

# Common questions about National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music

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#### Assignment — composing

### Can candidates work on their composition in groups after a workshop?

We do not recommend this as it is difficult to establish the candidate's contribution to the compositional process.

### If composing a theme and variations, can candidates use a well-known tune as the theme?

We do not recommend this approach. It would be difficult for the candidate, in their composing review, to demonstrate their input into the compositional process.

#### For singer/songwriters, are lyrics marked?

The overall song writing skills of singer/songwriters are assessed. For example, how well their chosen or written lyrics fit the melody and chordal patterns created. They must provide their lyrics and the chords chosen on their performance plan. The song does not need to be fully notated for the assignment.

### How accurate does the performance plan for the assignment need to be?

The performance plan for the assignment should reflect the accompanying audio file as much as possible. However, candidates can play more sophisticated chords on the audio recording. These will be taken into consideration when marked. The performance plan provides the context for the marker.

#### Which media file formats does SQA accept for submission?

All media files should be in MP3, MP4, WAV or WMA.

#### Assignment — composing review

Do candidates need to explain why they make decisions in their composing review? How many strengths and/or areas for improvement are candidates expected to identify?

Explaining their decisions will help candidates to achieve the full range of marks available. Candidates must identify, as a minimum:

- two strengths or
- ♦ two areas of improvement or
- one strength and one area for improvement

### Can candidates include additional information such as a planning log or screen shots as part of their composing review?

Yes, candidates can include a planning log or screen shots as part of their composing review. However, candidates should remember that the SQA template restricts the composing review to one page. Including numerous screen shots may restrict the space available for candidates to describe their main decisions, exploration and development of their musical ideas and their strengths and/or areas of improvement.

### Can candidates include audio files that demonstrate them exploring and developing their musical ideas?

Yes, candidates can include additional audio files to demonstrate their exploration and development of musical ideas. However, any additional audio files for this purpose must be clearly referenced in their composing review.

### Can I submit candidates' evidence collectively on a memory stick with a folder for each candidate?

Before the uplift dates for the Music assignments, SQA will issue packets for hard copy evidence to be submitted, along with Ex6 forms that list the candidates for each centre. Each Ex6 form lists up to 10 candidates in alphabetical order, by surname. If you are submitting the evidence electronically, you can use one CD or memory stick for each group of up to 10 candidates. You can submit electronic files with evidence for up to 10 candidates on one CD or memory stick. You must submit an audio file, score or performance plan, composing review and flyleaf to SQA for each candidate.

#### Performing/instruments

### For the external assessment of performing, what are the minimum and maximum time requirements for each level?

These are shown in the table below.

Level	Associated Board equivalent (minimum standard)	Total programme duration	Maximum time on one instrument	Minimum time on other instrument	Other possible combinations of minutes
National 5	Grade 3	8 minutes	6 minutes	2 minutes	4 and 4 5 and 3
Higher	Grade 4	12 minutes	8 minutes	4 minutes	6 and 6 7 and 5
Advanced Higher	Grade 5	18 minutes	12 minutes	6 minutes	9 and 9 10 and 8 11 and 7

#### Must pieces be accompanied?

In general, performances (on all instruments) should be accompanied unless stylistically inappropriate. For example, keyboards are not usually accompanied by another instrument and some classical guitar pieces may not have a published accompaniment.

### If there are no dynamic markings in a piece of music, how is this performance aspect assessed?

If there are no dynamic markings in the music, this performance aspect is not assessed. The mood and character of the piece can be enhanced when candidates make dynamic contrasts even if they are not present in the score.

### Can I make cuts to the music selected to keep within the chosen time limit on each instrument?

Yes, you can make appropriate cuts to keep within the chosen time limit. This should be at the discretion of the centre. You should take care to ensure the music performed by the candidate still meets the minimum requirements, for example National 5 — Grade 3 or above; Higher — Grade 4 or above; Advanced Higher — Grade 5 or above.

### If repeats are included in the timing of a piece, must they be played?

Yes, as visiting assessors are listening to entire programmes.

The same piece could have differences in timings if some candidates choose not to play repeats, while others do — and also if appropriate cuts have been made to fit the candidate's choice of time allocation for their programme

#### What are the drum kit requirements?

For drum kit requirements, centres should be working from the drum kit style bank.

