



Common questions about National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Art and Design

National 4

What are the requirements of the National 4 Added Value unit?

Candidates select one expressive idea and one design idea from their previous work. They use these ideas to plan and produce a final piece of expressive artwork and a design solution. They then evaluate both pieces of work.

This unit is internally assessed. Candidates do not need to mount or formally present their work.

A unit assessment support pack, which includes a template, is available for teachers and lecturers. Candidates can use this to evaluate and record evidence of their work.

What is the threshold for the number of assessment standards candidates need to meet to achieve the National 4 Added Value unit?

Candidates must meet 7 out of the 10 assessment standards to achieve the National 4 Added Value unit.

National 5 and Higher

What is the structure of the National 5 and Higher Art and Design courses?

National 5

There are three externally assessed course assessment components:

- ◆ question paper — 50 marks (20% of the total mark)
- ◆ expressive portfolio — 100 marks (40% of the total mark)
- ◆ design portfolio — 100 marks (40% of the total mark)

Higher

There are three externally assessed course assessment components:

- ◆ question paper — 60 marks (23% of the total mark)
- ◆ expressive portfolio — 100 marks (38.5% of the total mark)
- ◆ design portfolio — 100 marks (38.5% of the total mark)

National 5 course assessment — question paper

Why was the question paper changed for session 2019–20?

Our analysis of the 2019 question paper and grade boundary statistics demonstrated that questions 1(b) and 7(b) did not perform as we expected. As a result, we adjusted the 2019 grade boundaries and reviewed the wording we used in these questions and their marking instructions for future years.

For the 2018 and 2019 question papers, the marking instructions for questions 1(b) and 7(b) stated that 1 mark should be awarded for each point that explained the impact of a social, cultural or other influence on any of the selected artist's or designer's work and practice, up to a maximum of 5 marks. In line with these marking instructions, responses that identified an influence, but did not explain its impact, were not awarded marks.

Starting in the 2020 question paper, candidates will be awarded up to 2 marks for identifying influences on their selected artist or designer. The remaining 3 marks will be awarded for describing how these influences can be seen in any of their work.

We revised the specimen question paper (including marking instructions) in October 2019 to exemplify these changes. You can find this on the [Art and Design subject page](#). The marking instructions included in the specimen question paper give full details on how marks will be awarded. They include examples of responses that will and will not gain marks.

Do candidates have a choice of questions in the question paper?

The National 5 question paper has two sections: Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies. In each section, candidates complete one mandatory and one optional question. In both sections, candidates should attempt the mandatory question and select **one** from a choice of five image questions.

How many artists do candidates need to study?

Questions 1(a) and 7(a) (mandatory questions) ask candidates to comment on two artworks by different artists that they have studied. Candidates should study artworks or designs that prepare them for responding appropriately to three unseen prompts in each question.

Questions 1(b) and 7(b) ask candidates to select **one** artist or designer whose work they discussed in part (a) and identify two influences on that artist or designer, and then describe how these influences can be seen in any of their work.

Does the National 5 question paper have specific categories?

No, the National 5 question paper does not identify specific categories. However, it has questions on 2D and 3D artworks. In the Expressive Art Studies section, people, places and objects (or combinations of these) are represented with a variety of approaches, including media and techniques such as:

- ◆ painting
- ◆ photography
- ◆ mixed media work
- ◆ sculpture
- ◆ installation
- ◆ contemporary and traditional approaches

A range of 2D and 3D design areas are represented in the Design Studies section, including examples of design work from the following broad categories:

- ◆ visual communication or graphics
- ◆ product design
- ◆ environmental design (architecture or structures or interiors)
- ◆ jewellery
- ◆ fashion or textile design

Do candidates have to write about a contemporary artist or designer?

No. Candidates are not penalised if their responses do not refer to a contemporary artist or designer.

Higher course assessment — question paper

Do candidates have a choice of questions in the question paper?

The Higher question paper has two sections: Expressive Art Studies and Design Studies.

In the Expressive Art Studies section, candidates answer **three** questions: the mandatory question and **two** of the five optional questions.

In the Design Studies section, candidates answer **three** questions: the mandatory question and **two** of the five optional questions.

Does the Higher question paper have specific categories?

The Higher question paper does not identify specific categories. However, it has questions on 2D and 3D artworks. In the Expressive Art Studies section, people, places and objects (or combinations of these) are represented with a variety of approaches, including a range of media and techniques such as:

- ◆ painting
- ◆ photography
- ◆ mixed media work
- ◆ sculpture
- ◆ installation
- ◆ contemporary and traditional approaches

A range of 2D and 3D design areas are represented in the Design Studies section, including examples of design work from the following broad categories:

- ◆ visual communication or graphics
- ◆ product design
- ◆ environmental design (architecture or structures or interiors)
- ◆ jewellery
- ◆ fashion or textile design

How many artists do candidates need to study?

