

# Common questions about National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Physical Education

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## Updated documents (June 2024)

To make our courses more inclusive we have been working in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport and have made changes to the following documents at all levels:

- National 3 and 4 course and unit support notes
- National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course specification and coursework assessment task documents

### National 4

#### **How many physical activities do candidates have to provide evidence for in the *Factors Impacting on Performance* unit?**

While the context for learning can be provided by a range of physical activities, candidates must provide evidence for assessment from a minimum of **one** physical activity.

#### **How many physical activities do candidates have to provide evidence for in the *Performance Skills* unit?**

While the context for learning can be provided by a range of physical activities, candidates must provide evidence for assessment from **two** activities. All assessment standards must be met for **each** of these physical activities (activity 1 and activity 2).

#### **What is the required context for the added value unit assessment?**

The context of assessment must allow candidates to experience a more competitive or demanding performance environment, such as a tournament or competition, an athletics event, a swimming gala, or a gymnastic or dance display. This could be carried out within the centre or between centres. For further information please refer to the National 4 Added Value Unit Specification on the [subject page](#).

## **National 5**

### **What is the structure of the National 5 Physical Education course?**

Please see page 1 of the National 5 Physical Education Course Specification on the [subject page](#).

### **National 5 course assessment — portfolio**

#### **How many factors does the portfolio cover?**

Within section 1 of the portfolio, all four factors, Mental, Emotional, Physical and Social will be assessed. In section 2 of the portfolio, candidates must select two factors to demonstrate their understanding of the performance development process.

#### **Where can I find the portfolio coursework assessment task?**

Coursework assessment tasks that do not change annually can be found on the subject pages. You can find the portfolio coursework assessment task on the National 5 Physical Education [subject page](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

#### **Do I need to use the portfolio template?**

Yes. Qualifications Scotland has produced the template that candidates **must** use when submitting their Physical Education portfolio. This template can be found on the National 5 Physical Education [subject page](#) under the 'Coursework' heading. The submission instructions for the National 5 Physical Education portfolio document are also available under the 'Coursework' heading.

#### **What is the best way to complete the portfolio?**

You should decide on the most suitable method to complete the portfolio. The templates are in Microsoft Word and/or PDF format and Google docs. Candidates can either type or handwrite into these templates. Candidates must use blue or black ink.

## **Does the portfolio have to be completed under supervision?**

- Section 1 is conducted under a high degree of supervision and control. Candidates must be within direct sight of the supervisor throughout the session(s). Candidates must not interact with other candidates.
- Sections 2 and 3 are conducted under some supervision and control. Candidates do not need to be directly supervised throughout the session(s).

**Candidates must not directly copy the examples provided in the additional guidance section of the marking instructions.** They cannot obtain marks if they use these examples.

## **When should candidates complete their portfolio?**

The portfolio may be completed at any time during the course. You should decide when candidates have sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the portfolio.

## **Where should candidates complete their portfolio?**

Candidates should complete the portfolio in their centre.

## **Does the portfolio need to be retained between sessions?**

Yes, candidate work must be retained by centres between sessions. If candidates complete the portfolio electronically, centres should select the most appropriate backup approach. For example, candidates could use a folder on the network which is secured by staff at the end of each classroom session. Deciding how best to retain the portfolio is a centre decision.

## **What resources can candidates use when completing the portfolio?**

When completing section 1, candidates are not allowed access to any resources. For sections 2 and 3, there are no restrictions on the resources that the candidate may have access to but at no time should this include model answers or writing frames such as outlines or headings. Examples of resources which can be used to complete

the assessment include spider diagrams, bulleted notes from class or homework, or mind maps of key points. Please refer to the [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#) document on the [subject page](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **Can candidates complete the portfolio questions from the portfolio as homework or as part of teaching and learning?**

You should not give out portfolio questions as homework tasks or complete them in class as part of teaching and learning. This is to ensure that all responses to the portfolio questions are the candidate's own work. It would be good practice to assign tasks or homework that relates to the portfolio question being covered, but not the exact question from the portfolio. You could give feedback to candidates on these specific tasks or questions.

You can give candidates verbal or written feedback but that should come in the form of challenge questions to draw out further knowledge. Generic examples may be 'further detail required', 'Can you explain this more clearly?', 'What is the impact of this?'. After receiving feedback, candidates could revise their answers. Once they have improved their responses, they could enhance their understanding by breaking down their answers into note form. This exercise will strengthen their learning. The candidates would then use these notes during their 'portfolio write up' session for the specific question. The use of full responses that have had multiple attempts or large amounts of feedback during this type of 'write up' would indicate a candidate had been over supported.