### Can drum kit players perform from a performance plan rather than fully notated music?

Yes. The performance plan would need to contain notated grooves, a minimum of four appropriate fills and a plan stating the overall structure.

The plan of the overall structure could be:

- four bars of groove one then fill
- two bars of groove one then fill
- four bars of groove two then fill
- four bars of groove three then fill (and so on)

When using a performance plan, candidates can embellish the grooves. The fills they play should resemble those notated.

Candidates must demonstrate four-way independence at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

#### What are the requirements for Advanced Higher bagpipes?

A programme at this level must include a piobaireachd, a march, a Strathspey, and a reel. If candidates cannot include all of a piobaireachd within the programme time, they should perform sections of the piobaireachd instead, making sure that the chosen sections are level-specific. Candidates may also choose to miss out repeats in the march, Strathspey and reel to accommodate their chosen time allocation on the bagpipes.

### Can candidates combine bagpipes with tin whistle for their performance programme?

Yes. This is an approved combination of instruments for the performance programme.

#### What are the guitar chords requirements for each level?

There are three different and separate approaches to presenting a guitar programme:

- a programme of pieces of chordal/rhythm guitar throughout
- a programme of pieces which is a mixture of lead/melodic guitar and chordal/rhythm guitar — in which case the full chordal requirements for each level must be in the programme
- a programme of pieces of lead/melodic guitar entirely

In the latter case, candidates do not have to include chords/chordal/rhythm guitar within their programme and the requirement for a set of number of chords does not apply. Centre staff should indicate on the candidate mark sheet which approach has been selected — chordal, melodic or a mixture.

Level	Minimum number of chords	Chordal guitar requirements
National 5	12	Candidates should play chords in a continuous accompanying style, which could include finger picking, arpeggiated chords, barre chords or more complex playing techniques, appropriate to the styles of the music.
Higher	18	Candidates should play chords in a continuous accompanying style, which could include finger picking, arpeggiated chords, barre chords or more complex playing techniques, appropriate to the styles of the music. Techniques might include alternating bass, runs, slurring, bending and harmonics.

Level	Minimum number of chords	Chordal guitar requirements
Advanced Higher	18	Candidates must play single melodic lines at the appropriate standard and incorporate melody and accompaniment in at least one piece. They should play chords in a continuous accompanying style or a more demanding arpeggiated style. Barre chords, varied textures and more complex playing techniques appropriate to the style of the music are expected. Techniques might include alternating bass, runs, slurring, bending and harmonics. Candidates may also incorporate pieces from the classical guitar repertoire in their programme.

### Can guitar candidates perform from tablature during their performance exam?

Yes. However, the SQA visiting assessor must be provided with a copy of the sheet music that includes the melodic line that the chordal guitar is accompanying. This provides a context for the chords.

### Does a chordal guitar programme have to contain barre chords for National 5?

No. There is no requirement to include barre chords at National 5, as long as 12 chords are contained within the programme and candidates demonstrate a variety of strumming patterns.

#### Are ukulele requirements the same as those for guitar?

Yes. Candidates can choose to perform a melodic or chordal programme on ukulele.

### Can candidates use the same strumming pattern throughout a chordal guitar/ukulele programme?

No. Candidates must demonstrate more than one strumming pattern at all levels.

#### What guidance is available on levelling of pieces for voice?

Here is some general guidance to help you benchmark songs, as new repertoire is becoming available all the time.

- ♦ National 5 range of over an octave with some leaps; more demanding rhythmically and in terms of breathing/phrasing, interpretation/characterisation demands.
- ♦ Higher range of over an octave with some demanding leaps; more demanding rhythmically and in terms of breathing/phrasing, interpretation/characterisation demands.
- Advanced Higher range of over an octave with demanding leaps; much more demanding rhythmically and in terms of breathing/phrasing, interpretation/characterisation demands.

### Can candidates use melodic and/or rhythmic licence when performing?

This is acceptable if stylistically appropriate, however it should not be overdone. If candidates make significant additions to the score relating to ornamentation/embellishments, and if they take significant rhythmic licence, they should annotate this on the copy of the sheet music provided for the SQA visiting assessor. This will inform the assessment of the candidate.

