

Your National Qualifications

**What you need to know about National 5,
Higher and Advanced Higher coursework**



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Your National Qualifications

This guide explains what you need to know about completing your coursework for National Qualifications. It also has useful information to help you prepare for your National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams.

Your lecturers can give you more details about the coursework and exams for the courses you're taking.

You can share this guide with your parents or carers if you'd find that helpful.

If you need this information in another format, such as large print, Braille or another language, please email **customer@qualifications.gov.scot** or call **0345 279 1000**.

We use the term '**coursework**' in this booklet to mean any written or practical assessments (not exams) you do for your National Qualifications. This varies by subject. It can mean portfolios, practical activities, performances, assignments or projects.



What are National Qualifications?

National Qualifications are mainly taken by learners in secondary schools, colleges and training centres in Scotland. You may be studying for some of the following National Qualifications.

National 1 units and National 2 to National 4 courses

You'll complete unit assessments throughout the year.

Your lecturer will mark these as either 'pass' or 'fail'.

National 4 courses also include an added value unit assessment. You'll usually do an assignment or a test.

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses

Most of these involve coursework and end-of-year exams.

We mark these and grade them from A to D.

Skills for Work courses

These focus on the general skills needed in the workplace. Your lecturer will usually assess these through practical activities.

Scottish Baccalaureates

These are available to learners in S5 and S6. They include Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications, and an 'interdisciplinary project' which is graded A to C. Completing a Scottish Baccalaureate is an opportunity to develop your skills and show evidence of your initiative, of taking responsibility and of being able to work independently.

An '**interdisciplinary project**' is a large piece of work that will help build the skills, attitude and confidence you'll need as you move on to higher education or employment.



Awards

These are a set of related units that are often projects and assignments. Your lecturer will mark these as either 'pass' or 'fail'.

Assessment arrangements

If you need additional support because of an identified disability or additional support need, your college can arrange this for you. You do not need a formal diagnosis from a medical professional to receive this support.

Your lecturers can arrange support for coursework, performances and exams.

You'll still be expected to show the same skills and knowledge as other learners, and you'll be marked in the same way.

Please speak to your lecturer as soon as possible about these arrangements. If you prefer, your parent or carer can speak to your lecturer on your behalf.

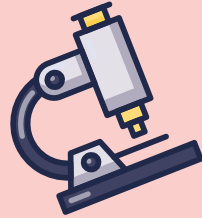
You can find more information on our [website](#).



'Assessment arrangements' are types of support that can be put in place to give you an equal opportunity to show what you know and what you can do in an assessment.

Types of coursework

National Qualifications can include different types of coursework, such as portfolios, practical activities, performances, assignments and projects. The type of coursework you do will depend on the course you're studying.



Coursework gives you the chance to show how much you understand your subject and to gain marks that could make a difference to your final grade. Each piece of coursework has different requirements. Your lecturer will explain these to you.



To keep assessments fair for everyone, there are rules you need to follow when doing your coursework. Speak to your lecturer if you do not understand the rules. Your lecturer will also tell you what happens if the rules are not followed.



Coursework rules

Cheating: plagiarism

You must only submit your own work. Submitting work that is not your own is a type of cheating called 'plagiarism'. This can include copying from someone else's work, copying work from the internet, or submitting work that was created by generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Copying work and amending or lightly editing the wording is still plagiarism.

It's also plagiarism if you submit work that is not your own, without clearly stating what the source in your work is. This is explained under 'Sources' on page 11.

It's not your own work if:

- ✗ you have copied text, images or material from GenAI tools;
- ✗ all or part of it was done by someone else;
- ✗ someone who has produced similar work in the past (for example, an older student or family member) helped you or did the work for you;
- ✗ you have used work that your lecturers prepared as an example; or
- ✗ you have copied text from books, websites or essay banks without referencing it.



Cheating: collusion

Working with others when you should be working alone is called 'collusion'. This includes giving or receiving help, and sharing files, passwords or work.

Everyone involved in collusion is breaking the rules, not just the person asking for help. If another learner asks you for help, tell them to speak to their lecturer instead.

If you are completing group work, make sure your written work is your own.

If you find any part of your course difficult, ask your lecturer for advice. No one else can be involved in discussing or reviewing your coursework.



Cheating: don't risk it

If you break the rules, you may face penalties.

Lecturers know your work well and can spot changes in your writing style and the language you use.

We use software that helps us identify plagiarism, collusion and the use of GenAI. This software works by matching copied text with the sources it has been taken from.

Sources

You can use different sources when completing your coursework, including books, the internet and TV programmes. Using a range of sources can help you learn, but you must reference them correctly.

Do not copy information and include it as your own work. Keep notes of all the material you use from other sources so you can clearly tell it apart from your own work. Your lecturer will show you how to do this, but here are some general rules:

- ✓ Use quotation marks around any text that has come directly from other sources and say where it is from.
- ✓ Provide a reference for any diagrams or illustrations that you have used from other sources.
- ✓ Create a bibliography (a list of the sources you have used) at the end of your work.
- ✓ Never use GenAI tools as an independent source of information.

If you write about someone you know in real life, do not use their name or any other information that could identify them in your coursework.

Artificial intelligence

There are many GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT or Google Gemini. If you choose to use GenAI, you must still show your own knowledge and skills and only submit your own work for marking.

Text created by a GenAI tool is not your own work. Rewording or lightly editing any work generated by AI does not make it your own work.