For example, for question 2A, you could assign a task to the class to discuss and explain the problems they faced while collecting data on their selected factors. The class can respond either verbally or by writing their responses in their jotters. You can then give feedback on the quality of each candidate's response. Candidates may then amend their answers based on the feedback received. After making the suggested adjustments, they could break their answers down into note format in a separate notes booklet. You should check to ensure that answers are not written in full sentences before candidates use their notes booklet in the 'portfolio write up' session. You must not provide feedback on the notes or on the responses written in the portfolio template for question 2A.

If feedback provided directly to the candidate from the teacher provides more detail and that detail would be awarded marks, this would be considered as assisting the candidate to produce a model answer.

Please find below an extract from the National 5 PE coursework assessment task portfolio document which clarifies the acceptable level of feedback for a teacher or lecturer to provide when undertaking the assessment:

'If a candidate gets stuck at a particular part of the task, the teacher or lecturer may assist by drawing out or teasing out points without leading the candidate or supplying the actual answers. For example, in question 2f, if a candidate is struggling to identify a target for each factor from the data gathered, the teacher or lecturer may discuss the data, asking questions on its content but without actually providing the candidate with the answer.'

## **What feedback is acceptable when completing the portfolio?**

Candidates must complete the assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. During teaching and learning before the assessment has taken place, you could give feedback to encourage the candidate to do further work on their own to find the solution, rather than telling them exactly what they need to do to get the marks.

## **Can candidates re-draft any sections of the portfolio?**

As long as you have not given feedback candidates can amend their work prior to submission. This is not classed as re-drafting. Once the portfolio is submitted candidates should not access it again.

## **What must be attached to the portfolio template?**

Candidates can attach a maximum of four A4 pages of data they have gathered and these pages must have the candidate's SCN (Scottish Candidate Number) at the bottom of each page. They must transfer any relevant information from their Personal Development Programme (PDP) to the PDP table in the portfolio.

## **When does the portfolio need to be submitted?**

You must submit the completed portfolio by the uplift date. Uplift dates can be found in the *Delivering National Qualifications Key Dates* document on Connect.

## **Higher**

### **What is the structure of the Higher Physical Education course?**

Please see the Higher Physical Education Course Specification on the [subject page](#).

### **Where can I find exemplification of the Higher question paper?**

The specimen question paper is available on the [subject page](#). This illustrates the standard, structure and requirements of the question paper candidates will sit. The specimen paper also includes marking instructions and definitions of the command words used.

## **Advanced Higher**

### **What is the structure of the Advanced Higher Physical Education course?**

Please see page 1 of the Advanced Higher Physical Education Course Specification on the [subject page](#).

### **Do I need to use the project template?**

Yes. Qualifications Scotland has produced the template that candidates **must** use when submitting their Physical Education project. Candidates must state their project focus on the first page.

This template can be found on the Advanced Higher Physical Education [subject page](#) under the 'Coursework' heading. The submission instructions for the Advanced Higher Physical Education project document are also available under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **Is there a limit to the number of appendices a candidate can submit?**

There is no limit to the number of appendices that can be submitted. However, you must only include information that is referenced within the project in the appendix.

## **Can the project focus be on more than one factor?**

Candidates should ensure their chosen performance topic gives a clear focus and allows for depth of study across all stages of the project. Candidates may select a focused topic where, potentially, several factors are included, however a clear link must be established when taking this approach.

## **Can the project and performance activity be different?**

Yes. But the activities selected must adhere to the 'Acceptable activities for assessment purposes' section in the performance coursework assessment task on the Advanced Higher Physical Education [subject page](#).

## **Are there any preferences for the review of sources?**

The sources of information could include books, journals, periodicals, websites, podcasts and interviews. These sources should be current, reliable and relevant to the topic of study.

# **National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course assessment — performance**

## **How is the performance component assessed?**

The performance is assessed against specific criteria. The assessment criteria are described in the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher coursework assessment tasks on the [Physical Education subject pages](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **For National 5 and Higher do the two activities for the course assessment need to be different?**

Yes. Candidates need to be assessed in two different physical activities with significantly different movement and performance skills for their coursework to help ensure that the course assesses a breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **Who decides which activities are acceptable for the course assessment?**

You must decide on acceptable activities by referring to the instructions in the coursework assessment task document on the [Physical Education subject pages](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **Which activities can disabled candidates use for assessment?**

Candidates should discuss and agree the activities they want to choose with you, based on their individual assessment needs and abilities. Only candidates with physical disabilities and who would ordinarily use a wheelchair and/or powerchair to participate in sport and physical activity can choose wheelchair and/or powerchair activities. Para versions of activities are also acceptable.

