria and completed within a different timescale.

If a candidate is resitting the 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

Can candidates select the same topic 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 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?

No. For example, if a candidate states that two of their chosen sources are biased, we would only award 1 mark for an explanation for the reason of any bias.

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 in the analysis and interpretation section, and then giving a justification for using it.

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 3,500 – 4,000 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 this stage 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 assignments so they can be electronically marked. To ensure complete accuracy in the scanning process, candidates **must** use the template when submitting their assignment and appendices. The template, and more detailed guidance for submitting the assignment, is on the relevant subject page under the 'Coursework' tab.

A template is **not** required for Higher assignments.

National 5 and Higher question papers

Will candidates be penalised for not using link words such as 'compare' 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.

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.