National 5 Business Management

Guidance on gathering key evidence for producing estimates in session 2020–21

This document provides subject-level guidance to SQA approved centres on gathering key evidence to support estimates for National 5 Business Management in session 2020–21. You should read this guidance alongside National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates and the SQA Academy resource, Quality assurance of estimates for National Courses.

This document also includes information on subject-level assessment resources.

Gathering key evidence to produce estimates for National 5 Business Management

Every year you provide estimates for your candidates. This document and National Courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates will give you additional support and guidance to support your decision making for session 2020–21. Evidence should be gathered later in the course, as a realistic reflection of a candidate’s attainment. It is important to note that it is not the quantity of evidence, but the quality of evidence, in relation to its predictive value, that will support you during the estimation process.

The following types of key evidence are likely to provide a good predictive value and may be helpful, although there may be other types of key evidence you feel you would like to use.

Types of key evidence and assessment resources

You should base your estimate decision on a holistic review of evidence that demonstrates a candidate’s knowledge and understanding for all five areas of study in the course.

We recommend that you use key evidence to support your final estimate decision. This could be a fully internally-assessed question paper (IAQP) or a version of this split into smaller assessments.

You could create an IAQP using:

◆ SQA’s 2021 question paper (SQA’s secure website)
◆ centre-devised questions
◆ questions selected from published SQA question papers (SQA’s website)
◆ questions adapted from published SQA question papers
◆ commercial papers which have been quality assured (these could also be adapted)
If you use non-secure assessments (such as published past papers), we recommended that you use a combination of resources to create an internal assessment with a strong predictive value.

**Course assessment modifications**

You can find detailed information on the modifications to course content in *Guidance on course assessment: National 5 Business Management* on SQA’s website.

**Question paper** — although these modifications narrow the assessable course content, you can gather candidate evidence from any area of the course content to produce an estimate.

**Assignment** — candidate evidence used for estimates does not need to replicate the assignment or the knowledge and skills of the assignment.

**Component 1: question paper**

**Course content**

For evidence to have a strong predictive value, it is best to sample knowledge and understanding from all five broad areas of course content:

- Understanding business
- Management of marketing
- Management of operations
- Management of people
- Management of finance

You can sample course content across a number of assessment occasions. This may duplicate assessment of some content; however, you should not assess the same content within an individual assessment.

**Command words**

Using a mixture of command words in assessments provides different types of answers, ranging from short sentences to multiple short paragraphs. Using this approach should help to ensure a balanced assessment.

SQA’s past papers and marking instructions contain general marking principles that detail what is required for common command words. The detailed marking instructions provide suggested answers and guidance on the best marking approach.

**Level of demand**

Across the whole assessment, there should be a mixture of grade A (difficult) and grade C (straightforward) questions. Approximately 50% of questions should be accessible to grade C candidates and 30% should be accessible to grade A candidates.
Assessment instruments

A full IAQP or one that is split into smaller assessments, will have a stronger predictive value compared to other types of evidence. These most closely replicate the standard, format, and duration of the SQA question paper. It is best to use this type of assessment towards the end of the academic year, when all or the majority of the course has been delivered — this allows content to be sampled from any part of the course.

It is worth considering the overall level of demand of the assessment. An IAQP that covers a wide range of course content is likely to have a stronger predictive value. If a full IAQP is split, the time allocated to complete the smaller assessments should be adjusted.

Class/topic assessments can also be used as a source of evidence. As they are likely to be single topic tests with a limited mark allocation, less weight should be given to them in the estimating process. You could use these to support an estimate if it samples additional depth or challenge, but the estimate should not be based solely on this type of assessment.

For any of the above assessment types, it is important to ensure that you use a corresponding marking instruction, that can be submitted alongside the assessment for verification/moderation purposes.

Component 2: assignment

The modifications for 2020–21 removed the assignment from the course, so there is no requirement to replicate this. However, an assignment can be used as part of estimate evidence if this has been completed.

Your estimate grade should be based solely on using key evidence demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the course content.

Using additional assessment resources for session 2020–21: key information

It is important that you use valid and reliable assessment when gathering evidence to produce estimates for National 5 in session 2020–21.

In National 5 Business Management, SQA will provide a question paper for session 2020–21, which you can use when gathering evidence to support your estimates. Please note that the marking instructions have not been standardised based on candidate responses. You may therefore need to agree within your centre how to consistently mark an item if a candidate response is not covered by the marking instructions.

The National 5 2020–21 question paper will only be available on SQA’s secure website — you must treat this confidentially, in the same way as other live assessment materials.

You should carefully consider how best to use these materials to support candidates, to integrate with your programme of learning, and to help you collate evidence of candidate attainment. Given current public health advice and to maximise learning and teaching time, it is important to stress that there is no expectation that schools and colleges hold a formal diet of prelims for National 5. One of the key reasons for moving to an alternative model was to
create additional teaching time through removing the need for prelims and replacing the final examination diet with more flexible classroom-based assessment. 

If you use a question paper in part or in its entirety, you should remind candidates that they must not discuss the content of the paper with anyone, including friends, family or on social media.

Understanding the national standard
SQA’s Understanding Standards website contains materials giving examples of candidate response and marking standards for National 5 Business Management assessments.

Additional question paper guidance
The following details are a guide to the format, standard and duration of the National 5 Business Management question paper. Assessments used for estimating purposes do not need to replicate these exactly but assessments that are close to standard, format and duration are likely to have a strong predicative value.

Candidates are allocated 2 hours to complete the SQA question paper, which is worth 90 marks and is split into two sections:

Section 1
♦ 40 marks (consisting of two 20-mark questions)
♦ based on two pieces of stimulus material
♦ sub-questions range in value from 1-5 marks
♦ questions can assess content from any of the five areas of study

The stimulus material is based on real organisations and can be in the form of text, financial information, graphs, diagrams or charts. The questions generally relate to the stimulus, although some questions may be based on topics surrounding the stimulus material.

Section 2
♦ 50 marks (consisting of five 10-mark questions)
♦ sub-questions range in value from 1-4 marks
♦ each question assesses one of the five different areas of study

A question paper should contain a mix of less demanding (grade C questions) and more demanding questions (grade A questions).