#### Is rap acceptable as part of a vocal programme?

For external assessment purposes, all songs in a vocal programme (at any level) must contain a melody line as this is one of the key assessment criteria strands. Rap songs do not fulfil that requirement. If a song contains a rap section, this would be acceptable as long as the melodic part of the song is of a suitable level.

#### Do I need to send music for the performance to SQA for approval?

No, you do not need to send music to SQA for pre-approval, however you can draw on the following as sources of material for the external assessment:

- music previously approved by SQA
- lists of exemplified pieces contained in <u>National Qualifications Music: Performing</u> document
- pieces from a range of external Music examination syllabi

You can present pieces that are not from the sources listed above, but you must ensure that the material meets the standard for any particular level. You can also collaborate and share materials with other centres.

### Should centres record the performance on the day of the assessment?

This is optional. However, we would recommend recording performances to centres that wish to engage fully with the marking review process.

Centres that do not record the performing exam may still request a review of the question paper and the assignment for National 5 and Higher. For more information, please refer to: Post Results Services: Recordings for Music, Drama and Dance Performing Exams.

#### Question paper — general

#### Which chords should candidates know?

At Higher level, the literacy content states that candidates should know chords I, IV, V, VI in major and minor keys. For National 5, the mandatory chords are C major, G major, F major and A minor.

### Do candidates need to be familiar with cadences in each of the major and minor keys?

Yes, candidates could be asked to identify cadences in either major or minor keys.

# Can candidates write their final answers for question 6 (Higher) and question 8 (National 5) in the specimen question papers as bullet points?

Answers can be in the form of bullet points, sentences or continuous prose.

#### How should candidates write their answer for the final question in the Advanced Higher question paper?

For question 6 (a) parts (i) and (ii), candidates can answer using bullet points.

For question 6 (b), candidates should respond in continuous prose and give a description of what they have heard. Please see the marking instructions in the specimen question paper for further guidance.

# In question 8 (National 5), question 6 (Higher) and question 6 (a) (Advanced Higher) of the specimen question papers, should candidates list every concept that they hear?

Candidate responses should contain the prominent concepts under each heading relating to the music heard. Markers will apply penalties if candidates list concepts that are not related to the music and/or provide extensive lists of contradictory concepts.

#### **Question paper — Higher Music**

#### Melody/harmony

#### Is note-naming and transposing into bass clef still a requirement?

Candidates still need to **identify** notes written in bass clef, but this is not part of the requirement to transpose into bass clef. For clarification, in the question paper, candidates could have to transpose notes down one octave from treble clef into bass clef. For example, question 4(a) in the 2015 Higher Music question paper.

#### Do candidates have to identify diminished and dominant chords?

Candidates could be asked to identify diminished and dominant chords within a musical literacy context, in an audio recording. They will not be asked to identify diminished and dominant chords purely from notation. However, they should be able to identify chords I, IV, V and VI, in major and minor keys in treble and bass clefs, for example question 5(a) in the 2016 Higher Music question paper.

### Do candidates need to know the technical names of any of the chords?

No. Candidates need to be able to identify tonic, subdominant and dominant **notes** (1st, 4th and 5th steps of the scale) in the keys of C, G and F major and A minor.

### Do candidates have to name and write intervals formed from the tonic?

Candidates need to be able to **name** the following diatonic intervals (using notes from the scale only — no chromatic notes): 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and octave (8ve); only the size or number of the interval is required. Candidates need to be able to **write** diatonic intervals above a given note in treble clef, for example question 4(d) in the 2016 Higher Music question paper.

#### Rhythm/tempo

### In compound time, which time signatures and note values do candidates need to know?

Candidates need to know:	6	9	12
	8	8	8

Within the context of compound time candidates need to know: quavers, crotchets, dotted crotchets and dotted minims.

#### Which rests do candidates need to know?

The rests used are exactly as before: quaver, crotchet, dotted crotchet, minim and semibreve.

#### Which note values do candidates need to know for triplets?

Candidates need to know triplet quavers and triplet crotchets only.

#### Dynamics/timbre

#### Do candidates need to understand accent and staccato symbols?

Yes, candidates need to understand and, where appropriate, use these symbols:

- accent(>)
- ♦ staccato(.)

