

National Course modification summary: Media



National 5 and 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 1 — Analysis of Media Content	30	1 hour and 45 minutes
Component 2: question paper 2 — The Role of Media	20	1 hour
Component 3: assignment	50	see 'Course assessment section' in the Higher Media Course Specification

Question paper 1 — Analysis of Media Content

Candidates will answer **one** question (20 marks) in Section 1 — analysis of media content in context.

Candidates will select one question from two available. The introduction of optionality here should reduce teaching time in session 2020–21. Currently, candidates need to be prepared to answer on seven key aspects. However, optionality will allow teachers and lecturers to reduce the number of key aspects they need to cover. Teachers and lecturers could decide to cover one or two of the context-based key aspects alongside four content-based key aspects, or two or three content-based key aspects alongside all three context-based key aspects.

This will mean a reduction of 20 marks for question paper 1.

Assignment

The following changes have been made to the assignment for session 2020–21 to reduce the volume of coursework being produced by candidates.

Section 1: planning

Refer to page 16 of the [course specification](#).

In session 2020–21 candidates will produce just **one** section on content research, instead of two, as shown:

- ◆ Content research (refer to at least one key aspect) 5 marks

This change will mean a reduction of 5 marks from Section 1.

In session 2020–21, candidates will research production role(s) **and/or** institutional context as shown:

- ◆ Production role(s) **and/or** institutional context research 5 marks

This change will mean a further reduction of 5 marks from Section 1.

The coursework assessment task will be updated with these changes to the assignment for session 2020–21 and will be published in due course.

Note: the weighting of the question papers and assignment will remain 50/50. The reduction of 20 marks for question paper 1, and 10 marks for the assignment, will mean that scaling is not required in session 2020–21.

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