Boccia can only be used by candidates with profound physical disabilities. Scottish Disability Sport classifies 'profound physical disability' as a physical impairment affecting all four limbs and where the person would use a wheelchair and/or a powerchair for day-to-day activity.

Goalball can only be used by candidates with severe vision impairment.

## **What changes are made to the marking instructions when assessing candidates with a disability?**

No modifications or adaptations can be made to the marking instructions.

It is the context which can be changed to provide an equal opportunity for disabled candidates to **demonstrate their attainment** in an assessment (for example to show the skills, knowledge and understanding they have achieved) without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

## **Why did Qualifications Scotland publish instructions on acceptable activities?**

Based on feedback from Understanding Standards events and surveys there were requests from teachers and lecturers for greater clarity around acceptable activities, activities that are not acceptable, and also restrictions on combinations of activities (for National 5 and Higher).

Qualifications Scotland needs to make decisions that will ensure consistency across all centres. There is an enormous number of activities available for candidates, which preserves personalisation and choice.

## **If I don't have expertise in an activity, can someone else help me such as a teacher from another centre or a coach?**

The assessments need to be carried out by qualified PE teachers and lecturers.

There are instances of PE teachers from one centre helping another, which is acceptable. Where this is the case, the visiting PE teacher must be involved in agreeing the context for the activity before the assessment takes place to make sure the demand is appropriate for a single performance and must also be involved/included in the centre's internal verification procedures.

## **For National 5 and Higher can a candidate be given a coursework assessment performance mark for more than two activities and their best scores submitted?**

No. The performance for National 5 and Higher course assessment is two **single** performance events. The context of each performance must be challenging, competitive and/or demanding. Therefore, evidence cannot be gathered over a series of different performance events. This would also apply to candidates undertaking Advanced Higher.

## **Can a candidate be assessed in June for their single performance if a centre's academic year begins then?**

Yes, candidates can only be assessed within the academic year of presentation.

## **How long should the candidate's performance last?**

The performance has to be of sufficient length to allow candidates to demonstrate the required skills, for example, in some activities this would be a set period of play. In others, such as field events, it would be the number of attempts normally given, with decisions being taken and acted on between attempts and still within the duration of the performance.

## **How many candidates should I assess at any one time?**

This will vary depending on the activity but don't try to assess too many at once. You need to be confident that you are able to devote enough time to each candidate in order to observe, assess and record achievement against each of the assessment items.

## **Should I know the candidate's tactics and role in advance of the assessment?**

Yes. It is good practice to understand what the candidate intends to do before the assessment. It may also be appropriate to have a brief discussion with the candidate after their performance to allow the candidate to explain their thought processes.

## **What information should I give to candidates?**

You should give candidates a copy of the 'Instructions to candidates' section of the coursework assessment task document for the performance and the opportunity to see and discuss the assessment items.

## **Is it necessary to record comments when assessing performances?**

Yes. It is necessary to record candidate achievement for each of the performances. Recording documents can be found in the performance coursework assessment task. Assessors must ensure comments about how assessment judgements have been made for each candidate are included on the documentation.

Centres must retain performance assessment records for one calendar year after completion of the course and these must be made available to Qualifications Scotland on request. This requirement is consistent with our retention policy.

## **Can I video performance assessments and mark them later?**

This is a centre decision. You can find advice on videoing assessments in the coursework assessment task document on the [Physical Education subject pages](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **What happens if a candidate does not attend their single performance event for reasons beyond their control, or if a candidate is injured during their single performance event?**

Guidance has been produced on what centres should do if a candidate does not attend their single performance event for a reason beyond their control, or if a candidate is injured during their single performance event.

It is **not** for a candidate who believes they have under-performed on the day. The guidance outlines what centres should do if a candidate cannot attend a single performance assessment for reasons beyond their control, or if a candidate is injured during a single performance assessment.

The *Guidance for internally assessed coursework component* is available on the [subject page](#) under the 'Coursework' heading.

## **Should centres inform candidates of internal assessment results?**

Candidates must be informed of the result of internal assessment (pass/fail, or their grade or mark) in line with our key dates to allow August certification to proceed. This includes marks for internally assessed course component assessment (IACCAs).

Candidates should be informed that the result is provisional if their work is subject to external verification by Qualifications Scotland. In such cases, candidates should be informed of final results after external verification.

## **What happens if a candidate wants to appeal their mark for the single performance event?**

As part of a centre's quality assurance system, there must be a documented procedure for dealing with candidate appeals against their internal assessment results if they feel that they have been treated unfairly. If this appeal has not been resolved by the assessor, the internal verifier can have a role in providing a second opinion.

You can find advice about recommended stages of the appeal process in the [Internal Verification: a guide for centres](#) document.

You will find general questions and answers about National Qualifications on our [website](#).