**Instructions for candidates**

This assessment applies to the assignment for National 5 Geography.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The assignment has two stages:

* research
* assessment: writing a report of your findings under supervision

In this assignment, you have to demonstrate your ability to apply your skills, knowledge and understanding to researching a geographical topic or issue of your choice. This may be related to areas you have studied in class, or you may choose to research any relevant topic or issue.

The task assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

* choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate geographical topic or issue
* collecting information from a limited range of sources of information
* processing the information gathered, using geographical skills/techniques
* drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
* reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence about the topic or issue studied

You must produce a report of your research and findings. You must complete this report within one hour and in one sitting. You will work independently in direct sight of your teacher or lecturer. Your teacher or lecturer is not allowed to assist you in writing your report. You should not communicate with any other candidate.

If your report is word-processed, your centre must ensure that you do not have access to the internet or any other files (either on hard drives or portable storage).

You will be able to refer to Processed Information, collected during your research, as you write your report. This Processed Information should be no more than two single sides of A4 paper or one single side of A3 paper. You will submit this Processed Information along with your report to SQA for marking.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it. Version 1.0 9

**Choosing a suitable geographical topic or issue**

The geographical topic or issue you choose should allow you to:

* carry out research on a geographical issue
* gather information in two different ways

You have a wide choice of possible topics to research. You can research something you have studied in class, or a topic or issue of personal interest. It can be local or based on something further afield.

Good topics for research allow you to gather data or information which you can then process. This allows you to reach your own original conclusions based on your findings. It is easier to write a good report on a topic which has generated clear results, so that you can comment on and explain these findings, rather than just making descriptive points.

It is helpful if you have a very clear idea of what you are trying to find out. This might be a research question, or question(s) or statement(s) which you try to prove or disprove.

Your teacher or lecturer may support you by commenting on the suitability of your chosen topic or issue, and can advise you on the likely availability of relevant resources.

**Collecting information from at least two sources**

Once you are clear about the topic or issue you are going to research, you can begin to collect information. You must use at least two different methods of collecting information. These could be from primary sources or from secondary sources. It is vital that you keep a record of all the sources you use.

Examples of primary sources (ie original information you have gathered yourself):

* surveys
* questionnaires/interviews
* letters/e-mails
* field sketches/field trips
* measurements (eg weather or river flow data)

Examples of secondary sources:

* maps
* websites
* newspapers/magazines/books
* television programmes/video/DVD/digital streaming
* radio/podcasts

**Using geographical skills/techniques to process the information you have gathered**

Once you have gathered your information you should use your geographical skills/techniques to process your findings. This might involve the use of a variety of different techniques depending on the nature of your research. Your results could be displayed in the form of:

* tables or graphs
* annotated field sketches
* pie charts
* land use maps
* annotated cross-sections
* photographs

or any combination of these.

At this stage it is important to consider which of these results (Processed Information) you are going to take into the assessment. You should take two different examples of results you have gathered. You must be able to fit your chosen information on to two single sides of A4 paper or one single side of A3 paper. It is important that this Processed Information is clearly labelled, as it is submitted as part of your assessment (although the Processed Information itself will not be marked). Make sure you understand the guidance on Processed Information below.

**Describing and explaining the main findings of your research**

You must describe and explain clearly the main things you have found as a result of carrying out your research.

If your research has been thorough, the results of your assignment should be clear to you, and it is your task to convey these results as clearly as possible.

To gain full marks, you must refer to the Processed Information which you have taken into the assessment (although you must not copy large chunks of data from this). You could quote selected information/facts/statistics from your Processed Information in order to convey your main findings. Your description and explanation of the main findings should link clearly to the issue or topic you have researched.

**Giving a conclusion based on your geographical knowledge and the evidence gathered during your research**

The final part of your assignment is to come to a conclusion about the topic or issue which you have researched.

This involves interpreting or highlighting the main results of your research by making judgements linked to your findings. For example, you could:

* make a decision or recommendation about your topic or issue
* explain the most important things you found out in your research
* provide answers to the question(s) you set yourself at the start of your research
* say whether or not the statement you started with has been proved or disproved

**Processed Information**

You can take Processed Information you have collected during the research stage of the assignment into the assessment stage. You should refer to this Processed Information to support your report, but you must not copy large chunks from it. You will gain marks for how well you use the evidence from your Processed Information in your report.

You should make sure that the evidence you take in shows information you have gathered from two different sources.

Some examples of the sort of Processed Information you can take in are:

* an annotated photograph(s) or field sketch(s)
* an annotated cross-section or land use map
* a table(s) or graph(s) showing figures about your topic or issue
* an example of a questionnaire you used to survey shoppers about traffic problems, together with details of the number of people surveyed
* a letter, with questions, you sent to the local council planning department
* a reply you received in response to your letter with key information highlighted
* a screenshot of a list of websites you found using a search engine with the most relevant ones highlighted
* a newspaper article with key points underlined
* a copy of notes you made from watching a video/TV programme/DVD relevant to your topic or issue
* field notes made on location

It is important that the evidence you bring into the assessment has been processed by you and that you have made it unique and have not just photocopied findings from a secondary source without at least annotating them in some way.

**Working with others**

While you should choose your own topic to research, others in your class may have chosen a similar topic. You might want to work with others for part of the time, when you are collecting information. If you choose to do this, it is important that you are able to show what you have contributed to this part of your assignment, and that the Processed Information you take into the assessment is your own work.