

National Course modification summary: Drama



National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course assessment in session 2020–21

The Deputy First Minister has announced that there will be no external assessment of Higher and Advanced Higher courses, and that the 2021 exam diet is now cancelled. The approach to awarding Highers and Advanced Highers will be broadly the same as National 5, which is based on the professional judgement of teachers and lecturers.

For up-to-date information on arrangements for National Courses in session 2020–21, please visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021.

Modifications to assessment

On 7 October 2020 we published Higher and Advanced Higher Drama guidance documents for course assessment to support teachers, lecturers and candidates in session 2020–21.

To adapt to ongoing restrictions in centres and comply with the latest Scottish Government public health guidance, modifications to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Drama are now needed. **This document replaces previous published guidance.** It includes further consideration of the key evidence centres may gather to determine candidate estimates for National 5 in session 2020–21.

Following our consultation on proposed modifications, which closed on 3 December 2020, we are making changes in line with the feedback. The changes detailed on the following pages are intended to support the delivery of learning and teaching, while maintaining validity.

National 5

We have updated our subject-specific guidance for teachers and lecturers on gathering evidence and producing estimates for National 5 to reflect the modifications to performance components, following our most recent consultation. This guidance can be found [on the Drama subject page](#).

To access the guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates, visit www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021.

Drama performance restrictions

When you select a text to use in the performance, and in your direction of the actors, you must consider if candidates will have the opportunity to maintain a suitable physical distance when they perform.

We acknowledge the difficulties and restrictions you have in teaching, learning and assessment this session when complying with government guidance, for example with voice projection, wearing a face covering and physical distancing.

You should use your professional judgement when assessing candidates for performance. Candidates must not be penalised for adhering to current government guidance. Please refer to [Education Scotland practical activities guidelines](#) for drama.

You are strongly encouraged to maintain records of candidate progress and achievement, including regular filming.

You should follow government health advice when considering an appropriate audience. Alternatively, it would be acceptable that the audience consists of only the assessor.

Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	50 scaled to 40	2 hours and 30 minutes
Component 2: performance	60	Dependent on role selected. See below for further details.

Component 1: question paper

No changes to this component.

In section 3 — performance analysis of the Higher Drama question paper, candidates are asked to give a performance analysis of a theatrical performance that they have seen live or recorded. The course specification states that the performance must have taken place in the last two years.

For session 2020–21, we have temporarily removed this two-year rule for live and recorded performances. We recognise that all live theatre performances have been cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and that most centres will now need to rely on recorded performances.

The National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company are providing free access to high-quality, filmed performances.

Component 2: performance

Actors

In session 2020–21, the number of interactive roles candidates are assessed on has been reduced from two to one.

Groups should be as small as possible to minimise physical interaction between candidates. We recommend no more than four actors in each performance.

The proposed timings for assessing candidates in one interactive role are as follows:

Number of actors	Proposed timing
Two	8–12 minutes
Three	11–13 minutes
Four	13–16 minutes

You should double the marks for one interactive role, so that candidates achieve a mark out of 50.

Preparation for performance will remain approximately 500 words, and candidates must focus on only one interactive acting role.

Directors

We recommend that directors should direct no more than four actors. Candidates should direct a rehearsal lasting approximately 25–30 minutes.

Candidates must complete the preparation for performance.

Designers

Candidates should only choose make-up and hair as an additional production role in session 2020–21 if government health advice allows. Alternatively, we recommend that you do not offer candidates this option.

Candidates can apply make-up and hair to themselves based on their designs instead of a model on the day of the assessment.

Candidates must complete the preparation for performance.

Advanced Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: project–dissertation	30	2,500 to 3,000 words
Component 2: assignment	20	Candidates have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the production of evidence for assessment.
Component 3: performance	50	Dependent on role selected. See below for further details.

Component 1: project–dissertation

No changes to this component.

Component 2: assignment

No changes to this component.

Component 3: performance

Actors

- ◆ Groups should be as small as possible to minimise physical interaction between candidates. We recommend that there should be no more than four actors in each performance.
- ◆ Each candidate should make a maximum acting contribution of 17 minutes for the interactive piece.
- ◆ The monologue is still required to be approximately 3 minutes.

Directors

Candidates should direct a rehearsal lasting approximately 30–35 minutes.

We recommend that directors should direct no more than four candidates.

Designers

No changes suggested.

If you have any questions about these changes, please email NQ2020@sqa.org.uk.