Candidates should study a range of different artists and designers to allow them to respond effectively to the optional questions. These questions require candidates to demonstrate specialist knowledge and understanding of art practice and issues.

Questions 1 and 7 (mandatory questions) ask candidates to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of one artwork and one design, and to explain how social, cultural and/or other influences impacted on the artwork or design. Candidates should study artworks or designs that prepare them for responding appropriately to these questions.

Do candidates have to write about a contemporary artist or designer?

No, the Higher question paper does not specifically ask for responses to include reference to a contemporary artist or designer. Candidates are not penalised if they do not refer to a contemporary artist or designer.

Do candidates have to give biographical information about artists or designers?

The Higher question paper does not ask for biographical information on artists or designers. However, candidates can give biographical information in response to questions 1 and 7 (mandatory questions) where they are explaining the impact of social, cultural and/or other influences on an artwork or design. If they do include biographical information, it must be connected to the impact on the work. Candidates do not gain marks for general biographical information that they have not related to the selected artwork or design.

National 5 and Higher course assessment — portfolio

Where do I include the new flyleaf for National 5 and Higher?

Starting in session 2019–20, candidates must complete a flyleaf for both the expressive and design portfolios. We've added the flyleaf to bring the coursework submission in line with other subjects and so that candidates can clearly indicate if they have included their evaluation.

The completed flyleaf must be attached to the back of the first sheet of the portfolio.

You can find flyleaves for National 5 and Higher on our website.

How can candidates present their portfolio work?

Candidates can present their work in a variety of ways. They must label their submission, indicating the number of sheets (1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3 as appropriate) on the back of each sheet in the portfolio.

For both the design portfolio and the expressive portfolio, all work, including 3D work, should not exceed three A2 size, single-sided sheets or equivalent.

Portfolios must be able to be folded to a size not exceeding A1.

Layering of work is not acceptable. All work selected for external assessment should occupy its own space on the sheets.

Each portfolio submitted to SQA must be packaged separately. One package should contain candidates' expressive portfolios and one package candidates' design portfolios. For further details, please refer to the [Art and Design Portfolio Assessment](#) web page.

The selection of candidate work should reflect the requirements of the National 5 or Higher portfolio assessment task.

Can teachers and lecturers help with mounting the portfolio work?

The course specifications for National 5 and Higher state that candidates must undertake the assessment independently.

Candidates may discuss the various options with their teacher or lecturer, but the final decision on which work to include and the layout must be the candidate's own. This is because 40 marks are available in each portfolio assessment for the candidate's understanding of the creative process.

The physical sticking down of the work does not attract marks. Teachers and lecturers can help with mounting as long as the candidate has selected and laid out their work independently. Teachers and lecturers must not alter the candidate's selection or layout of work in any way if they help with mounting.

How should candidates present their evaluations?

Candidates must complete and submit the mandatory evaluation templates with their design and expressive portfolios. These templates are available on the National 5 and Higher Art and Design web pages under the 'coursework' tabs.

Candidates should take care to attach the expressive evaluation to the expressive portfolio and the design evaluation to the design portfolio.

Candidates should complete the evaluations on the A4 templates and include them on the first sheet of the portfolio. The evaluation must not obscure the candidate's expressive or design work. The portfolio, including the evaluation, must not exceed three A2-sized sheets or equivalent. There is no word count, but evaluations may not exceed the A4 space provided. The evaluation template is set up with a font style and size that must not be amended.

Evaluations should focus on evaluative rather than descriptive comments. For further information, please refer to the detailed marking instructions in the National 5 and Higher Art and Design portfolio assessment tasks.

Should the portfolios demonstrate evidence of the candidate's investigation into artists and designers?

No. Candidates demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of artists and designers and their work in the question paper. However, a candidate's portfolio is likely to draw on and develop aspects of this understanding through their use of visual and/or design elements or their choice of theme and/or stimulus.

Candidates could choose to refer to aspects of their study of artists and designers — such as a particular painting or piece of design — if it helps to showcase the development process.

Do candidates need to include investigation and research work in the portfolio?

Yes, candidates must include investigation and research work in the portfolios for National 5 and Higher.

For the expressive portfolio, candidates must include relevant 2D or 3D analytical drawings, studies and investigative research. Investigation can also include experimentation with materials, techniques and/or technology. All investigation and research included must have a clear link to the theme and/or stimulus and the subsequent work in the portfolio.

For the design portfolio, candidates must include relevant investigative material and market research. Investigation can also include experimentation with materials, techniques and/or technology. All investigation and research included must have a clear link to the design brief and the subsequent work in the portfolio.

How much investigation and research work should candidates include in the portfolio?

