

# National Course modification summary: English



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

The Deputy First Minister has announced that National 5 exams will not take place in session 2020–21. SQA is working with stakeholders to develop an alternative certification model for National 5 that is based on teacher and lecturer estimates.

At present, Higher and Advanced Higher exams are still planned for 2021 and this will remain under review. We continue to work with stakeholders to put contingency plans in place to respond to any changes in public health advice, or local or national lockdowns, that may result in further changes to the 2021 exam diet — including changes to the timetable.

For up-to-date information on arrangements for National Courses in session 2020–21, including timetable information and guidance on estimates, please visit our website at [www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021).

### Modifications to assessment

Following our public consultation on proposed modifications to National 5 to Advanced Higher course assessment, which closed on 24 August 2020, we are making changes to course assessment for session 2020–21. The changes detailed on the following pages are intended to support the delivery of learning and teaching, while maintaining the validity, credibility and standard of the courses.

We have published a high-level report on the outcomes of the consultation, which is available from [www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021). This includes details of the modifications to National 5 course assessment, which were planned prior to the 2021 National 5 exams being cancelled.

As a result of the modifications, we are exploring the implications for National 3 and National 4 courses in session 2020–21 and will provide further guidance in due course.

### National 5 course assessment 2020–21

There will be no external assessment for National 5 courses in session 2020–21.

**Candidates will not be required to sit exams and SQA will not assess coursework.** Instead, we are working with stakeholders to develop an alternative certification model for National 5 that is based on teacher and lecturer estimates.

Centres need to gather evidence of candidates' attainment and use this to determine estimate grades and bands. We have published separate guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates and there is an SQA Academy course available to support teachers and lecturers.

We are also developing subject-specific guidance for teachers and lecturers on gathering evidence and producing estimates. This will include how the previously-intended National 5

modifications could be used to support with gathering evidence and producing estimates in session 2020–21. This guidance will be published from the end of October.

Details of the modifications we had previously intended to make to National 5 course assessment in session 2020–21 are included in our high-level report on the outcomes of the consultation.

To view the high-level report, and to access the guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nq2021).

### Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation	30	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 2: question paper Critical Reading	40	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 3: Portfolio–writing	30	<a href="#">see 'Course assessment section' in the Higher English Course Specification</a>

#### Component 3: portfolio–writing

For session 2020–21, the portfolio–writing will contain one piece of writing (either broadly creative **or** broadly discursive). The expectation is that this modification will free up more time for learning and teaching.

The portfolio piece will be marked out of 15, but the 30% weighting for this component will remain. The word count remains the same, at no more than 1,300 words.

The portfolio will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All current conditions of assessment remain unchanged.

#### Component 4: performance–spoken language

Assessment of the performance–spoken language will not be mandatory in session 2020–21.

It is acknowledged that, depending on the approach taken by a centre, the assessment of this component can be time consuming. This modification has been put in place to support delivery of learning and teaching in session 2020–21.

Given the central place of spoken language skills in Higher English, and their importance and relevance to candidates, it is hoped that opportunities to develop these skills will continue, even though the formal assessment will be removed for session 2020–21.

## Advanced Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper Literary Study	20	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 2: question paper Textual Analysis	20	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 3: portfolio–writing	30	<a href="#">see 'Course assessment section' in the Advanced Higher English Course Specification</a>
Component 4: project–dissertation	30	<a href="#">see 'Course assessment section' in the Advanced Higher English Course Specification</a>

For reasons of equity across SQA National Courses, and to address some concerns raised in the technical consultation about the impact of lost learning and teaching time in session 2020–21, the following change will be made to English Advanced Higher this session.

### Component 3: portfolio–writing

For session 2020–21, the portfolio–writing will contain one piece of writing (from any genre). The expectation is that this modification will free up more time for learning and teaching and, given the circumstances this session, allow for realistic levels of independent or self-directed learning.

The portfolio piece will be marked out of 15, but the 30% weighting for this component will remain. The advice on the length of the piece of writing remains the same, with no specified word count, but it should be appropriate to purpose and genre.

The portfolio will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All current conditions of assessment remain unchanged.

If you have any questions about these changes, please email [NQ2020@sqa.org.uk](mailto:NQ2020@sqa.org.uk).