



National 5
coursework
assessment task



National 5 Art and Design, SCQF Level 5

Expressive 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 expressive portfolio. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This expressive 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 a design portfolio.

This expressive 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 expressive portfolio

The expressive 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 expressive portfolio assessment task, ie they should have the necessary skills and be made aware of the requirements of the assessment.

The expressive 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 expressive portfolio is developed in response to an expressive theme/stimulus, 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 expressive portfolio.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates can seek clarification regarding the expressive 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 expressive 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 expressive 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 expressive portfolio should not exceed three A2-sized, single-sided sheets or equivalent. The expressive 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

Expressive portfolio – process

This section has 40 marks.

Evidence should be provided of the candidate's ability to: produce relevant investigative research in response to the theme/stimulus including 2D/3D analytical drawings and/or studies; using this to demonstrate a single line of development and producing a final piece.

Mark range description: Producing relevant investigative research including 2D/3D analytical drawings and/or studies appropriate to the selected theme/stimulus

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

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

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

Section 2

Expressive portfolio – skills

This section has 50 marks.

Evidence should be provided throughout the expressive portfolio of the candidate's ability to respond to the theme/stimulus by creatively using: a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology; and appropriate visual elements and expressive effects.

Mark range description: Creatively using a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology in response to the theme/stimulus

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 using appropriate visual elements and expressive effects (eg composition, lighting, viewpoint, mood and atmosphere) in response to the theme/stimulus

0-6	7-12	13-18	19-25
Limited effective use of appropriate visual elements and expressive effects	Partially effective use of appropriate visual elements and expressive effects	Effective use of appropriate visual elements and expressive effects	Highly effective use of appropriate visual elements and expressive effects

Section 3

Expressive 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 expressive portfolio and evaluate the effectiveness of the visual qualities of their expressive portfolio with reference to their theme/stimulus.

Mark range description: Giving justified personal opinions on the decisions made when working through their expressive portfolio and evaluating the effectiveness of the visual qualities of their expressive portfolio with reference to their theme/stimulus

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 expressive portfolio for National 5 Art and Design.

This expressive 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 relevant investigative research appropriate to an agreed theme/stimulus
- ◆ producing a single line of development showing visual continuity with the investigative research
- ◆ demonstrating the refinement and realisation of the single line of development, leading to a final piece
- ◆ using a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology
- ◆ using the visual elements and expressive effects in response to the agreed theme/stimulus
- ◆ expressing justified personal opinions on decisions and the effectiveness of the expressive qualities of the portfolio

This expressive 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.

Expressive portfolio assessment task

In this assessment, you have to:

- a Agree a theme/stimulus with your teacher or lecturer.
- b Produce relevant investigative research in response to your theme/stimulus. This must include 2D/3D analytical drawings and/or studies. It may also include:
 - ◆ images that are directly relevant to your theme/stimulus
 - ◆ experimentation with materials, techniques and technology
- c Demonstrate a single line of development that shows visual continuity with the work you produced in response to your theme/stimulus.
- d Refine this expressive idea and produce a final piece which maintains visual continuity with your development work.
- e Throughout your expressive portfolio, creatively use a selection of materials, techniques and/or technology together with appropriate visual elements and expressive effects (eg composition, lighting, viewpoint, mood and atmosphere).
- f Reflect on and critically evaluate the creative process you followed when working through your expressive portfolio. In your evaluation give justified personal opinions on:
 - ◆ the decisions you made when working through your expressive portfolio
 - ◆ the effectiveness of the visual qualities of your expressive portfolio, with reference to your theme/stimulus

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 expressive portfolio should not exceed three A2-sized, single-sided sheets or equivalent. Your expressive portfolio must fold to a size not exceeding A1.

You must attach your evaluation to the first sheet of your expressive 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	Detailed marking instructions section 1, expressive portfolio – process (page 6): description of process reworded to clarify the requirements for investigative research. Mark range descriptions have been simplified. Instructions for candidates (page 10): expressive portfolio assessment task updated to clarify the requirements for the investigative research.	September 2020
3.0	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 ♦ read the new information on page 2	September 2026

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