



National 5
coursework
assessment task



National 5 Art and Design, SCQF Level 5

Design portfolio

Assessment task

Valid from session 2026-27 and until further notice.

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Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions, and instructions for candidates for the National 5 Art and Design design portfolio. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This design portfolio is worth 100 marks. The marks contribute 40% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of three course assessment components. The other components are a question paper and an expressive portfolio.

This design portfolio has three sections.

Section 1 titled 'process' has 40 marks.

Section 2 titled 'skills' has 50 marks.

Section 3 titled 'evaluation' has 10 marks.

Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Setting, conducting and marking the design portfolio

The design portfolio is designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to work independently and is sufficiently open and flexible to allow personalisation and choice.

Candidates should be fully prepared before undertaking the design portfolio assessment task, ie they should have the necessary skills and be made aware of the requirements of the assessment.

The design portfolio is:

- ◆ set by centres within Qualifications Scotland guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control
- ◆ submitted to Qualifications Scotland for external marking

All marking is quality assured by Qualifications Scotland.

Assessment conditions

Time

The design portfolio is developed in response to a design brief, and is produced over an extended period of time, allowing candidates to develop and refine their work before it is presented for assessment.

Supervision, control and authentication

Teachers and lecturers must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

Candidates do not need to be directly supervised at all times.

Candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting. Teachers and lecturers may give support and guidance if required and should put in place processes for monitoring progress; for example, regular checkpoints to ensure that the work is the candidate's own.

Resources

There are no restrictions on the resources candidates may access while producing their design portfolio.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates can seek clarification regarding the design portfolio assessment task if they find it unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

If a candidate is working on their design portfolio and is faced with more than one possible solution to a problem, then the teacher or lecturer may explore options with them. The teacher or lecturer and the candidate can discuss the pros and cons of each option. The candidate can then decide on a solution based on the discussion.

Once candidates have decided that their design portfolio is complete and have submitted it to their teacher or lecturer for uplift by Qualifications Scotland, it must not be changed by either the teacher or lecturer or the candidate.

The Qualifications Scotland evaluation template is mandatory. Teachers or lecturers must not provide model answers or writing frames to assist candidates when completing their evaluation.

Evidence to be gathered

Volume

Candidates can present their work in a variety of ways; however, the overall maximum size for the design portfolio should not exceed three A2-sized, single-sided sheets or equivalent. The design portfolio must fold to a size not exceeding A1 for submission to Qualifications Scotland.

The evaluation should be attached to the first sheet and should not overlap work or extend beyond the three A2 sheets or equivalent. There is no word count for the evaluation.

Refer to the National 5 Art and Design subject page for further information on portfolio submission.

Marking instructions

In line with Qualifications Scotland's normal practice, the following general marking principles are addressed to the marker. They are also helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

General marking principles

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that must be applied when marking candidate responses for this portfolio during the central marking event. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- a Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.
- b Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- c If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.

When marking the portfolio, you must refer to specific descriptions of competence for different mark ranges and allocate marks for each section of the portfolio using a 'best fit' approach.

The band descriptions define the expected level and standard of evidence expected at the mid-point of the band range. You must select the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence, before calibrating accordingly within the mark range. The examples below illustrate this.

Section 1 of the portfolio includes a three-mark range. When you have decided on the 'best fit' mark range, use your professional judgement to allocate a mark, ie:

- ◆ where the candidate's evidence almost matches the level description in the range above, award the highest available mark from the mark range
- ◆ where the candidate's evidence meets the standard described, award the middle mark in the range
- ◆ where the candidate's evidence does not meet the standard described, award the lowest mark in the range

Section 2 of the portfolio includes a six-mark range. When you have decided on the 'best fit' mark range, use your professional judgement to allocate a mark, ie:

- ♦ where the candidate's evidence almost matches the level description in the range above, award one of the two highest marks in the range
- ♦ where the candidate's evidence meets the standard described, award one of the two middle marks in the range
- ♦ where the candidate's evidence does not meet the standard described, award one of the two lowest marks in the range

Detailed marking instructions

Section 1

Design portfolio – process

This section has 40 marks.

Evidence should be provided of the candidate's ability to respond to the design brief by: producing relevant 2D/3D investigative material and compiling relevant market research; using this to demonstrate a single line of development and producing a design solution.

Mark range description: Producing relevant 2D/3D investigative material and compiling relevant market research appropriate to the design brief/design area

0-2	3-5	6-8	9-10
Limited relevant investigative material and market research	Partially relevant investigative material and market research	Relevant investigative material and market research	Highly relevant investigative material and market research

Mark range description: Demonstrating a single line of development, showing visual continuity and the refinement of one idea and producing a design solution

0-7	8-15	16-23	24-30
Limited effective development and refinement of one idea leading to the production of a design solution	Partially effective development and refinement of one idea leading to the production of a design solution	Effective development and refinement of one idea leading to the production of a design solution	Highly effective development and refinement of one idea leading to the production of a design solution

Section 2

Design portfolio – skills

This section has 50 marks.

