

National Course modification summary: Graphic Communication



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.

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. 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.

Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	75	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	50	8 hours

Question paper

We will not sample 'drawing standards, protocols and conventions' in the 2021 question paper. This modification will reduce the assessment burden on candidates, as we are removing 15 marks from the question paper, reducing the marks from 90 to 75 marks. The duration of the question paper will also change from 2 hours and 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Assignment

We will reissue the 2020 assignment for session 2020–21 and will publish it as soon we have made the administrative changes, rather than at the end of January 2021. Teachers and lecturers are familiar with the 2020 assignment, so using this will reduce preparation and planning time for centres. Publishing the assignment early will also mean that candidates can start it as soon as their teacher or lecturer is satisfied that they have the knowledge to do so.

The existing assessment conditions (the assignment must be conducted under a high degree of supervision and control) remain in place but there are two new points of guidance:

- ◆ Candidates can do thumbnail or sketching tasks from home if necessary — for example, if a centre is closed due to a localised COVID-19 outbreak.
- ◆ Candidates can spend additional time on the assignment if necessary — for example, if a centre is closed due to a localised COVID-19 outbreak. Teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement to decide if additional time is necessary as the assignment is designed to be completed in 8 hours. Spending more time on it could affect candidates' ability to cover all learning required for the course and prepare for the question paper.

Centres must ensure that any copies of the 2020 assignment are stored securely and confidentially. Exemplar material from the 2020 assignment must not be displayed in classrooms and the 2020 assignment must not be used for practice coursework activities.

Advanced Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	80	2 hours
Component 2: project	60	No fixed duration

Question paper

We will not sample 'graphic communication as it impacts on our environment and society' in the 2021 question paper. This topic integrates across all areas of the course, therefore there will be no questions about:

- ◆ digital rights management and/intellectual property rights
- ◆ planning where there are likely to be environmental issues (for example specimen Q3d)
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of printing technologies where environmental concerns arise, for example links, substrate types, distribution

This modification will reduce the assessment burden on candidates, as we are removing 10 marks from the question paper, reducing the marks from 90 to 80 marks. The duration of the question paper will change from 2.5 to 2 hours.

Project

We are removing the following areas from the project:

- ◆ analysing the graphic brief and research
- ◆ producing graphic specifications
- ◆ project plan preliminary planning
- ◆ evaluating the solutions and the processes

This modification allows candidates to focus on practical graphics work. It means that the marks allocated to the project will reduce from 90 to 60 marks, releasing more time for learning and teaching, and for completing the practical graphic skills in the project.

We have updated the coursework assessment task to reflect the modifications to the project.

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