

# National Course modification summary: Geography



## 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              |
|---|-------|-----------------------|
| Question paper 1: Physical and Human Environments       | 100   | 1 hour and 50 minutes |
| Question paper 2: Global Issues and Geographical Skills | 40    | 50 minutes            |

### Question paper: Physical and Human Environments

#### Physical Environments

In this section of the question paper, the erosional and depositional features from coastal landscapes will **not** be assessed. All other content from this section can be assessed in the 2021 question paper. This does not affect the structure of this section. The total number of marks for this section will remain at 50.

#### Human Environments

There are no modifications to this section. The total number of marks for this section will remain at 50.

The total number of marks for this question paper will remain at 100 and the duration of the exam will remain as 1 hour and 50 minutes. The layout of this question paper will be the same as the specimen question paper and the 2019 question paper and therefore will look familiar to candidates.

The purpose of this modification to this question paper is to ease pressure on teaching and learning, while ensuring that the range of skills and knowledge and understanding is still covered. Centres should aim to deliver the whole course as normal but will be free to decide on timing and depth in relation to coastal landscapes which will not be assessed in the 2021 question paper.

### Question paper: Global Issues and Geographical Skills

#### Global Issues

In this section, the number of optional questions that candidates will need to answer will reduce from two to one. There will be a question on each of the four global issues, but candidates will be instructed to answer only **one** of these questions. The total number of marks for this section will reduce from 40 to 20.

### **Application of Geographical Skills**

There are no modifications to this section. The total number of marks for this section will remain at 20.

As a result of the above modification, the total number of marks for this question paper will reduce from 60 to 40 and the duration of the exam will reduce from 1 hour and 10 minutes to 50 minutes.

The layout of this question paper will be similar to the specimen question paper and the 2019 question paper and therefore will look familiar to candidates.

The purpose of this modification to this question paper is to ease pressure on teaching and learning, while ensuring that the range of skills and knowledge and understanding is still covered. Centres should aim to deliver the whole course as normal but will be free to decide on timing and depth in relation to the second global issue that will not be assessed in the 2021 question paper.

### **Assignment**

The coursework component (assignment) will be removed for session 2020–21.

Teachers and lecturers raised concerns about their ability to deliver the assignment effectively this session due to:

- ◆ social distancing restrictions which may limit the possibilities for fieldwork
- ◆ the time required to deliver the assignment when there may be less time in school and/or class

The assignment has been removed for session 2020–21 to address these concerns. Centres should aim to deliver the skills and knowledge associated with the assignment to ensure that candidates are prepared for future progression, however, they will be free to decide on timing and depth given that these skills will not be assessed as part of the 2021 course assessment.

### **Advanced Higher course assessment 2020–21**

| <b>Component</b>                  | <b>Marks</b> | <b>Duration</b>        |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Question paper                    | 50           | 2 hours and 30 minutes |
| Project–folio: geographical study | 60           | carried out over time  |
| Project–folio: geographical issue | 40           | carried out over time  |

## **Question paper**

The following geographical techniques will not be assessed in the 2021 question paper:

- ◆ micro-climate analysis
- ◆ questionnaire design and implementation

The purpose of this modification is to ease pressure on teaching and learning, while ensuring that the range of skills and techniques is still covered. Centres should aim to deliver the skills and techniques as normal but will be free to decide on the appropriate timing and depth in relation to the above techniques which will not be assessed in the 2021 question paper.

## **Project–folio: geographical study**

We are publishing guidance to support centres in relation to carrying out the geographical study in session 2020–21. This will be published on the [Advanced Higher Geography subject page](#) in due course.

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