



Common questions about Practical Metalworking

Changes to National 5 course assessment for session 2025–26

Will there be a question paper in session 2024–25?

Yes. The last question paper for National 5 Practical Metalworking will be in May 2025. From session 2025–26, there will be no question paper.

Will there be a replacement for the question paper?

Yes. We will add a case study worth 10 marks to the practical activity. We've updated the specimen practical activity to include a case study.

National 5 practical activity

The practical activity changes each year. What happens if my candidates do the wrong one?

Candidates must complete the current practical activity. It is only available on our secure website, and it clearly shows which session it is for.

My candidates don't like the product in the practical activity. Can they make something else?

No. The SQA practical activity is mandatory. We only publish one practical activity annually on our secure website, and it is only valid for that academic session.

You can incorporate other products into your learning and teaching activities if you think your candidates would engage with them more.

Can I discuss the practical activity on forums or secure groups?

No. The practical activity is a secure assessment, and the mark contributes to a candidate's overall grade. It is only available on our secure website and teachers, lecturers and candidates must not share or discuss it on other forums, including social media.

Do I need to prepare anything for the practical activity before my candidates start it?

The practical activity includes instructions for teachers and lecturers, and instructions for candidates. These instructions can vary each year, but they always include an introduction to the practical activity and information on how to prepare candidates before they begin.

Can I deliver some content, have candidates carry out part of the practical activity, deliver more content, and then have candidates finish the practical activity?

No. Candidates must start the practical activity at an appropriate point in the course, once all content has been delivered and without interruption by periods of learning and teaching.

Can I change the size of the product in the practical activity?

You cannot change the size of the product in the practical activity. Candidates must do the practical activity as published by SQA. (The only exception concerns the thickness of materials. See question below.)

My materials supplier can only provide thickness x when thickness y is required. Can I change the thickness of the product in the practical activity?

You can change the thickness of the materials if you cannot provide the prescribed thickness (typically due to supplier issues). If you change the thickness, you must amend the working drawings to take this into account. Refer to the practical activity documentation for further information. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Can I use the practical activity mark from last session for a candidate who is repeating the course?

No. We publish a new practical activity annually and it is only valid for that academic session.

If I am delivering the course over two years, when do I give candidates the practical activity?

Candidates must start the practical activity at an appropriate point in the course, once all content has been delivered. If you deliver the course over two years, candidates must do the practical activity in the second year of delivery, the same year they receive their results.

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

You can find videos that explain how to apply the practical activity marking instructions to a candidate's work on our [Understanding Standards website](#).

General

Does my centre need specific approval to offer Practical Metalworking courses?

No. Centres do not need approval from SQA to offer the National 4 and National 5 Practical Metalworking courses.

Do I need to provide an estimated grade for each National 5 candidate?

Yes. Centres must provide an estimated grade for each candidate. This is a condition of offering the National 5 Practical Metalworking course.

What should I do if a candidate needs additional support or has an assessment need?

You should contact the [Assessment Arrangements Team](#) to discuss the needs of the candidate. We deal with every request on an individual basis to ensure equity for all candidates and that the most appropriate arrangement is in place.

If candidates are doing freestanding units rather than the course, how long do I need to keep evidence of unit assessment?

You must keep unit evidence until the end of the academic session in which you made the assessment decisions. However, if your centre changes unit entries after 28 February (for example changes a level, changes a result, or makes a new unit entry), you must retain the assessment evidence until 30 September in the same calendar year.

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