



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

Subject	Politics
Level	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

Almost all centres submitted evidence for five candidates. Evidence was generated from assessment instruments that made either partial or full use of the SQA 2021 NQ assessment resource for Higher Politics or were based on questions from SQA past papers or the specimen question paper. As a result, the assessment approaches taken were all considered valid and reliable.

Most centres used shorter assessments to assess candidates at appropriate stages in their learning. Many centres provided additional supporting documentation to outline how the assessment evidence submitted would contribute to the wider assessment approaches to be taken to ensure suitable coverage of the knowledge and skills covered in the Higher Politics course. A small number of centres submitted additional assessment evidence to support their assessment judgements.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Assessment judgments were generally in line with the national standard. Most centres applied these judgments consistently. The vast majority of centres provided annotations that indicated how assessment judgments were made. These often related to the criteria outlined in the relevant marking grids for each type of question. Most, but not all, centres adhered to the guidelines contained in the marking grids when allocating marks to candidate responses.

Centres are reminded about the significance of the use of the marking grid when allocating marks for candidate responses. A small number of centres were lenient in the allocation of marks as a result of not following this guidance. For example, to access the second interpretation mark in the 20-mark electoral data source question in question paper 2, all relevant aspects of data must be interpreted accurately. In addition, supporting justifications must be provided when crediting evaluations of the validity of the viewpoint for this question.

For the 20-mark extended-response questions in question paper 1, marks for the scope and development of knowledge should be allocated in line with the horizontal interpretation of the grid. For example, candidates can be awarded up to five marks for scope of knowledge if four relevant aspects of the question are described in detail. Or, if only three aspects of the question are described with some detail in a candidate response, only three marks can be allocated for scope. Consequently, if a candidate response indicates three aspects are covered, each with some description, and then some development takes place of each of these three aspects through some explanation and/or exemplification, a total of three marks for scope and three marks for development can be awarded, resulting in six marks in total for knowledge and understanding.

Most centres provided additional documentation outlining quality assurance and moderation processes. Almost all evidence submitted showed evidence of this. There was a strong correlation between applying clear moderation processes and assessment judgements that adhered to the national standard.