Common questions about National 3, National 4, National 5 and Higher Administration and IT

Unit assessment — National 3, National 4 and freestanding units

How can I re-assess candidates?

You can re-assess candidates using materials from a different unit assessment pack or by producing your own assessments to meet the assessment criteria. Where appropriate, oral questioning is acceptable for re-assessment, but you must document this for verification purposes.

Where assessment standard thresholds apply, you can find details in the unit specifications. If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of assessment standards, they will be judged to have passed the unit overall and no further re-assessment is required.

Can I produce my own assessment materials?

Yes. If you are making major changes to the questions and/or activities in the unit support packs, or writing your own, you are advised to have your materials 'prior verified' by SQA before you use them.

Find out more about [SQA's prior verification service.](#)

Do all units in the National 3 and National 4 courses assess keyboarding skills?

No. We do not assess keyboarding skills in the National 4 Administrative Practices unit. However, keyboarding skills are part of the error tolerance for all other units, as follows:

- National 3 units — 1 error per 10 words
- National 4 units — 1 error per 15 words

Do all SCQF level 5 and 6 freestanding units assess keyboarding skills?

No. We do not assess keyboarding skills in the Administrative Practices (SCQF level 5) unit or the Administrative Theory and Practice (SCQF level 6) unit. However, keyboarding skills are part of the error tolerance for all other units, as follows:

♦ SCQF level 5 freestanding units — 1 error per 20 words
♦ SCQF level 6 freestanding units — 1 error per 25 words

Course assessment — National 5 and Higher

Does the maximum time for the National 5 and Higher assignments include printing time?

No. Candidates can have additional printing time for the National 5 and Higher assignments at the end of each sitting (National 5 up to 2 sittings and one sitting for Higher). However, we anticipate they will print individual tasks as they work through the assessment. If a candidate notices a missing printout, they should reprint this in the additional time — but they must not complete or amend any tasks, other than print settings.

At the end of the assignment, candidates must check they have all printouts and place them in the correct order behind the flyleaf. Teachers or lecturers can support this. If your centre chooses to invigilate the assignment, this means teachers or lecturers can be in the room towards the end of the assignment.

Does the maximum time for the National 5 question paper include printing time?

No. Invigilators will allow candidates additional printing time for the National 5 question paper, if required. However, we anticipate candidates will print individual questions as they work through the assessment.

When does SQA release the National 5 and Higher assignments to centres?

The assignments and associated e-files are published on SQA's secure website. We will notify centres in advance when they will be available. You can arrange access to the assignments and e-files through your SQA co-ordinator.

How long do candidates have to complete the National 5 assignment?

Candidates have three hours to complete the assignment (excluding printing time). They must complete it in a maximum of two sittings, under a high degree of supervision and control.

If additional printing time is required, candidates should complete this immediately after each sitting. This is a closed-book assignment.

How long do candidates have to complete the Higher assignment?

Candidates have two hours to complete the assignment (excluding printing time). They must complete it in one continuous sitting, under a high degree of supervision and control.

If additional printing time is required, candidates must complete this immediately after. Everyone in your centre must complete the assignment on the same day. If not, you must inform SQA when you submit the assignments. This is a closed-book assignment.

Are screenshots acceptable as evidence for internet research tasks at National 5?

Yes. However, we recommend that candidates continue to print directly from websites and include their name in the header or footer to show it is their work.

If this is not possible (due to the browser), candidates can screenshot the relevant information from the websites into a document and include their name in the header or footer to show it is their work.

Is there a question paper at National 5 and what does it assess?

Yes. The question paper assesses IT functions in spreadsheet and database applications, and administration theory. It is worth 50 marks. During the exam diet, candidates have two hours (excluding printing time) to complete all tasks in the question paper using IT applications.

Can a teacher, lecturer and/or technician be in the room during the National 5 exam?

No. Once the question paper packet is open, only invigilators can be in the room. However, a teacher, lecturer and/or technician should be available to help with any technical issues that may occur.

What should candidates be able to access during the National 5 exam?

Candidates must have access to the e-files for the question paper issued by SQA. They must not have access to any other files or the internet.

When are the e-files available for the National 5 exam?

SQA releases the e-files to SQA co-ordinators approximately three days before the exam to allow teachers, lecturers and/or technicians to check that the files are compatible with the system candidates will use for the exam.

Centres should only transfer the e-files one hour before the scheduled start time of the exam.

General

Where can I find information about course content for National 5 and Higher?

Information about course content is in the course specifications, available on the [subject level pages](#) of SQA's website.

In a spreadsheet question, would it be acceptable to name the cell where an absolute cell reference is required?

Yes. Naming a cell is one way of using an absolute cell reference.

What is the difference between an aggregate function and a summary calculation?

An aggregate function is used within the query function to summarise data. It groups information by the data within a field and then performs a summary. For example, grouping on town and then counting how many shops are in each town

A summary calculation is used in a report and can be used as part of the wizard function before the report is completed. Alternatively, the summary calculation can be carried out once the report is complete using the totals function within design or layout views.

What should candidates include for e-diary printouts?

Candidates should print daily or weekly diary printouts, as specified in the task. However, if the printout is truncated, they should also print the event in such a way that enables keyboarding skills to be assessed.

What do you mean by social media? What social media would be acceptable for candidates to use in their responses to questions and tasks for National 5 and Higher?

Social media is a range of communication and information platforms that continue to develop at pace. Examples include social networks, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and games.

It enables the sharing of ideas, thoughts and information between users. They engage through either web-based software or applications using, for example, a computer, laptop, tablet, console or smartphone.

It is not possible to have a definitive list of social media, however, the following are current examples: TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat (December 2021).

In our National 5 and Higher Administration and IT courses, social media is under the communication topic. Please refer to our course specifications for details on what could be assessed.

Can candidates use a screen reader?

Yes. If a candidate (as part of an assessment arrangement) requires a digital assignment and/or question paper to use with a screen reader, you must request this with the Assessment Arrangements Team by the published closing date. However, there are some limitations and our Assessment Arrangements Team will provide you with guidance.

What other resources are available?

As part of our Understanding Standards programme, we provide a range of online resources to help you understand what is required in the course assessments for National 5 and Higher. Understanding Standards materials are available from www.understandingstandards.org.uk.

We have produced a list of links to the online assessment resources available for each level. You can access these from the Understanding Standards tab on the relevant subject level pages of SQA's website.

You will find general questions and answers about National Qualifications on our website at www.sqa.org.uk/faq