



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

Subject	History
Level	N5

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 made effective use of the SQA 2021 NQ assessment resource or indicated that it was in their assessment plan to do so. Most centres presented partial evidence of the key evidence required to produce provisional results.

Many centres created their own assessments, which replicated the approach, level of demand and structure of SQA assessments. Some centres devised their own assessments using a range of SQA past papers, which had appropriate course coverage and level of demand.

Some centres used a commercially-produced paper from current and past years in their entirety or in part. Most centres adapted questions in line with the national assessment standard, but for a minority of centres questions required further adaptation.

In the majority of centre submissions, the approach to assessment closely followed SQA's guidance on gathering key evidence. Some centres submitted unit assessments as part of their candidate evidence and supplemented this with scaled-down SQA assessments. Most centres submitted additional information indicating their overall assessment approach. This was very helpful in confirming the accuracy of centres' approaches to assessment, especially with respect to breadth, depth and level of challenge.

Most centres' evidence included assessors' comments and other supporting evidence that clearly showed the basis on which assessment judgements had been made. Detailed observation notes were also employed effectively by some centres.

A minority of centres did not submit additional information indicating their approach to moderation.

There was some very good practice with respect to internal and local moderation. Some centres had collaborated more widely across local authorities. Many centres had clear policies and submitted evidence demonstrating careful and collegiate assessment approaches.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Most centres' assessment judgements were valid, reliable and in line with national standards. This led to most candidates being assessed accurately, fairly and consistently.

On the whole, centres' assessment judgements were accurate. However, there were instances where marking instructions had been applied too severely. This was apparent in 'Explain' questions, where some centres did not properly credit evidence where there was an implicit link to the question. Also, with the 9-mark question, some centres did not properly credit knowledge points that had been linked to the question. For source-handling questions, some centres were inconsistent in crediting provenance marks for the 'Evaluate' question. In the 'How fully' question, some centres were severe in their crediting of source points. Centres should be aware of this when making their own assessment judgements.

Some centres did not make use of standard annotation to clarify their assessment judgements. Wherever possible, centres should consider using standard annotation to help communicate their assessment judgements more clearly.

There were common themes in feedback to centres. For assessment judgements, there was some severity in assessing individual question types as mentioned above. In addition, centres should consider using standard marking annotation to communicate the rationale for their decisions clearly. When using commercially-produced papers, centres should ensure that they check their assessments against the latest advice given below. When reviewing assessment judgements, centres should consult the same information:

- ◆ **Subject guidance:** https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/guidance-estimates-n5-history.pdf
- ◆ **Course Specification:** https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/HistoryCourseSpecN5.pdf
 - 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' – pp 3–25
 - Appendix 2: guidance on creating assessments for National 5 – pp 42–45
- ◆ **History specimen question paper National 5** (Marking codes p6):
https://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/papers/instructions/2019/mi_N5_History_mi_2019.pdf
- ◆ **Understanding Standards materials:**
<https://www.understandingstandards.org.uk/Subjects/History/national5> (see 'Additional resources for Session 2020–21' on the left-hand side)
- ◆ **Webinar** – Understanding Standards tab on N5 History subject page:
<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47447.html>

Overall, the evidence submitted by centres demonstrated very high levels of professionalism and knowledge of making accurate assessment judgements in line with national assessment standards. Moreover, there were many examples of best practice with respect to collegiality and moderation.