

Graphic Communication

The Qualifications Team

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Changes to assessment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

As announced by the Deputy First Minister in September 2016, units and unit assessments are being removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses on a phased basis over three years:

- National 5 from 2017–18
- Higher from 2018–19
- Advanced Higher from 2019–20

For more information, including a Q&A on the implications of these changes, please visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges.

Units that were previously part of National 5 courses

The units that were previously part of National 5 courses are now freestanding units at SCQF level 5. They can no longer be used to contribute to the achievement of a National 5 course.

We will remove all references to National 5 courses from the unit specifications, unit support notes and unit assessment support packs in due course, and the unit support notes will be added to the unit specifications as an appendix. The unit specifications will also be relocated to a new freestanding units web page for each subject.

Further information on the timescales for this will be provided in our weekly Centre News newsletter.

Changes to assessment in National 5

The National 5 Graphic Communication course is now assessed through the following components:

Component	Marks
Question paper	80
Assignment	40

Clarification of course content in the National 5 course

The course content has not changed. Therefore, the validity of learning and teaching resources used by centres in session 2016–17 is also unchanged.

Changes to assessment in Higher courses from session 2018–19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from Higher courses from session 2018–19 and we have started our review of the Higher course assessments. For this, we are working closely with our National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) for each subject. Our NQSTs include teachers and lecturers who currently deliver National Courses, and representatives of professional associations. We will also meet with a sample of teachers to gauge their views on the proposed changes and the implications of these.

The publication of new and revised Higher materials will follow a similar timescale to National 5:

End of April 2018	Revised Higher course specifications
End of May to end of September 2018	Course support notes New/revised specimen question papers New/revised coursework assessment tasks

We will provide further information on what the changes to assessment are for each subject by the end of January 2018.

Conditions of assessment for coursework

To ensure fairness for all candidates, it is essential that the specified assessment conditions for coursework are consistently applied in all centres. The following documents detail the specific conditions that must be followed in each assessment:

- course specification
 - course assessment specification (Higher and Advanced Higher only)
 - coursework assessment task
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In addition to these documents, you must also refer to the following document, which is available from the coursework section of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher web pages:

- [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)

This document provides important information on the time and volume of assessment, the use of resources, and the supervision, control and authentication of assessment — including examples.

Changes to documents

New and revised National 5 documents and assessment support materials

Following the removal of units and unit assessments from the National 5 Graphic Communication course, we have strengthened the course assessment to ensure it assesses the full content of the course.

We have published revised course specifications and new assessment support materials for the National 5 course, which detail the requirements of the revised course assessments from session 2017–18 onwards. The documents are available from the National 5 subject web pages at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. Further information on the changes to documents and assessment support materials is provided below.

Course specification

In April 2017, we published a revised course specification which provided detailed information about the National 5 course and course assessment, including the conditions of assessment that must be followed. The revised document was produced by merging the previous course specifications, course assessment specifications and general assessment information into a single, streamlined document. Course support notes have been added to the course specification as an appendix.

The National 5 Graphic Communication course specification is available on the [National 5 Graphic Communication web page](#).

Specimen question paper

The specimen question paper has been revised to match the new mark allocation, duration and content area/sampling regime. This is shown in the course specification.

The specimen question paper is available on the [National 5 Graphic Communication web page](#).

Coursework assessment task

A specimen coursework assessment task has been created to match the new mark allocation and duration. This assignment is now externally assessed, has a time limit, and is subject to more stringent assessment conditions.

Before candidates start the National 5 assignment, we recommend that teachers and lecturers take the opportunity (perhaps in the class period before the candidates are due to begin) to take the candidates through the coursework documentation — the instructions and the assignment itself — to ensure that all candidates understand what is expected of them and what the conditions of assessment are. Candidates will still have to respond to the assignment themselves.

The specimen coursework is available on the [National 5 Graphic Communication web page](#).

Supportive resources

National 5 CPD webinar

To help teachers and lecturers prepare for the changes to assessment in the National 5 course, we ran a subject-specific continuing professional development (CPD) webinar that focused on the requirements of course assessment.

A recording of the webinar is available to view online via our website and can be accessed from the **CPD webinar/audio and support** tab on the [National 5 Graphic Communication web page](#).

Q&A document on the changes to assessment

During the question and answer section of the National 5 webinar, we received a number of questions about the changes to assessment. These can be accessed from the 'Changes to assessment: Questions and Answers' tab on the [Graphic Communication subject web page](#).

National 5 course events

We hosted a series of subject-specific events that focused on the changes to course assessment at National 5. During these events, teachers and lecturers had the opportunity to discuss the changes and to ask questions.

Common questions

We have updated our Common Questions document, to reflect the type of queries that we have received. This document can be found on the [Graphic Communication subject web page](#).

Further information and guidance

Coursework

SQA coursework assessments, whether internally or externally assessed, are secure documents. They are available on our secure website and they cannot be shared or discussed elsewhere. Other forums, particularly on social media, are not secure.

Recruitment

SQA is always looking for markers (for question papers and coursework) to support external assessment activity. If you would be interested in marking any of the technology subjects, please refer to the 'Recruitment' section of the SQA website:

<https://appointeeopportunities.sqa.org.uk/vacancies.html>

Course reports

Each year, SQA produces a course report for each subject/level. The course report highlights any issues that have been identified through quality assurance for internal, and external assessment and provides guidance for teachers and lecturers — essential reading for all deliverers.

Internal verification

A requirement of approval to offer SQA qualifications is that a centre has, and applies, an internal verification policy. Through our verification activity, we have found that most centres are carrying out some form of internal verification. It is also essential that the outcome of this activity is recorded and acted on.

Where two sets of marks have been allocated to a piece of work, a record of the discussion and the decision of which one to use must be kept.

External verification

For session 2017–18, we have decided to undertake external verification as an event activity. This means that, if selected, centres will need to submit their materials for uplift and we will not be undertaking any verification visits.

Delivery time

The Graphic Communication National 5 course is delivered over 160 hours of class time, as indicated by the SCQF level and points. This includes 40 hours for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning, preparation for course assessment and the course assessment itself.

Submission date — internal assessment mark form

Please note that the submission date for the internally assessed marks of the Higher and Advanced Higher assignment component of course assessment is 27 April 2018. Please refer to your SQA co-ordinator to make sure that all marks are prepared in time for this.

Submission date — external assessment uplift

Please note that the uplift date for the externally assessed National 5 assignment is 21 March 2018. Please refer to your SQA co-ordinator to ensure that all materials are prepared in time for this.

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