



Common questions about Engineering Science

National 5 and Higher assignments

The assignment changes each year — what happens if candidates do the wrong one?

This shouldn't happen as the assignment is only available on our secure website and it clearly shows which session it is valid. Candidates must do the current assignment to gain marks.

Can assignment work be reviewed or provisionally marked?

No. Once assignments are complete or when the 8-hour time limit has passed, they are prepared for submission to SQA for external assessment.

The assignment has a time limit of 8 hours — what happens if a candidate doesn't finish in time?

Like the question paper, the assignment has a fixed duration. If a candidate does not finish in the time available, they should submit the work they have completed to SQA and a mark is awarded. Candidates are not allowed any additional time.

Can candidates work as a group when doing the assignment?

No. Candidates must carry out the assignment on an individual basis — no group work is permitted. The assignment must be conducted under a high degree of supervision and control, to ensure that work presented is the candidates' own.

Can the assignment simply be printed out and handed to the candidates to do?

No. The assignment includes instructions for teachers, lecturers and candidates. These can vary each year, and include an introduction to the assignment and information on preparing candidates before they begin.

Can teachers, lecturers or candidates discuss the assignment on forums or secure groups?

No. The assignment is a secure course assessment and the mark contributes to the candidate's overall grade. It is only available on our secure website and cannot be shared or discussed on other forums, including social media.

Is it possible to deliver some content, have the candidate do part of the assignment, deliver more content and then have the candidate complete the assignment?

No. Candidates should start the assignment at an appropriate point in the course, once all content has been delivered and without interruption by periods of learning and teaching.

Candidates have 8 hours to complete the assignment — does this mean that they have to do this for a full day?

No. Candidates must complete the assignment over a consecutive period of 8 hours.

For example, if a candidate has Engineering Science on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, they would begin on Monday and then stop to attend their other classes. They would resume on Wednesday, stopping again, before continuing on Friday.

You must ensure that candidates' work remains secure between classes and until they complete the task. The live assessment task must remain secure until SQA removes it from the secure site.

The assignment must be conducted under a high degree of supervision and control — does this mean that we need invigilators?

No. Teachers and lecturers can supervise. You can find the '*Guidance on conditions of assessment*' document for the assignment on the [National 5 Engineering Science web page](#) and the [Higher Engineering Science web page](#).

Can we use the assignment mark from last session for a resit candidate?

No. We publish a new assignment annually and it is only valid for that academic session. Candidates resitting a question paper will have to do the assignment relating to that academic session.

If we are delivering the course over two years, when do we give candidates the assignment?

Candidates must do the assignment from the same academic session as the question paper that they are sitting. Additionally, they should start the assignment at an appropriate point in the course, once all content has been delivered, so it couldn't be part way through the first year of a two-year delivery.

Our centre does not have enough pneumatic components for all candidates to do this part of the assignment at the same time — what should we do?

If you have a limited number of pneumatic components and opt to use construction rather than simulation, you need to plan carefully. You need to manage the class so that each candidate has the time and resources to do this part of the assignment on their own.

One solution is to stagger candidates' access to the components over several days. Alternatively, you might find simulation rather than construction more appropriate in situations like this.

Can we alter the assignment by changing images or changing the layout?

No. Candidates must do the assignment as published. You cannot change it in any way or present it to candidates in a different format.

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

No. There is no 'standard' assessment arrangement for candidates with additional support needs. Centres must contact the assessment arrangements team (aarequests@sqa.org.uk) to provide details of each situation and the assessment arrangements they think are appropriate. We deal with every request on an individual basis to ensure equity for all candidates,

Is there a recommended software package appropriate to use as a pneumatics, electronics or structures simulation?

No. We do not approve, recommend or comment on the validity of any specific software packages used in National Courses. You must ensure that any software package used for learning and teaching purposes meets the requirements of the course specification.

Simulation software can be very expensive — can SQA suggest where we can find it cheaply?

No. It is for you to decide the most appropriate software to deliver National Courses and to identify a supplier.

Our simulation software is web-based so we cannot use it without internet access — how can candidates do the assignment?

The assessment conditions are in the course specification and expanded upon in the coursework assessment task. You must adhere to these conditions to ensure equity for all candidates.

We acknowledge that some centres may have web-based software, networks that cannot be restricted, or something similar. In such cases, centres must do the best they can (relative to their situation) to meet the assessment conditions. For example, you may be able to limit internet access for running web-based simulation software.

Where internet access cannot be restricted, you must ensure that candidates are not using the internet to help them do their assignment.

We are having major problems with our simulation software and don't have physical components to use in its place — what should we do?

Escalate this within your centre as a matter of urgency. Without the necessary software, you cannot deliver the course and candidates cannot do the assignment.

General

Do we need to provide an estimate grade for all candidates?

Yes. Not only is it a condition of offering the qualification, it is necessary for candidates who may need to make use of our [Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service](#).

If candidates are doing units rather than the course, how long do we need to retain evidence of assessment?

This timescale is unchanged for normal unit entry — you must retain evidence of assessment decisions made until the end of that academic session. However, if you alter unit entries after 28 February, you must retain the assessment evidence until 30 September that calendar year.

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