



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

Subject	Business Management
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

In all cases, centres demonstrated valid, fair and robust approaches to assessment. Most centres made effective use of the SQA 2021 NQ assessment resource for the question paper component of the course. Some centres used a commercially produced paper, that contained appropriate course coverage and was in line with national standards. Few centres devised their own assessments using a range of SQA past papers.

Centres are reminded that when devising assessments or purchasing commercial resources, these should be checked in accordance with the course specification on SQA's website. In particular, when devising centre-based resources, centres must ensure there is appropriate course coverage and level of demand. Please refer to the specimen question paper on SQA's website for exemplification of current assessment standards.

Many centres submitted partial candidate evidence as part of the national quality assurance exercise. Before deciding on a final provisional result however, centres are reminded that they must consider evidence that covers all three areas of study in the course, as well as the skills demonstrated in the project, to ensure all required knowledge and skills are covered.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Centres demonstrated good assessment judgements which were applied correctly to the variety of assessment approaches. Many centres included helpful notes and annotations explaining how the assessment judgements were reached. On the whole, centres have prepared their candidates well, and there were many excellent examples of candidates' responses that demonstrated a high level of achievement.

For Advanced Higher level, the responses required are fairly detailed and centres should refer to the marking instructions and, in particular, the 'expected response(s)' column, for an indication of the level of detail in relation to the command word employed. In some cases, the marking instructions were applied too leniently to candidates' responses. Centres are reminded that candidates' responses that are simply lifted and reworded from the case study in section 1, without any connected analysis, cannot be awarded marks.

For the project component, centres are reminded that analysis points that deviate from the finding stated are considered generic developments, and these are to be discouraged at this level. Candidates should develop points directly attributable to their findings. It is also crucial for candidates to reference all findings accurately before any marks for analysis can be awarded.

Centres are reminded that in both the question paper component and the project, impacts of 'good/bad reputation/image' are not sufficient on their own and must be further developed at this level. Please refer to recent SQA marking instructions for examples of the level of detail required and highlight that reputation is only a valid point when it is sufficiently expanded.

Candidate evidence was well annotated with almost every centre using brackets to indicate a correct response and displaying codes for any general marks awarded, where applicable, in the margin. Centres should refer to SQA Understanding Standards material for exemplification on effectively annotating both components.

Overall, centres' preparation of their evidence is to be commended. In almost every case, there was evidence of robust and supportive internal and or local moderation procedures, which included documentation to show any discussions on the cross-marking that had taken place.