



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

Subject	French
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

Centres submitted a wide range of evidence for learners, including reading and translation, listening, discursive writing and some supplementary evidence based on the performance-talking. They used the SQA question paper for 2020–21, either as published by SQA or modified by the centre. Some centres also used a selection of items from SQA past papers or, on occasion, centre-devised assessments.

Centres made effective use of the SQA question paper for 2020–21, and where they devised their own assessments using a range of SQA past papers, these generally had appropriate course coverage and level of demand.

Some approaches to assessment did not replicate the format of current SQA Advanced Higher examinations. For example: pre-reform SQA reading papers lacking line numbers and appropriate signposting in the body of the comprehension questions, and featuring previous-style inferencing questions, or essay choices being presented in the format of a question rather than a statement. This resulted in the level of demand being too challenging. Centres following this approach should take account of this when making or reflecting on assessment judgements, and are reminded that SQA past papers from before 2016 should be adapted to reflect current assessment approaches.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Centres' assessment judgements were mostly reliable and in line with national standards. Assessment judgements were often supported by evidence of robust internal quality assurance procedures, with documented professional dialogue between the assessor and colleagues promoting consistency of standards.

Particularly good practice involved blind marking of discursive writing. This was supported by each assessor's comments, along with detailed documentation of discussions with colleagues that showed how assessment judgements had been made.

Where issues were identified with the application of marking instructions or the level of demand of assessment evidence, centres were advised to review internal quality assurance processes. Further guidance on internal quality assurance is available on [SQA's website](#).

Centres are reminded that marking should be as positive as possible, and that the extraneous rule previously applied in marking SQA examinations is no longer applicable.

In relation to assessment judgements, centres can refer to Advanced Higher Understanding Standards materials for overall purpose question in reading and discursive writing. These are available at <https://www.understandingstandards.org.uk> . Exemplar materials for performance-talking are available on SQA's secure site at <https://secure.sqa.org.uk>.