If you use assistive AI tools to help with your spelling and grammar, you must not use them primarily to re-write or translate work. The words you submit must be your own.

Ask your lecturer if you're ever unsure whether you can use GenAI tools.

You can find out more about GenAI and your assessments on our **website**.



Language, writing and images

Do not include rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images in your work. If you submit work that includes discriminatory material, such as racist or sexist content, the people who are marking your work will report it to us.

- ✓ Written coursework must be legible.
- ✓ You must use a pen with black or blue ink.
- ✓ Do not use gel pens or pencils as these can fade or smudge if your coursework is scanned.

Markers will do their best to read your work, but they may not be able to award marks if it's too difficult to read.



Word count

If your coursework has a minimum or maximum word count, you must stick to it. You might be penalised if you do not.

See 'What if I break the rules?' on page 18 for more information.

Resource sheets

For some subjects, you are allowed to use resource sheets (also called 'research sheets' or 'processed information sheets'). Your lecturer will tell you if you need one and will show you how to use it. If you're not sure whether you'll need to use one, ask your lecturer.

If you need to use a resource sheet, make sure you understand the rules. You could lose marks or face other penalties if you do not use it correctly. You must submit your resource sheet with your coursework. If you do not, you will automatically lose 20% of the marks available.



Handing in

your

coursework

Handing in your coursework



Check your work

Before submitting your coursework, check that:

- ✓ everything is your own work, and you have properly referenced all sources of information, diagrams or illustrations you have used
- ✓ there is no rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images in your work
- ✓ you have followed your lecturer's instructions
- ✓ you have not included text created by GenAI

Deadlines

Your lecturer will set your coursework deadlines. It's important to submit your work before the deadline or it may not be marked.

If you're struggling to meet a deadline, speak to your lecturer as soon as you can.



Declaration

Before you submit your coursework for marking, you'll need to sign a declaration. Make sure you understand it. If you're unsure about anything, ask your lecturer.

The declaration confirms that:

- ✓ you have read this guide and understand it
- ✓ you understand that we may reduce or cancel your grades if you break the rules
- ✓ your coursework is your own work, and you have clearly identified all sources you have used
- ✓ you've submitted all the required work, including any resource sheets or other type of information sheet relevant to your subject
- ✓ you understand that your coursework will be sent to us for marking

If you're planning to publish or share your work online, you must talk to your college first.



**What if I break
*the rules?***

If a Qualifications Scotland or college investigation finds you have broken any rules, you may face a penalty. For example:

- Your marks can be reduced, or you can be awarded zero marks.
- Your qualification can be cancelled.
- You may receive a written warning or be disqualified from taking Qualifications Scotland courses in the following year.

You must:

- ✓ do all the work yourself
- ✓ properly reference all sources
- ✓ ask your lecturer what you can use GenAI for, and acknowledge any use
- ✓ check your work before handing it in
- ✓ hand your work in on time
- ✓ include any resource sheets or similar information sheets you have used when you submit your work

You must not:

- ✗ copy someone else's work
- ✗ work with others when you should work alone
- ✗ submit work as your own that was created by GenAI
- ✗ use rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory words or images in your work

Your 2027 exams

You can download the exam timetable from our [website](#).
This shows the dates and times of your exams.

You can also download our MyExams app to create your personal timetable, add notes and sync your timetable with your other calendars.

The 2027 exams will run from **Monday 26 April to Thursday 3 June**.

We'll share more information about your exams in March 2027.



Questions we're often asked about exams...

What are prelims?



Prelim is short for 'preliminary exam'. Most colleges run prelims to help you practise for your exams, give feedback on your performance, and help identify how well you are progressing with your course.

Your college will decide whether and when they will run prelims this year.

Does Qualifications Scotland mark the prelims?



No, your college sets your prelim question papers, and your lecturers will mark them.

Who will mark my coursework and exams?



We mark all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams. We also mark most of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher coursework, though your lecturer will assess some of it. We carry out quality checks to make sure lecturers are marking in line with the required standard.



When will I get my results?

You will get your exam results by post on Tuesday 10 August 2027. You can also get your exam results by text or email (or both) if you sign up to **My Qualifications Scotland**. We'll also send your results to your college. If you've applied to a university or college through UCAS (University and College Admissions Service), they'll receive your results too.

If you do not receive your results certificate by post on results day, please contact your college. They can let you know your results and will work with us to find out what's happened to your certificate.

I have two exams at the same time or one straight after the other on the same day. What should I do?



Speak to your college. They'll be able to look at alternative arrangements for you.

I've heard that watches won't be allowed in exams anymore. Is this true?

Yes, from the 2027 exams onwards, you will not be allowed to bring watches of any kind into the exam room. This includes analogue, digital and smart watches.



As wearable technology evolves, it's becoming harder to tell the difference between traditional watches and internet-enabled smart watches. A ban on all watches will mean that exam conditions are fair and consistent in all schools and colleges.



Support and information

Your college will give you your Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) card, and more information about sitting exams, by the end of March 2027.

Your SCN card will help you remember your number when you're starting an exam and have to write the number on your script. So, as soon as you receive your card, write your name and SCN on it. You can scan the QR code on the back of the card for more information about assessments.

For more support, including organisations who can help if you're feeling anxious, visit our [website](#).

You can also call us on **0345 279 1000**.
We're here to help.

Customer Service Team

Phone: **0345 279 1000**

Email: **customer@qualifications.gov.scot**

Website: **[qualifications.gov.scot](https://www.qualifications.gov.scot)**



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