



Common questions about National 4 and National 5 Practical Metalworking

Can we change the size of the practical activity — my materials supplier can only provide thickness x when thickness y is required?

You cannot change any part of the practical activity, except for the thickness of the materials used. If the prescribed thickness is not available (typically due to supplier issues) you can change this, but you will need to amend the working drawings to take account of it. Please refer to the practical activity documentation for further information.

My candidates don't like the practical activity — can we make something else?

The practical activity is a mandatory course assessment component. The only activity that is valid is the one that SQA provides for that stated academic session.

If you feel other assessments may be more engaging for candidates, then use these as part of your learning and teaching activities.

The practical activity changes each year, what happens if my candidates do the wrong one?

We can only award marks for the current practical activity. The activity is available on SQA's secure website and clearly shows for which session it is valid.

Do we need to provide an estimated grade for each candidate?

Yes. Not only is it a condition of offering the qualification, but it is a necessity for candidates who may need to make use of our [Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service](#).

Can we just print out the practical activity and hand it to candidates to do?

No. The practical activity includes instructions for teachers and lecturers, and instructions for candidates. These may vary each year, but they will include an introduction to the practical activity and information on how to prepare candidates before they begin.

Can we discuss the content of the practical activity on forums or secure groups?

No. The practical activity is a secure course assessment, held on SQA's secure website. The candidate's mark contributes to their overall grade. You cannot share or discuss the activity on other forums, which are not secure, including social media.

Is it possible to deliver some content, have the candidate carry out part of the practical activity, deliver more content, and then have the candidate complete the practical activity?

No. You cannot interrupt the practical activity by periods of learning and teaching. Candidates should carry out the activity after you have delivered all the course content.

As we cannot interrupt the practical activity by periods of learning and teaching, does this mean that candidates have to do this for a full day and for a number of days?

No. Candidates should carry out the activity in consecutive periods of time. For example:

Practical Metalworking is on period one on Monday, period three on Wednesday and period five on Friday. Candidates would begin on Monday and then stop to attend their other classes. They would resume on Wednesday, stopping again, before starting again on Friday.

You must ensure that candidates' work (and the practical activity) remain secure between class periods and throughout the process.

Does my centre need specific approval to offer these qualifications?

No, National 4 and National 5 Practical Metalworking are now auto-approved for use in centres.

Can we use the coursework mark from last session for a resit candidate?

No. We issue the practical activity annually and it is only valid for that academic session. A resit candidate has to carry out the practical activity relating to the session that they are sitting the question paper.

Is SQA considering a Higher course in this subject area?

There are no plans to develop an SCQF level 6 (Higher) qualification in Practical Metalworking. Courses in this subject are only available at SCQF level 4 (National 4) and SCQF level 5 (National 5).

Where can I find more advice on marking the practical activity?

We have produced videos that detail how to apply the practical activity marking instructions to a candidate's piece of work. You can view these on our [Understanding Standards website](#).

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