#### General questions

### There are a number of new concepts on the Advanced Higher concepts list. What guidance can you provide for these?

#### **Electronic dance music**

Electronic dance music is normally heard in dance clubs where the DJ combines tracks electronically into one smooth mix. Electronic dance music originally featured drum machines, synthesisers and sequencers, but is now mostly produced using computers and software with sampling, effects, and multi-track recording features. Electronic music includes music of different genres, including house music, dubstep, drum and bass.

#### Piano trio

A piano trio is a small chamber group consisting of a piano and two other instruments, normally a violin and a cello.

#### **Contemporary jazz**

Contemporary jazz is an umbrella term for all kinds of jazz music being played now — as well as jazz music of the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s — which can feature some or all of the following:

- sophisticated, highly chromatic harmonies (verging on impressionist or atonal)
- rhythmic experimentation (cross rhythms, changing time signatures)
- a developing groove based on just two or three chords
- instruments used in experimental ways (melodic instruments used in percussive roles, harmonics and other virtuoso performing techniques)
- world music and avant-garde influences
- instruments never used seriously in jazz before (flugelhorn, flute or oboe)

### Do the unit codes for the freestanding *Performing on One Instrument or Voice* units correspond to specific instruments?

The *Performing on One Instrument or Voice* units (F3F4) are still available and will continue as freestanding units alongside the Music courses. These units still have the same code, but they have been renamed as follows, to remove Access 3, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher from the title:

- ★ F3F4 09 SCQF level 3
- ★ F3F4 10 SCQF level 4
- ◆ <u>F3F4 11</u> SCQF level 5
- ◆ F3F4 12 SCQF level 6
- ★ F3F4 13 SCQF level 7

The content of the units is unchanged. The unit titles and codes do not correspond to specific instruments or voice. You cannot enter a candidate for the same unit and level twice. However, you can enter candidates for the *Performing on One Instrument or Voice* unit at different levels, presenting the better instrument at the upper level, for example F3F4 12 for SCQF level 6 and F3F4 11 for SCQF level 5.

#### What Understanding Standards materials are available for Music?

SQA are publishing examples of candidate evidence with commentaries as part of the Understanding Standards programme. These materials are for teachers and lecturers to help them develop their understanding of the standards required for assessment. As these materials become available, they will be published in the following locations:

- ♦ SQA's secure website materials relating to the externally-assessed assignment, performance and portfolio. Teachers and lecturers can arrange access to these materials through their SQA co-ordinator.
- Understanding Standards website materials relating to the question papers.

You can also access Understanding Standards materials through the CPD tab on the National 5 and Higher Music web pages. For more information about our Understanding Standards programme, please visit our Understanding Standards page.

#### How are scaled marks calculated for National 5 and Higher Music?

Marks are scaled for the question paper, assignment and performance by SQA. Please refer to the scaling tables in Appendix 1.

#### Unit assessment

#### Music: Composing Skills unit

### What are the main differences between SCQF level 6 and SCQF level 7 (Advanced Higher) for the Music: Composing Skills unit?

The unit assessment support packs contain useful information on requirements for all levels and are published on SQA's secure website. The significant differences between the requirements for the freestanding SCQF level 6 unit and the SCQF level 7 (Advanced Higher) unit are in bold below.

SCQF level 6 candidates must generate evidence that demonstrates they have met minimum competency for each of the four assessment standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.

#### Music: Composing Skills (SCQF level 6) unit

- For assessment standard 1.1, candidates are expected to analyse two selected examples of music and demonstrate a clear understanding of the influences on composers' work and their specific approach to creating music.
- For assessment standard 1.2, candidates are required to experiment in creative ways and to use at least eight music concepts.
- For assessment standard 1.3, candidates are required to develop ideas and use at least eight music concepts.
- For assessment standard 1.4, candidates are required to critically reflect on their music and creative choices and identify any chosen approaches that were particularly successful in meeting their creative intentions and identify at least one area for improvement.

