



Common questions about National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Graphic Communication

National 4 added value unit

Can centres create their own assessment for the National 4 added value unit?

Yes, centres can create their own assessment as well as use the ones supplied in the assessment bank on the secure site. Centres should ensure that any assessments they create are at the same level of difficulty as those on the secure site.

If candidates achieve the National 4 3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication unit, and the 2D Graphic Communication unit, but do not pass the added value unit, can they be awarded a National 3 course?

Yes. Candidates in this position can be awarded a certificate for National 3 Design and Technology. However, this process is not automatic. Centres must enter them for the National 3 Design and Technology course.

Question paper

Does SQA publish examples of good and poor candidate responses for the question paper?

Yes, please see the course reports — they include a summary of areas candidates performed well in and areas candidates found demanding. They also contain advice on preparing future candidates and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course reports are available from the subject level pages of our [website](#).

National 5, and Higher and Advanced Higher exemplification of candidate responses is available on the [Understanding Standards website](#).

Coursework

Assessment arrangements

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

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

Annual issue of National 5 and Higher assignments

The National 5 and Higher assignment changes each year — what happens if candidates complete the wrong one?

This should not happen as the assignment is only available on our secure website and it clearly shows for which session it is valid. If candidates do not use the current assignment, they cannot gain any marks.

When will the National 5 and Higher assignments be published on SQA's secure website?

We will publish the assignments in January.

Assessment conditions

Can I discuss the content of the National 5 and Higher assignment on forums or secure groups?

No. The assignment is a secure course assessment (the mark contributes to the candidate's overall grade). It is available on our secure website, and you must not share or discuss it on forums, including social media.

When can I explain the requirements of the National 5 and Higher assignment to candidates?

We recommend doing this during the last period of class time before candidates begin the assignment. You can take candidates through the instructions and the assignment task to ensure they understand the assignment conditions and requirements. However, after this, candidates must undertake the assignment on their own.

Can the class discuss the National 5 and Higher assignment as a group before they begin?

No. Group activity is not permitted in the assignment. It must be conducted under a high degree of supervision to ensure each candidate produces a response to the assignment on their own.

At National 5 and Higher can I teach some content, have candidates complete part of the assignment, teach more content, and then have candidates finish the assignment?

No. Candidates must undertake the assignment after all the course content has been delivered. The assignment must not be interrupted by periods of learning and teaching.

Can I review or provisionally mark a candidate's National 5 or Higher assignment work?

No. Once complete, or when the 8-hour time limit has passed, the assignment must be prepared for submission to SQA for external assessment.

The time allocation for the National 5 and Higher assignment is 8 hours. Do candidates have to spend a full 8-hour day completing their assignments?

No, there is no requirement for candidates to complete the assignment in one 8-hour session. However, they do need to undertake the assignment in consecutive periods of subject time. For example, Graphic Communication is on period 1 on Monday, period 3 on Wednesday and period 5 on Friday. The candidate would begin on Monday and then stop to attend their other classes. The candidate would resume on Wednesday, stopping again, before starting again on Friday, and so on. The teacher or lecturer must ensure that candidates' work (and the assignment) remains secure between class periods.

The National 5 and Higher assignment has a time limit of 8 hours — what happens if a candidate doesn't finish in this time? How will SQA enforce the 8-hour time limit?

The assignment has a fixed duration. If a candidate does not finish in the available time, you must submit the work they have completed to SQA for marking.

Centres must ensure that candidates understand what they need to do to comply with the instructions for controlled assessments. Not adhering to the 8-hour time limit is candidate and/or centre malpractice.

It is important that SQA and centres work together to protect the credibility of the qualifications system. Concerns that assessment standards may not be applied consistently can put the value of our qualifications at risk, and negate candidates' hard work.

Is there a page limit for the assignment and is there a penalty for exceeding it?

The page limit for National 5 is eight pages and the page limit for Higher is ten pages. There is no penalty for exceeding the specified number of pages at these levels. If candidates produce more (or fewer) pages, these will all be marked.

At Advanced Higher the project has a 20-page limit, and a penalty is applied if candidates exceed this by more than 10%.

What should I do if a candidate is caught cheating while undertaking their coursework?

Any instances of candidate malpractice must be investigated and resolved in line with your centre's procedures.

Coursework task

Do National 5 and Higher candidates have to create their own drawing frames to BS888?

No. Teachers and lecturers may give their candidates CAD drawing frames to work on. The marks assigned to British Standards in the assignment are for the candidates being able to recognise and use the standards correctly, not for being able to set up a drawing template, although this is a useful skill for candidates to have.

Can National 5 and Higher candidates use a straight edge for sketching, and can they use isometric grids and squared paper?

In tasks requiring candidates to sketch, and where candidates choose to do this manually, they can use a straight edge.

National 5 and Higher candidates should be able to sketch manually without the aid of either straight edges or grid paper. However, if you feel that a candidate (at any level) requires either a straight edge or grid paper, they can use them.

Can National 5 and Higher candidates use radius aids?

Any radius aid, such as circle or ellipse templates, French curves, and flexi curves, is regarded as drawing equipment. Candidates must not use radius aids for sketching work.

Can National 5 and Higher candidates sketch manually then scan in and digitally enhance or manipulate?

Yes, but if they do this, they must do it within the 8-hour time limit.

For the Advanced Higher project at the preliminary sketching stage, should candidates present details of the intended modelling techniques as a written modelling plan or annotation which accompanies the sketches?

Each approach is valid. Candidates use the approach that they feel best demonstrates their skill and helps them effectively plan their solution.

In Advanced Higher project work would you expect to see the 'datum feature symbols' applied in candidates' work?

We would not expect to see them in most project work. However, they have always been in the course specification and candidates should be aware of what they are for and what they look like in drawings, where appropriate. The same applies to surface finish symbols.

Should candidates use placeholder text in their Advance Higher project solutions?

No. Placeholder text is used in the development process and candidates must not use this in their commercial and visual media graphics (CVMG) or technical graphics (TG) solutions.

Estimates

Do I need to estimate a grade for my candidates? How can I determine this without marking their assignments or projects?

Yes. An estimate is a condition of offering the qualification and is necessary for candidates who use our exceptional circumstances service. You should base the estimate for each candidate on evidence generated throughout the session. This could include prelims, class tests or practice coursework activity.

External assessment of coursework

Will SQA return assignments and projects to centres once they are marked?

No, SQA will not return coursework to centres as a matter of course. However, you can request the return of externally assessed coursework items from our [website](#).

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