

National Course modification summary: Modern Languages



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.

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	Scaled marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper 1 Reading	30	not applicable	2 hours (Chinese languages 2 hours and 40 minutes)
Component 2: question paper 1 Directed writing	20	30	
Component 3: question paper 2 Listening	20	30	30 minutes approximately
Component 5: Performance–talking	30	not applicable	10 minutes approximately

Component 2: question paper 1 Directed writing

This question paper has 20 marks, to be scaled to 30 marks for session 2020–21.

Component 4: assignment–writing

This coursework component will be removed from the course assessment for session 2020–21. This will reduce the overall number of raw course assessment marks by 20.

Removing the assignment–writing will mean increased learning and teaching time for other areas of the course. There will be more opportunities for candidates to develop the skills of reading and listening in general class activities or when practising the techniques and time-management skills of assessment.

Teachers and lecturers will have increased time to focus on the skill of talking and will have greater preparation time for the performance–talking. Teachers and lecturers will not need to:

- ◆ explain the process and conditions of assessment of the assignment–writing and how to apply an improvement code or equivalent feedback process
- ◆ annotate candidates' first drafts of the assignment–writing
- ◆ set aside class time for the final drafting of the assignment–writing
- ◆ organise and package the assignments for submission to SQA

Advanced Higher course assessment 2020–21

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper Reading and Translation	50	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 2: question paper Listening and Discursive Writing	70	1 hour and 20 minutes (Chinese languages 1 hour and 45 minutes)
Component 4: performance–talking	50	15–20 minutes

Component 4: performance–talking

The length of the performance has been altered to 15–20 minutes for session 2020–21. This is to take account of the effect of removing the portfolio (component 3) from the discussion in the performance–talking.

Component 3: portfolio

This coursework component will be removed from the course assessment for session 2020–21. This will reduce the number of course assessment marks by 30, with a revised total of 170 marks for course assessment in session 2020–21.

Candidates work independently to produce the portfolio and spend considerable time outside the classroom researching and analysing a number of sources in order to complete the final essay. Removing the portfolio will mean increased learning and teaching time for other areas of the course. There will be more opportunities for candidates to develop the skills of reading, listening and discursive writing, and when practising the techniques and time-management skills of assessment.

Teachers and lecturers will have increased time to focus on the skill of talking and will have greater preparation time for the performance–talking. Candidates will not need to discuss the portfolio in the performance–talking.

There will be increased class time as teachers and lecturers will not need to:

- ◆ explain the process and conditions of assessment of the portfolio
- ◆ organise meetings to discuss progress with candidates
- ◆ organise and package the portfolio materials for submission to SQA

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