

National Course modification summary: Psychology



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 in this document 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	Duration
Question paper	60	2 hours
Assignment	40	carried out over time

Question paper

The questions on the optional topics will be removed from the question paper, reducing the total marks from 80 to 60 and reducing the duration of the exam from 2 hours and 40 minutes to 2 hours.

The question paper will have two sections based on the mandatory content only:

- ◆ Section 1: Individual behaviour — sleep and dreams (30 marks)
- ◆ Section 2: Social behaviour — conformity and obedience (30 marks)

The purpose of this modification to the question paper is to ease pressure on teaching and learning, while ensuring that both ‘Individual behaviour’ and ‘Social behaviour’ are assessed in the question paper, with the range of specified skills still being sampled. Centres should aim to deliver the whole course as normal but will be free to decide on timing and depth in relation to the optional topics that will not be assessed in the 2021 question paper.

Assignment

For session 2020–21 teachers and lecturers can suggest the research topic and the research method to their candidates.

This modification will give teachers and lecturers greater control, allowing them to suggest the research topic and research method for groups within the class or for the whole class, which will reduce teaching time and support delivery of the assignment.

To support centres in delivering the Higher Psychology assignment under socially distanced conditions, the following advice is provided:

- ◆ Candidates must still collect their own primary research data but can use a smaller sample size — a minimum of three research participants.
- ◆ Digital data collection methods can be used to gather primary data. Surveys and questionnaires can be issued, for example using individual emails or Google forms, while ensuring confidentiality is maintained.
- ◆ Laboratory experiments that are usually conducted within the classroom environment can be done virtually. For example, the Jenness ‘beans in a jar’ conformity experiment can be

conducted using an image of the jar. Fake estimates sheets and blank estimate sheets can be emailed to participants in advance and responses sent back electronically.

- ◆ PowerPoint presentations and video clips can be shared virtually for use in experiments, such as those involving memory. Response sheets can be emailed to participants in advance and responses sent back electronically.

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