



Alternative Certification Model 2020–21: National QA Exercise Key Messages

Subject	English
Level	Advanced Higher

This report provides information on themes emerging from the national quality assurance exercise, which is part of the Alternative Certification Model for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

A sample of candidates' assessed work from selected centres was reviewed to determine whether assessment was in line with the national standard. The evidence submitted may have been partial or incomplete and is unlikely to have represented all of the evidence that will be gathered to allow the centre to determine a provisional result.

The centres selected for review in this subject and at this level have been provided with specific feedback on the evidence that they submitted. The comments below highlight key points about the assessment approaches and instruments used and the sampled centres' assessment judgements, for all centres delivering the subject at this level to reflect upon and make any appropriate adjustments.

Section 1: Comments on approach to assessment

The amount of evidence submitted by centres was variable. Most centres submitted one of the key pieces of evidence for each candidate. Other centres submitted two or more key pieces of evidence for each candidate.

The types of evidence submitted by centres came from the following sources:

- ◆ SQA Course Assessment Task (Project–Dissertation and Portfolio–Writing)
- ◆ SQA 2021 question paper (Literary Study and Textual Analysis)
- ◆ a commercial question paper — P&N 2020/21 (Literary Study and Textual Analysis)
- ◆ centre-devised question papers

All of the evidence submitted by centres was of the type detailed in the SQA subject-specific guidance on key pieces of evidence for Advanced Higher English.

All of the submitted assessments were valid and were accompanied by appropriate marking instructions.

There was clear evidence that a wide range of texts appropriate to this level was being taught in centres, and that candidates were engaged and successfully adopted a variety of suitable approaches to assessment tasks. All of this seemed very much in line with the evidence seen in previous years.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Most centres were judged to be on standard. Where centre assessment judgements were identified as not in line with national standards, there was evidence of a tendency towards leniency in the assessment of some candidates. This was often evident at the top end of the mark ranges for each component. Some scripts that had been awarded marks in the 18–16 range for Literary Study and Textual Analysis would have been more accurately placed in the 15–13 range. For example, assessors should be confident that candidates show 'secure knowledge and understanding' of the texts and that analysis 'strengthens the line of argument' in Literary Study essays in order to place those scripts within the 18–16 mark range.

Recommendations to centres guided them to the appropriate exemplar material on the SQA Understanding Standards website.

There was significant evidence of good practice among the centres selected. This included:

- ◆ detailed written feedback to candidates linked to specific assessment standards
- ◆ internal moderation
- ◆ external moderation involving partner and/or consortium schools
- ◆ collaboration between teachers/assessors in arriving at appropriate assessment judgements

It was clear that a thorough and effectively documented moderation process enabled many centres to make high quality and considered assessment judgements.