There is no prescribed amount of investigation and research for the portfolio. This work is worth fewer marks than the other elements of the portfolio, so the volume of work should be proportionate to the marks available. The nature and volume of the investigation and research depends on the candidate's approach. The marks for process are awarded for relevance.

Can candidates have their portfolio work returned to them?

Yes, candidates can request that we return their National 5 and Higher portfolios. For further information, please visit the [return of materials](#) web page.

Are there exemplar portfolios?

Exemplar portfolios are available on the Understanding Standards webpage (www.understandingstandards.org.uk) and on SQA's secure site under the 'Understanding Standards' tab.

Advanced Higher

What is the structure of the Advanced Higher Art and Design courses?

Advanced Higher Art and Design (Expressive and Design)

Both of the Advanced Higher courses contain one externally assessed component: a portfolio. The portfolio has three sections:

- ◆ practical work — 64 marks
- ◆ contextual analysis — 30 marks
- ◆ evaluation — 6 marks

Do candidates need to include investigation and research work in the portfolio?

Yes, candidates must include investigation and research work in the portfolio for both Advanced Higher courses.

For the expressive portfolio, candidates must include relevant 2D or 3D analytical drawings, studies and investigative research. Investigation can also include experimentation with materials, techniques and/or technology, and exploration of relevant cultural contexts, artists' work and practice. All investigation and research included must have a clear link to the theme and/or stimulus and the subsequent work in the portfolio.

For the design portfolio, candidates must include relevant investigative material and market research. Investigation can also include experimentation with materials, techniques and/or technology, and exploration of relevant cultural contexts, designers' work and practice. All investigation and research included must have a clear link to the design brief and the subsequent work in the portfolio.

How can candidates present their practical work in the portfolio?

Portfolio sheets at Advanced Higher level can be up to A1 in size. Candidates can submit a minimum of eight A1 sheets and a maximum of 16 A1 sheets or equivalent. Candidates should number their portfolio sheets to indicate the order in which markers should view them. Numbering can go on the front or back of the sheets.

Candidates can submit sketchbook(s) as evidence where they show further development and/or resolution of initial idea(s). Candidates must bookmark the appropriate pages if only part of a sketchbook is to be marked. Sketchbook pages are included in the overall allocation.

Candidates can submit 3D work, or photographs of 3D work, as part of the portfolio, as appropriate. Any 3D work they submit counts towards the overall allocation.

Candidates should submit photographic prints, and not the actual work, for:

- ◆ two-dimensional work in excess of A1 size
- ◆ work using valuable or expensive material
- ◆ work of a fragile nature
- ◆ work that is large, heavy or otherwise difficult to handle

Digital submissions must not exceed 5 minutes.

If the practical work exceeds the maximum, a penalty is applied. Candidates should include the size of their portfolio on the flyleaf.

How can candidates present the contextual analysis?

The contextual analysis has a word limit of 2,000 words. Candidates should include the word count on the flyleaf. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied.

The contextual analysis should include clearly captioned images of the artwork(s) or design work(s) researched. Candidates must clearly cite the sources within the text and reference them using appropriate conventions.

The contextual analysis should analyse a work or group of related works associated with the practical work. It should also explore selected aspects of contextual connections or ideas that link to the topic. Candidates may deal with these two parts, analysis and context, separately or together.

How should candidates present their evaluation?

Candidates must complete their evaluation on the SQA evaluation template provided on the subject page. There is no word count, however candidates must not exceed the space given on the template (approximately 400 words). The evaluation template is set up with a font style and size that must not be amended.

Within the evaluation template, candidates can give a summary of their creative intentions for the expressive portfolio, or a summary of their design brief for the design portfolio. They can also briefly explain how their contextual analysis relates to their practical work.

Are there exemplar Advanced Higher portfolios?

We hosted Revised Course Assessment events in September 2019. At these events, we showcased exemplar portfolios for the expressive and design courses that showed variations of how candidates can present work. These portfolios, including commentaries, are available on the Understanding Standards website (expressive portfolios) and SQA's secure website (design portfolios and all contextual analysis documents).

Can candidates submit a moving image piece or animation as the final piece for an expressive portfolio?

An animation is an acceptable expressive final piece of work. Please note that digital submissions must not exceed 5 minutes.

There are specific marks for coherence in the Advanced Higher Portfolio Assessment Task, so candidates should structure and present the practical work as a single consistent enquiry and clearly show the process of developing ideas. It is important that candidates present the work in a way that puts the development of ideas at the centre of the submission.

Can candidates have their Advanced Higher portfolios returned to them after the external assessment?

Yes, candidates can request that we return their Advanced Higher portfolios. For further information please visit the [return of materials](#) web page.

National Qualifications questions and answers are available on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.

Questions and answers on the changes to National Courses are available at www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges.