



# **SQA National Qualifications:**

## **Guidance for centres managing remote assessment in 2020–21**

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# Introduction

In 2020–21, managing assessments and coursework for National Qualifications brings additional challenges.

Where candidates can attend the centre in person, it is strongly advised that assessment should take place within the centre. However, in some cases where a candidate is unable to attend the centre for an extended period, such as if they are shielding or repeatedly self-isolating, it may be necessary to manage assessment remotely.

This guidance is intended to help centres who are considering managing assessment remotely, to manage it in a way that ensures that evidence is produced under appropriate conditions and authenticated.

Candidates with assessment arrangements must be able to access these in a remote assessment scenario. You should consider to what extent the existing assessment arrangements can be implemented remotely, and whether additional or alternative arrangements are required to allow the candidate equal and fair access to the assessment. If it is not possible to provide assessment arrangements remotely, this may not be a suitable arrangement. Please see our [assessment arrangements web page](#) for further information.

Please ensure that you always follow the most up-to-date public health guidance. For further information please visit the [Scottish Government website](#).

## Deciding whether remote assessment is necessary

Before deciding to conduct an assessment for a National Qualification remotely, you should consider whether it is possible to reschedule the assessment so it can be conducted in-centre at an alternative time. This decision will, of course, be dependent on the latest public health guidance for centres and individuals.

Remote methods of assessment can bring complexity and risk the authenticity of the assessment. Some candidates will not have access to the digital resources required, or a suitable environment, to complete the assessment. For these reasons, we advise that remote assessment should only be used where in-centre assessment is impractical. In 2020–21, this includes adjustments made to support COVID-safe delivery of assessment.

In situations where a candidate is shielding, home-bound or unable to visit the centre for a significant period, remote assessment may be necessary. For any assessment conducted this way, sufficient controls should be in place to ensure that the candidate's work is authenticated as far as possible.

# Supervision, control and access to resources

You should carefully review the assessment conditions and resource restrictions outlined in the course and unit documentation to ensure you comply with requirements. For assessment write-ups, the course documentation will define the access to resources that candidates are allowed, and the level of supervision and control required.

## Access to resources

### Free access to resources (open book)

In many of the assessment methods for coursework, an 'open book' approach to resources should be taken at some stages of the assessment. This is likely to be the case during planning and preparation stages that prepare candidates for any final write-up, practical activity, performance, and so on. In a minority of coursework assessments, candidates are permitted access to open resources throughout their assessment.

### Access to defined resources

In some subjects, candidates may have access to materials other than the assessment instrument, such as dictionaries, prepared notes or resource sheets. These materials must never include a pre-prepared write-up. The course documentation provides details of permitted materials. This should include the type (for example books, notes, tables); the amount (for example 200 words of notes, two textbooks); and any more specific information on the materials (for example a French dictionary).

### Closed-book conditions

Under closed-book conditions, only the assessment instrument is available to candidates. However, the assessment instrument may contain, for example, a vocabulary list or a data sheet.

## Supervision and control

Under **some supervision and control**:

- ◆ candidates do not need to be directly supervised at all times
- ◆ the use of resources, including the internet, is not tightly prescribed
- ◆ the work an individual candidate submits for assessment is their own
- ◆ teachers and lecturers can provide reasonable assistance

Under a **high level of supervision and control**:

- ◆ the use of resources is tightly prescribed
- ◆ all candidates are within direct sight of the teacher or lecturer throughout the session(s)
- ◆ display materials which might provide assistance are removed or covered
- ◆ there is no access to email, the internet or mobile phones
- ◆ candidates complete their work independently

- ◆ there is no interaction with other candidates
- ◆ no assistance of any description is provided

If a closed book assessment, or an assessment with 'defined resources' with a high level of supervision and control, is conducted remotely online, you should take appropriate steps to ensure that supervision meets the requirements for 'high supervision and control' in the conditions of assessment.

## **Authentication**

The teacher or lecturer must be able to confirm that the work submitted is the candidate's own. Teachers and lecturers should be sufficiently familiar with the candidate's general standard of work to judge whether the piece submitted is within their capabilities.

Each candidate should sign a declaration to confirm that the work they submit for final assessment is their own unaided work (see form provided in [Your Coursework](#)).

If a teacher or lecturer suspects that the candidate has not completed the work unaided, this should be investigated by the centre before any result is submitted to SQA. If the candidate is not familiar to the assessor or invigilator, their identity should be authenticated.

## **National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher**

It is for you to select the most appropriate method of assessment for the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher alternative certification model, but to maintain validity, many assessments will need to be completed under controlled conditions.

### **Assessments that require a high level of supervision and control**

#### **Performance and talking course assessments**

For talking and for some types of performance assessment that would normally be recorded, it is possible to conduct assessment remotely using video conferencing software where this allows audio and/or video recording. You should ensure that the candidate has access to required resources and, where restrictions apply, is not able to access prohibited resources.

It is recommended that you undertake a data protection impact assessment. In addition, you must ensure that you are following child protection policies.

#### **Question papers/Assessment write-ups**

Question papers will be taken under conditions of high-level supervision and control. Write-ups generally occur under a high level of supervision and control, with restrictions on access to resources.

The security of assessment material should be maintained. If the candidate is not familiar to the assessor or invigilator, their identity should be authenticated.

You should ensure that the supervision meets the requirements for 'high supervision and control' in the conditions of assessment. Under normal circumstances, best practice in this area would be:

- ◆ There must not be any display of materials that could be of assistance to candidates in answering questions and/or generating evidence.
- ◆ The invigilator must check that no other internet-enabled devices are present such as mobile phones, tablet computers, smart watches or earpieces.
- ◆ Candidates must be prevented from accessing applications other than those necessary for recording their responses.
- ◆ Candidates must be aware of the timings of the assessment, and they should have access to a time-keeping device (on-screen or otherwise).
- ◆ The invigilator must be able to see candidates at all times during the assessment. The invigilator must be able to see each candidate's head, eyes, torso, keyboard and mouse. This means that it is unlikely that candidates will be able to access toilet facilities for the duration of the assessment.
- ◆ The invigilator must be able to detect noises made within the candidate's assessment environment.

We recognise that for 2020–21, it may not be possible to achieve all the points above, and you will need to consider what conditions of assessment are practicable to apply in the candidate's circumstances. You could also consider whether it would be better to postpone the assessment until the candidate is able to physically attend the centre.

## Unit assessments at all SCQF levels

The conditions of assessment will be defined in the unit specification. The type of assessment used should determine what methods of authentication are required. This will not generally require remote invigilation, but some level of supervision and control should be in place.

The security of assessment material such as assessment support packs should be maintained.

## Further information

Please visit our [remote assessment](#) webpage for further information, including questions and answers on using technology to support remote assessment.

For guidance on conducting an assessment remotely, please see [Advice for centres in using technology to support assessment remotely](#).