#### Music: Composing Skills (SCQF level 7) unit

- For assessment standard 1.1, candidates are expected to analyse two selected examples of music and demonstrate a **high level understanding** of the influences on composers' work and their specific approach to creating music.
- ♦ For assessment standard 1.2, candidates are required to experiment in **sophisticated** and creative ways and to use at least **12 music concepts**.
- ◆ For assessment standard 1.3, candidates are required to develop ideas and use least 12 music concepts.
- For assessment standard 1.4, candidates are required to critically reflect on their music and the impact of their creative choices. They are also required to identify any chosen

approaches that were particularly successful in meeting their creative intentions and identify two areas of strength and two areas for development in the music.

### Do candidates need to compose an extended piece of music for the *Music: Composing Skills* unit?

Candidates do not need to compose a complete piece of music; however, they may choose to do so. The key focus of the *Music: Composing Skills* unit is the ongoing acquisition of composing skills, and candidates can demonstrate this by composing short sections of music.

You should use your professional judgement to decide the most appropriate approach for each candidate. Some candidates may benefit from a range of tasks to strengthen and further develop their composing skills, while for others one task could suffice.

# Do the eight concepts required for the *Music: Composing Skills* (SCQF level 6) unit have to come from the Higher concepts? Can they be literacy concepts?

All eight concepts do not need to be from Higher level. They can also come from lower levels, but the way in which candidates deploy them should show increased selection/ discrimination, development and refinement through the levels — they should show a step up from SCQF level 5 to SCQF level 6.

Literacy concepts could be used as part of the (minimum) eight concepts and candidates should deploy them in a Higher-level way and context. The majority of the (minimum) eight concepts should not be literacy concepts as this would not provide enough breadth or scope at Higher level.

#### **Understanding Music unit**

# For *Understanding Music* assessment standard 1.2 at SCQF level 6, are candidates required to carry out the assessment tasks on two styles of music?

Candidates are not required to analyse two different styles. If they generate adequate evidence during one assessment task, which focuses on one style of music, this is acceptable.

At SCQF level 6, candidates should demonstrate their analysis skills by:

- identifying key features and significant components within the music
- establishing and describing the relative importance of components on the style of the music
- explaining the impact of specific social and cultural influences on the distinctive sounds and development of the musical style

## Understanding and Analysing Music (Advanced Higher — SCQF level 7) unit

### Are there set periods or styles of music I should use in the *Understanding and Analysing* Music unit?

The music candidates listen to and analyse can come from any genre, period or style, but it must be sufficiently contrasting to provide breadth and scope for Advanced Higher candidates.

#### How many pieces of music should candidates study?

Candidates should study a minimum of two pieces. These may be from the same style or period but, again, should be sufficiently different to give breadth and scope.

#### Is there a set number of concepts that candidates should cover?

The context and content of the music provides the challenge at Advanced Higher. There is no set number of concepts. Concepts can be drawn from a number of levels.

### Do candidates have to present the evidence for this unit in essay format? If so, what is the word count?

Candidates may present their evidence in essay format. However, there is a range of ways of presenting evidence (for example presentations, radio broadcasts, videos).

If candidates chose to write an essay, there is no specified word count, but they should be able to meet the assessment standards in around 1,500 words. Other forms of candidate evidence should provide equivalent points and features included in an essay.

#### How can I approach this unit with my candidates?

This unit is all about personalisation, choice and opportunities for specialism. There are a number of creative ways to approach it. One is to listen to a number of contrasting pieces of music from different genres and styles. Then, according to the interests of the candidate, start to specialise.

One approach is to relate the pieces of music chosen for study to the instrument the candidate plays. A guitarist could look at two movements from different guitar concertos — one by Vivaldi and one by Rodrigo. There is also potential for integration with the *Music:* Performing Skills unit in that the candidate could perform examples of music from these works and fulfil the evidence requirements of the Performing Skills unit. Another example: a candidate who is interested in vocal music could select two songs to study, for example Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody and The Beatles' Eleanor Rigby. These songs are from contrasting eras, genres and styles and lend themselves to social and cultural exploration.

### Should evidence for this unit include individual audio files for all sections of the music analysed by the candidate?

No, individual audio files are not required. Sections could be referenced using extracts from the score or a reduced score. Where a full score is not available, you should provide the full audio along with timings for the particular sections the candidates have analysed.

#### Music: Performing Skills unit

### What duration should a candidate's programme for the *Music: Performing Skills* unit be?

The *Music:* Performing Skills unit does not specify how long each example of music should be for the candidate to meet assessment standard 1.1 on both instruments, or instrument or voice.

