National 5 Economics
Assignment
Assessment task

Valid from session 2023-24 and until further notice.

Contents

Introduction

This document contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the National 5 Economics assignment. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment is worth 30 marks. The marks contribute 25% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidate evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that must be applied when marking candidate responses in this assignment. 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   There is a penalty for exceeding the word count of 1,300 words by more than 10%.
d   Candidates are awarded marks for demonstrating specific skills, knowledge and understanding when producing their report, as follows:

Introduction (3 marks)
Marks are awarded for stating the purpose of the economic report and for giving background information on the choice of topic, based on research.

Research sources (6 marks)
Marks are awarded for stating the reason for choosing each research source and explaining the value of the sources used.

Findings, analysis and interpretation (12 marks)
Marks are awarded for giving findings, and for analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Conclusion(s)/recommendation(s) (4 marks)
Marks are awarded for drawing appropriate justified conclusions and/or justified recommendations from the research findings.

Economic theory (3 marks)
Marks are awarded for expressing relevant economic theory relating to the chosen topic. This theory should permeate the findings, analysis and interpretation section of the report.

Structure and presentation (2 marks)
Marks are awarded for a well-presented and structured report including a minimum of two out of four given criteria in the detailed marking instructions.

Marking overview

Section 1: introduction		3 marks	1-2 marks	0 marks
		The purpose of the report is clearly identified. Economic background information on the topic is clearly provided.	The purpose of the report may or may not be identified. Limited economic background information on the topic is provided.	The purpose of the report is unclear/not identified. No economic background information on the topic is provided.
Section 2: research sources	**5-6 marks**	**3-4 marks**	**1-2 marks**	**0 marks**
	Several reasons for choosing research sources are stated. A variety of explanations of the value of the research sources are given. At least two sources must be used to gain full marks.	Some reasons for choosing research sources are stated. Some explanations of the value of the research sources are given.	Limited reasons for choosing research sources are stated. Limited explanations of the value of the research sources are given.	No reasons for choosing research sources are stated. No explanations of the value of the research sources are given.
Section 3: findings, analysis and interpretation	**9-12 marks**	**5-8 marks**	**1-4 marks**	**0 marks**
	A variety of relevant findings are stated. A variety of analytical and/or interpretative points are given, based	Some relevant findings are stated. Some analytical and/or interpretative points are given, based on the	Limited relevant findings are stated. Limited analytical and/or interpretative points are	No relevant findings are stated. No analytical and/or interpretative points are given.

	on the findings. These points are logically developed to show economic reasoning.	findings. These points are logically developed to show economic reasoning.	given, based on the findings.	
Section 4: conclusion(s)/ recommendation(s)		**3-4 marks** Several justified conclusions are drawn and/or justified recommendations are made. They are supported by evidence from within the report.	**1-2 marks** Some justified conclusions are drawn and/or justified recommendations are made. They are supported by evidence from within the report.	**0 marks** No justified conclusions are drawn and/or justified recommendations made.
Section 5: economic theory		**3 marks** Several economic theory points are clearly described in correct terms. They are relevant to the context of the paragraph in which they are written. They appear within the findings, analysis and interpretation section.	**1-2 marks** Some economic theory points are clearly described in correct terms. They are relevant to the context of the paragraph in which they are written. They appear within the findings, analysis and interpretation section.	**0 marks** No economic theory is evident within the findings, analysis and interpretation section.
Section 6: structure and presentation			**1-2 marks** A well-structured and presented report is produced.	**0 marks** A badly-structured and presented report is produced.

Detailed marking instructions

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section1: introduction	Award **1 mark** for a clear statement of the purpose of the report, when introducing the topic. Award **1 mark** for each piece of appropriate economic background information on the topic **(up to a maximum of 2 marks).**	3	Example of a **purpose**: *The purpose of this report is to investigate the impact of HS2 on the UK economy* (**1P — 1 mark awarded for purpose**). Examples of **background information**: *HS2 will be a high-speed rail line that directly connects London to Birmingham, the East Midlands, Leeds, and Manchester* (**1B — 1 mark awarded for background**). *It is scheduled to open in phases between 2016 and 2033* (**1B — 1 mark awarded for background**).

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section 2: research sources	Award **1 mark** where the reason for choosing a source is stated, up to a maximum of two reasons per source. Award a **maximum of 3 marks** for reasons in total. Do not award marks for reasons that are general, ie not specific to the topic. Award **1 mark** where the value of each source is explained, up to a maximum of two values per source. At least two sources should be given. Award a **maximum of 4 marks** if only one source is given**.** **Do not** award marks where the candidate only identifies the sources used.	6	Examples of **reasons** may include: *I looked up The Telegraph newspaper website (see appendix 1) to find information about the impact of the National Living Wage on workers' incomes* (**1R — 1 mark awarded for reason**). *I looked up the ONS website (see appendix 1) to find statistics about unemployment* (**1R — 1 mark awarded for reason**). An example of an **explanation of value** may be: *The Economist article (see appendix 1) was written on XXXXXX and therefore it was up to date* (**1V — 1 mark awarded for explanation of value**). Explanations of value may include **how the candidate knows** that the source is: ♦ up to date ♦ concise ♦ complete ♦ cost-effective ♦ accurate ♦ objective

