

Advanced Higher English

Subject-specific guidance on gathering key evidence in session 2020–21



Please read this guidance alongside [National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates](#) and the SQA Academy resource, [Quality assurance of estimates for National Courses](#).

Gathering key evidence for Advanced Higher English

This document and *National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates* will give you additional support and guidance to support your decision making for session 2020–21. Evidence should be gathered later in the course, as a realistic reflection of a candidate's attainment. It is important to note that it is not the **quantity** of evidence, but the **quality** of evidence, in relation to its predictive value, that will support you during this process.

The following types of key evidence are likely to provide a good predictive value and may be helpful to you, although there may be other types of key evidence you would like to use.

Types of key evidence

You can generate the most valid evidence for this course by using the approach exemplified in the SQA question papers and coursework tasks. However, you do not need to simulate an exam setting in order to produce evidence. You should gather evidence where candidates have had opportunities to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learned from the course in unseen situations.

The relative weightings of marks which contribute to the Advanced Higher English course are given below. You should take these into account when reviewing candidates' assessment evidence across the four contributing components.

Question paper components

Candidates do not need to produce evidence for question paper components on a single occasion, but it is important that assessment tasks are unseen.

It would be best to make final assessment decisions on key evidence towards the end of the academic year when all or the majority of the course has been delivered. Assessments for question paper components could be devised using:

- ◆ 2021 Advanced Higher question papers
- ◆ commercially produced question papers
- ◆ centre-devised questions
- ◆ questions selected from a range of SQA past papers
- ◆ questions selected from SQA past papers which have been amended

Component 1: Literary Study

This component has a relative weighting of 20% of the overall course assessment.

This assessment task gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their critical reading skills and their knowledge and understanding of previously-studied literary texts. Candidates apply their understanding, analysis and evaluation skills to previously-studied texts from one of the following genres: poetry, prose fiction, prose non-fiction, or drama. This takes the form of one appropriately structured critical essay.

This assessment task requires candidates to make connections and/or comparisons across texts. The required number of texts should be specified in each question:

- ◆ poetry: three poems
- ◆ prose fiction: two novels or three short stories
- ◆ prose non-fiction: at least two non-fiction texts
- ◆ drama: two plays

Refer to [Advanced Higher English Course Specification](#), page 9.

Component 2: Textual Analysis

This component has a relative weighting of 20% of the overall course assessment.

This assessment task gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their critical reading skills in response to an unseen literary text. Candidates apply their understanding, analysis and evaluation skills to one unseen text from the genres of poetry, prose fiction, prose non-fiction or drama and produce a critical analysis which is appropriately structured to meet the demands of the question.

Refer to [Advanced Higher English Course Specification](#), page 10.

Coursework components

Component 3: portfolio–writing

This component has a relative weighting of 30% of the overall course assessment.

Although writing remains a central focus of the Advanced Higher English course, for session 2020–21 it is not necessary to take evidence from two pieces of writing. High predictive value can come from one piece of writing, which you must conduct under some supervision and control.

The writing can be from any of the following genres:

- ◆ persuasive
- ◆ informative
- ◆ argumentative
- ◆ reflective
- ◆ poetry

- ◆ prose fiction
- ◆ drama

Candidates produce the piece of writing independently, but you can support candidates to choose the topic, theme and genre of the piece of writing, in addition to providing feedback on one draft.

Refer to [Advanced Higher English Course Specification](#), pages 11–17.

Component 4: project–dissertation

This component has a relative weighting of 30% of the overall course assessment.

The project–dissertation assesses candidates’ independent reading of complex and sophisticated literature. It provides evidence of candidates’ skills in critical analysis, evaluation, investigation and writing. Candidates’ chosen text(s) for the dissertation must be literary, and must be untaught. The dissertation should be between 2,500 and 3,500 words in length.

Candidates must carry out the assessment independently, and must take the initiative in planning, management and completion of the task. However, you may support candidates in the planning and preparation of the dissertation. You should read and provide feedback (written or spoken) to candidates on a dissertation which is at the draft stage. This feedback should consist of directional support offering guidance in summary form, rather than detailed commentary.

Refer to [Advanced Higher English Course Specification](#), pages 18–25.

Using additional assessment resources for session 2020–21: key information

It is important that you use valid and reliable assessment when gathering evidence in session 2020–21.

In Advanced Higher English, SQA will provide question papers (Literary Study and Textual Analysis) for session 2020–21. Please note that the marking instructions have not been standardised based on candidate responses. You may therefore need to agree within your centre how to consistently mark an item if a candidate response is not covered by the marking instructions.

The Advanced Higher English question papers will only be available on SQA’s secure website — you must treat these confidentially, in the same way as other live assessment materials.

You have the option to use the question papers as internal assessments for gathering candidate evidence. Question papers can be split to support assessments you carry out during class time.

If you use a question paper in part or in its entirety, you should remind candidates that they must not discuss the content of the paper with anyone, including friends, family or on social media.

Understanding the national standard

National standards are exemplified through marked examples of candidate work from previous examination diets, which illustrate how marking instructions are applied. These examples and assessment commentaries are available on [SQA Understanding Standards Advanced Higher English web page](#).

When considering evidence for the portfolio–writing, you can find examples of marked candidates’ work, with accompanying commentaries, from 2016 and 2019. Further examples of reflective writing have also been added.

For Literary Study, there are marked candidate responses to a range of popular texts across all genres from 2016 and 2017.

For Textual Analysis, marked examples of candidates’ work from 2016 and 2017 exemplify how the marking instructions work across all genres.

Two types of resource are included for the project–dissertation: examples of full, marked dissertations from 2016 and 2019, and a list of topics or tasks with accompanying advice on their suitability.

Judging evidence

When marking centre-devised assessments (which may include SQA past paper questions) it is important to use the methods described in SQA marking instructions. These can be found using the [past paper search facility](#).

For writing, you should use the portfolio–writing marking instructions in the [Advanced Higher English Course Specification](#), pages 14–17, and for the project–dissertation, you should use the project–dissertation marking instructions, pages 23–25.

Summary

A holistic review of a candidate’s performance in Advanced Higher English should have as its focus four key pieces of evidence. One from each listed below:

- ◆ Literary Study
- ◆ Textual analysis
- ◆ Portfolio–writing
- ◆ Project–dissertation

Supplementary, naturally occurring evidence can also contribute to a holistic judgement.