Evidence should be provided throughout the design portfolio of the candidate's ability to respond to the design brief by creatively: using a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology for aesthetic and functional effect; and demonstrating their understanding of appropriate design elements.

Mark range description: Creatively using a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology for aesthetic and functional effect in response to the design brief

0-6	7-12	13-18	19-25
Limited effective use of materials, techniques and/or technology	Partially effective use of materials, techniques and/or technology	Effective use of materials, techniques and/or technology	Highly effective use of materials, techniques and/or technology

Mark range description: Creatively demonstrating understanding of appropriate design elements (eg aesthetics, style, layout, visual elements, function, safety, balance) in response to the design brief

0-6	7-12	13-18	19-25
Limited understanding of appropriate design elements	Partially effective understanding of appropriate design elements	Effective understanding of appropriate design elements	Highly effective understanding of appropriate design elements

Section 3

Design portfolio – evaluation

This section has 10 marks.

Evidence should be provided of the candidate's ability to reflect on and critically evaluate their creative process. They should give justified opinions on decisions they made when working through their design portfolio and evaluate the effectiveness of the aesthetic and functional qualities of their design portfolio with reference to their design brief.

Mark range description: Giving justified personal opinions on the decisions made when working through their design portfolio and evaluating the effectiveness of the aesthetic and functional qualities of their design portfolio with reference to their design brief

0-2	3-5	6-8	9-10
Personal opinion expressed with little or no effective justification	Personal opinion expressed showing simple justification and/or critical evaluation	Personal opinion expressed showing some justification and critical evaluation	Personal opinion clearly expressed and justified showing focused critical evaluation

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the design portfolio for National 5 Art and Design.

This design portfolio is worth 100 marks. The marks contribute 40% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ producing investigative material and compiling market research appropriate to the agreed design brief/design area
- ◆ producing a single line of development showing visual continuity with the investigative material and market research
- ◆ demonstrating the refinement and realisation of the single line of development, leading to a design solution
- ◆ using a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology for creative effect
- ◆ demonstrating understanding of design elements in response to the agreed design brief requirements
- ◆ expressing justified personal opinions on decisions and the effectiveness of the design qualities of the portfolio

This design portfolio has three sections.

Section 1 titled 'process' has 40 marks.

Section 2 titled 'skills' has 50 marks.

Section 3 titled 'evaluation' has 10 marks.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

Design portfolio assessment task

In this assessment, you have to:

- a Agree a design brief with your teacher or lecturer.
- b Produce relevant 2D/3D investigative material and compile relevant market research appropriate to the design brief.

Your investigative material may include:

- ♦ images that are directly relevant to your design brief
- ♦ experimentation with materials, techniques and technology

Your market research should include existing designs that are relevant to your brief.

- c Demonstrate a single line of development that shows visual continuity with the work you produced and compiled in response to your design brief.
- d Refine this design idea and produce a design solution which maintains visual continuity with your development work.
- e Throughout your design portfolio, creatively use a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology, and show your understanding of appropriate design elements (eg aesthetics, style, layout, visual elements, function, safety, balance).
- f Reflect on and critically evaluate the creative process you followed when working through your design portfolio. In your evaluation give justified personal opinions on:
 - ♦ the decisions you made when working through your design portfolio
 - ♦ the effectiveness of the aesthetic and functional qualities of your design portfolio, with reference to your design brief requirements

You must use the Qualifications Scotland template for your evaluation.

Presenting your work

You can present your work in a variety of ways; however the overall maximum size for your design portfolio should not exceed three A2-sized, single-sided sheets or equivalent. Your design portfolio must fold to a size not exceeding A1.

You must attach your evaluation to the first sheet of your design portfolio. It must not overlap any other work or extend beyond the three A2 sheets or equivalent.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Instructions for candidates (page 10): design portfolio assessment task updated to remove 'relevant analytical drawings or studies' from the list of investigative material candidates can produce.	September 2020
3.0	We've clarified that candidates should 'compile' their market research rather than 'produce' it. We've added further information about supervision and control on page 2. We've changed references to 'SQA' to 'Qualifications Scotland' throughout. We've made changes to the format and layout of the document to improve accessibility. What you need to do differently ◆ ensure you use the most up-to-date version of this document ◆ be aware that candidates need to compile existing images for their design portfolio market research ◆ read the new information on page 2	September 2026

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