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
			Do not award marks for: ♦ the use of 'relevant' as a value, for example 'the source is relevant because it is up to date'. The value here is 'up to date' which then needs to be explained. ♦ repeated explained values for different sources ♦ flipped explained values, eg *up to date vs out of date* ♦ reasons for using sources that are not used in the 'Findings, Analysis and Interpretation' section ♦ explanations of values that are about unreferenced sources ♦ lengthy descriptions of the information contained in the source

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section 3: findings, analysis and interpretation	Award **1 mark** for each relevant, referenced finding stated (**up to a maximum of 6 marks**). Award **1 mark** for each analytical and/or interpretative point and development, up to a **maximum of 4 marks** for any one referenced finding **in total**), for example one finding, plus three of any of analysis/interpretation/development. Points that analyse/interpret/develop unreferenced findings **do not** attract marks for the **finding**. Candidates can be awarded **up to 2 marks** for the analysis/interpretation/ development of unreferenced finding(s) **(up to a maximum of 4 marks for this section)**. Findings should not be repeats of background information. Findings and analysis outwith the purpose of the report **do not** attract marks.	12	Candidates must make their findings and analytical and interpretative points from their research; **these must be linked to the purpose.** For example: *The ONS website (see appendix 1) said that unemployment rose by x% last year* (**1F — 1 mark awarded for finding**). *This means that the government will need to spend more on Jobseeker's Allowance* (**1A — 1 mark awarded for analysis**). *Living on benefits will mean lower household income, which will lead to a reduction in demand for goods and services in general* (**1A — 1 mark awarded for development of analysis**). *This will lower the sales revenue and profits of firms* (**1A — 1 mark awarded for development of analysis**). *This in turn will lead to a further increase in unemployment* (**0 marks, as maximum marks have been awarded from one finding**). Candidates may base analysis and interpretation on details from research findings that include displays, graphs and charts, etc. For example: *The above graph from The Scotsman website (see appendix 1) shows that the price of oil was $139 in XXXX and was $46 in XXXX* (**1F — 1 mark awarded for finding**). *This represents a 67% fall over the period of 7 months* (**1I — 1 mark awarded for interpretation**). *This suggests that the cost of production of firms may fall because transport costs will fall* (**1A — 1 mark awarded for analysis**).

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section 4: conclusion(s)/ recommendation(s)	Award **1 mark** for each justified conclusion drawn and/or justified recommendation made. Award **1 mark** for each development of a conclusion and/or recommendation. Conclusions/recommendations must be based on evidence in the 'findings, analysis and interpretation' section. Points can be positive or negative.	4	For example, if the topic was 'Should the UK Government raise the state pension age to 70?': *I conclude that the state pension age should be raised because the amount of government spending that is currently needed to fund state pensions is continuing to rise* (**1C — 1 mark awarded for justified conclusion**). *In addition, the rising age of the population will further increase the cost of providing state pensions in future* (**1C — 1 mark awarded for development of justified conclusion**). *I recommend that the government does not increase the pension age in the next 5 years because this does not allow people near the pension age enough time to prepare* (**1R — 1 mark awarded for justified recommendation**). *I recommend that people should pay into a private pension scheme as soon as they start work, so that they can fund a comfortable lifestyle in their old age* (**1R — 1 mark awarded for justified recommendation**).

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section 5: economic theory	Award **1 mark** for stating each relevant economic theory point. Each point must relate to the economic topic chosen. Each point must be presented within the 'findings, analysis and interpretation' section. Award **0 marks** if: ♦ the economic theory is unclear ♦ the theory is written under a separate heading or is presented as an appendix	3	Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of the underpinning economic theory relating to the topic, and express it correctly. **For example:** *The OBR (see appendix 1) has given growth statistics showing that the GDP of the UK should rise from x% to x% by 20xx* (**1F — 1 mark awarded for finding**). *GDP measures growth in National Income and is calculated by adding up the value of total output of goods and services in the UK economy in one year* (**1T — 1 mark awarded for theory**).

	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
Section 6: structure and presentation	Award **1 mark** for any appropriate element of presentation or structure demonstrated (**up to a maximum of 2 marks).**	2	A well-presented and structured report should have the following elements: ♦ use of headings, and if word-processed, consistent use of fonts and sizes ♦ consistent use of appropriate economic terms ♦ logical and well-structured referencing ♦ appropriate use of display materials such as charts, graphs, images

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for National 5 Economics.

This assignment is worth 30 marks. The marks contribute 25% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

♦ selecting an appropriate and current economic topic
♦ researching and gathering suitable economic data/information, related to the context of the economic topic, from a range of sources
♦ applying knowledge and understanding of economic concepts to explain and analyse the key features of the topic
♦ drawing valid conclusions and/or recommendations to make informed economic judgements and/or decisions
♦ producing an appropriately formatted report suitable for the purpose, intended audience and context of the assignment

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

In this assessment, you have to carry out research and write a report on an economic topic of your choice. You should assume that the reader has little or no economic knowledge.