Candidates do not need to perform complete pieces. They may choose to focus on the section(s) of a piece that demonstrate that the music is of the appropriate level.

To fully meet assessment standard 1.1, candidates must perform a minimum of four examples of music (two on each instrument).

### What are the requirements for drum kit players for the *Music: Performing Skills* unit?

For the *Music: Performing Skills* unit drum kit candidates have to play a minimum of two examples at the appropriate level (Grade 5 for Advanced Higher — SCQF level 7, Grade 4 for SCQF level 6, Grade 3 for SCQF level 5, Grade 2 for National 4 and Grade 1 for National 3).

The examples of music for National 4 (SCQF level 4), SCQF level 5, SCQF level 6 and Advanced Higher (SCQF level 7) candidates should include three different fills and demonstrate four-way independence.

The examples of music for National 3 candidates should include two different fills and demonstrate three-way independence.

At all levels, candidates should perform examples of music in contrasting styles and they should select only one style from each of bank 1–9. Please refer to page 20 of the National 5 Music Course Specification. The drum kit style bank applies to all levels.

### What standard should songs be for the National 3 and National 4 *Music: Performing Skills* units?

As new music is available all the time, here is some general advice to help benchmark songs:

- ◆ National 3 limited melodic range with no demanding leaps. Short phrases and very simple rhythmic patterns.
- ◆ National 4 range of an octave or just over. Simple rhythms. No great demands regarding phrasing or vocal leaps.

#### National 4 added value unit

### What is the minimum and maximum time requirement on each instrument for the added value unit?

Level	Associated board equivalent (minimum standard)	Total programme duration	Maximum time on one instrument	Minimum time on other instrument	Other possible combinations of minutes
National 4	Grade 2	8 minutes	6 minutes	2 minutes	4 and 4 5 and 3

### For the added value unit assessment are the two instruments considered separately?

Yes. Candidates must reach basic competence on both instruments to pass the added value unit. Assessors should make a holistic judgement for each instrument. They should take account of the quality of all of the evidence available for each instrument/voice across the full programme.

### For the performance in the added value unit, do centres have to record all pieces?

Yes. Centres must record all pieces for both instruments/voice. This forms part of the evidence requirements for this unit.

### For the performance in the added value unit, can the assessment be split over a period of time?

The procedure for the National 4 added value unit and the National 5 course assessment should be similar — the National 4 performance should replicate as far as possible the external assessment conditions for National 5. It may not be possible for candidates to perform both instruments back-to-back, but they should complete both performances within a reasonable period. Candidates should complete both performances within one assessment session. This session could be on the same day — for example, candidates could perform on instrument one in the morning and instrument two in the afternoon.

For National 5 course assessment, candidates could perform on two instruments within the time that the visiting assessor is in the centre and this could be the assessment session.

#### What are the drum kit requirements for the added value unit?

Centres should be working from the drum kit style bank. Candidates have to play in three styles, demonstrating four-way independence, and include three appropriate and different fills within each style. The pieces should be of Grade 2 level.

#### What are the chordal guitar requirements for the added value unit?

Chordal guitarists must demonstrate nine chords in a continuous accompanying style, which could include arpeggiated chords.

# **Appendix 1: National 5 and Higher Music scaling table**

Mark	Scaled mark 40–35	Scaled mark 30–15	Scaled mark 30–25
	(question paper)	(assignment)	(performance)
1	1	1	1
2	2	1	2
3	3	2	3
4	4	2	3
5	4	3	4
6	5	3	5
7	6	4	6
8	7	4	7
9	8	5	8
10	9	5	8
11	10	6	9
12	11	6	10
13	11	7	11
14	12	7	12
15	13	8	13
16	14	8	13
17	15	9	14
18	16	9	15
19	17	10	16
20	18	10	17
21	18	11	18
22	19	11	18
23	20	12	19
24	21	12	20
25	22	13	21
26	23	13	22
27	24	14	23
28	25	14	23
29	25	15	24
30	26	15	25
31	27		
32	28		
33	29		
34	30		
35	31		
36	32		
37	32		
38	33		
39	34		
40	35		

National Qualification questions and answers can be found on the <u>frequently asked</u> <u>questions section</u> of SQA's website.