



Common questions about National 4 and National 5 Electronics

Delivering this qualification at National 4 and National 5

Why has the name of the course changed from Practical Electronics to Electronics?

Some National 5 practical subjects have removed the question paper from session 2026–27 onwards. However, as this subject has more theory than other practical courses, we are keeping it. Research conducted in 2024 showed that the question paper is an effective way to sample knowledge and understanding. In June 2025, we surveyed teachers and students to find a suitable new name for the qualifications. Both groups preferred 'Electronics' as the new name.

What software does SQA recommend?

SQA does not recommend any specific software. However, we do give a list of what candidates need access to, so they can complete the tasks within the course.

Our centre has an OLE server that won't work for images. Is it acceptable to use an attachment field instead?

Yes, an attachment field is acceptable.

Can centres deliver this course if they already do Physics and/or Engineering Science

No. Centres must apply for approval before delivering this qualification for the first time and must consider what resources they have available.

To deliver this qualification in the next academic session, and to allow us to certificate candidates in August the following year, centres must apply for approval by the end of September of the previous year. You can find out more about the [National Qualification approval process](#) on our website.

What are the subject-specific requirements for this course?

Teachers and lecturers delivering or assessing National 4 or National 5 Electronics must have one of the following:

- ◆ a physics or technology teaching degree
- ◆ a degree in a physics, electronics, electrical engineering, or a technology area, with a post-graduate teaching qualification and relevant experience in electronics

Centres must have the following available to all candidates:

- ◆ a laboratory or electronics workshop, equipped with power and appropriately ventilated
- ◆ soldering equipment and a range of electronic components, and circuit construction and testing tools
- ◆ IT equipment, including appropriate circuit-simulation software
- ◆ personal protective equipment
- ◆ a health and safety policy, and risk assessment in place

National 4

Does the National 4 added value unit change from year to year?

You can currently choose between three assessments. After the second year of implementation, centres can create their own added value unit assessments.

Can the National 4 added value unit be created from coursework tasks candidates have seen as part of the National 5 course?

You must use an SQA National 4 added value unit in the first two years of delivery, without any changes. Thereafter, you must compare any evidence used against the assessment standards in the National 4 added value unit assignment. While they may be similar in context, both the National 4 added value unit and the National 5 assignment are separate assessments. You can find the National 4 and National 5 assessments on [SQA's secure site](#).

What are the conditions of award for National 4?

To achieve the National 4 Electronics course, candidates must pass all the mandatory units, including the added value unit. National 4 courses are not graded. You can find more information about the units in the course specification on the [National 4 Electronics page](#) of our website.

Has there been an update to the National 4 assessment standards?

Yes. Based on feedback from teachers, and as part of our ongoing review and maintenance of National Courses, we updated the assessment standards for National 4 Electronics in May 2024 to better streamline the assessments and remove any unintended duplication.

You can find out about updated National 4 assessment standards on the [National 4 Electronics page](#) of our website.

Do you provide any sources of information to help me teach the course?

Yes. We provide advice and guidance for teachers and lecturers on learning, teaching and assessments in course and unit support notes on the [National 4 Electronics page](#) of our website. You'll also find verification reports, course reports and understanding standards material in the same place.

How should we gather and judge evidence?

Your SQA co-ordinator can help you access unit assessment support tasks on [SQA's secure site](#).

You can also find useful information on the secure, closed Facebook group page 'Stripboard'.

National 5

Do all candidates have to complete the added value unit and the National 5 coursework task?

National 5 candidates do not have to complete the National 4 added value unit. You should enter candidates at the most appropriate level.

How can I prepare my candidates for the question paper?

You can find past papers, marking instructions and course reports on the [National 5 Electronics page](#) of our website. You should also read the course and the verification reports.

Practical activity

When can candidates start the practical activity?

Candidates can start the practical activity when you feel they are fully prepared and have covered all the course content.

What evidence do candidates need to gather?

The following evidence is required for the assessment:

- ◆ the completed solution (constructed circuit or photographs and/or hard copy from simulation software)
- ◆ a record of progress through the task, including all items of evidence specified within the assessment task
- ◆ a short report on testing the solution (in written, electronic and/or oral form)
- ◆ evidence of the candidate's degree of independence and safe working (detailed assessor observation notes). You must retain evidence for quality assurance purposes.

Is there a word count or page limit for the assessment?

No. There is no word count or page limit.

Assessment arrangements

My candidate has assessment arrangements in place for the question paper; how do I apply these to the coursework?

Please email the Assessment Arrangements Team at aarequests@sqa.org.uk, or call 0345 213 6890 to discuss.

Assessment conditions

What are the assessment conditions for the practical activity?

The practical activity is set by SQA, from a bank of four assessments available on [SQA's secure site](#). Candidates should carry out the practical activity under open-book conditions, but you must supervise them to ensure that the work presented is their own. Centre staff internally mark evidence, and all marking is quality assured by SQA. You can find further information on assessment conditions in the course specification (page 13 onwards) on the [National 5 Electronics page](#) of our website.

How much time are candidates allowed?

There is no specific allocation of hours for the practical activity. Centres should, however, manage the timeframe of each assessed area appropriately, and set checkpoints throughout the assessment.

Estimates

Do I need to estimate a grade for my candidates?

Yes. Providing a grade estimate is a condition of offering the qualification and is necessary for those candidates who use our exceptional circumstances service. You should base the estimate for each candidate on evidence generated from the assessment and formal exam experiences throughout the session.

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