The report should be no more than **1,300 words** and should follow the section headings provided. If you exceed the word count of 1,300 words by more than 10%, a marking penalty will be applied.

You are allowed a maximum of two A4-sized pages of appendices (which **do not** count towards the 1,300 words).

You must give brief details of each research source. This can be done in the body of the report, as footnotes throughout, or as an appendix at the end.

You are allowed up to 5 hours in class to research and write up your report. You may conduct field research outwith the classroom and in addition to the 5 hours in class allocated.

Preparing your report

Use the following instructions to prepare your report. The tick boxes can help ensure you complete each section.

You may wish to use the 'National 5 — assignment notes' to help you prepare your report, but this is optional. There is an example at the end of this document and on SQA's website under the 'Coursework' tab.

Section 1: introduction (3 marks)

♦ Introduce your topic with the question you intend to answer.
♦ Provide at least two pieces of economic background information on your topic.

	✔
Question/title	
Economic background	
Economic background	

Section 2: research sources (6 marks)

Find at least two different sources of information for your topic. Sources may include websites, journals, books, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, etc. You must give brief details of each source, eg URLs, in the body of the report, as a footnote, or in an appendix.

♦ State the reason for looking up each source.
♦ Explain the value of each source to your topic.

		✔		✔
Source 1	Reason		Value	
Source 2	Reason		Value	
Source 3	Reason		Value	

If only two sources are used, you must provide two values for each to gain full marks.

		✔		✔		✔
Source 1	Reason		Value		Value	
Source 2	Reason		Value		Value	

Section 3: findings, analysis and interpretation (12 marks)

♦ State between three and six relevant findings. Remember that you must give brief details of the source of each finding, eg URLs, in the body of the report, as a footnote, or in an appendix.

♦ Give point(s) of analysis and/or interpretation for each finding.
Note: you can give up to three points of analysis/interpretation for each finding.

	How many in your report?
Findings	
Analysis/interpretation point(s)	
Total	

Section 4: conclusion(s)/recommendation(s) (4 marks)

♦ Draw conclusions, justifying why you are drawing them and/or make recommendations, justifying why you are able to make them.

Note: your conclusions and/or recommendations must be based on points you have already made in the 'findings, analysis and interpretation' section.

	✓
Justified conclusion/recommendation 1	
Justified conclusion/recommendation 2	
Justified conclusion/recommendation 3	
Justified conclusion/recommendation 4	

Section 5: economic theory (3 marks)

♦ Your report must include relevant economic theory points.

Note: you must present all theory points in the 'findings, analysis and interpretation' section of your report and not under a separate heading.

	✔
Theory point 1	
Theory point 2	
Theory point 3	

Section 6: structure and presentation (2 marks)

♦ Use the headings from sections 1–4 for your report (if word-processing, use consistent fonts and sizes).
♦ Be consistent in your use of appropriate economic terms.
♦ Reference your sources logically.
♦ Use display materials, eg charts, graphs, images, if appropriate.

Marks will be awarded for **any two** of the following:

	Min 2 required ✔
Headings, fonts and sizes	
Economic terms	
Logical referencing	
Display material	

You should:

♦ insert your report title
♦ use 1·5 line spacing
♦ use a readable, clear font
♦ use font size of 12
♦ number your pages
♦ insert your SCN on every page
♦ not staple your pages together

National 5 Economics — assignment notes

You can use this to record your research and analysis, and to help you prepare your final report. If you need additional space, you can add more rows to any of the tables.

You can download a copy from SQA's website under the 'Coursework' tab.

Introduction (3 marks)

	Notes
Question/title	
Economic background	
Economic background	

Research sources (6 marks)

Brief details of source	Reason for choosing	Value(s) of information

Findings, analysis and interpretation (12 marks)

Source	Findings	Analysis and/or interpretation point(s): (for example this shows that … this means that … this suggests that … this leads to … therefore … the impact is …)

Conclusion(s)/recommendation(s) (4 marks)

Conclusion/recommendation	Justification

Economic theory (3 marks)

Theory point

Structure and presentation (2 marks)

	Min 2 required ✔
Headings, fonts and sizes	
Economic terms	
Logical referencing	
Display material	

Recommended style (0 marks)

	✔
Report title	
1·5 line spacing	
Readable, clear font	
Font size 12	
Pages numbered	
SCN on each page	
Not stapled	

Administrative information

Published: August 2023 (version 1.3)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Clarification and/or exemplification given in the detailed marking instructions for the following sections: introduction, research sources, and findings, analysis and interpretation. Minor amendments made to the 'Instructions for candidates' section.	September 2019
1.2	Minor amendments made to section 2 and 3 of the 'Detailed marking instructions'.	August 2022
1.3	Minor amends made to: Section 2 'Resources' — text relating to 'do not award marks for'. Sections 3 'Findings, analysis and interpretation' — text in 'marking instructions' clarified. Section 4 'Conclusions and recommendations' — text added to marking instructions to clarify that 'points can be negative or positive', example added to exemplify this.	August 2023

Security and confidentiality

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