



National
Qualifications

English

Portfolio: writing

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the portfolio Component of Higher English Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Higher English portfolio.

This portfolio is worth 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks. The marks contribute 30% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of three Components of Course assessment.

The other Components are a Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation question paper and a Critical Reading question paper.

This portfolio of writing will have 30 marks and will contain two written texts. A maximum of 15 marks will be awarded for each text chosen for the portfolio.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the portfolio Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 30% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the portfolio in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ skills in writing in different genres
- ◆ skills in writing for different purposes and audiences

The added value consists of challenge and application: the candidates will build on the skills they have acquired in the *Creation and Production* Unit and apply them with greater independence.

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of a portfolio.

Assessment overview

The portfolio consists of two written texts which will be the evidence for assessment. The added value consists of the ability to apply language skills in the creation of texts.

This portfolio will give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ skills in writing in different genres
- ◆ skills in writing for different purposes and audiences

The portfolio will comprise two written texts that address the main language purposes, namely creative and discursive writing.

The assessor will support the candidate to choose the focus, theme and genre for his/her writing.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This portfolio is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course: this will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the following Unit Outcome: Creation and Production Outcome 1: Writing.

This assessment has two stages:

- ◆ a portfolio planning and development stage which should be completed over a period of time
- ◆ a writing stage

The written texts must be no longer than 1,300 words each. Full marks can be achieved in a shorter piece, if appropriate to purpose. Candidates will be instructed to record their word count (excluding footnotes and any references). Markers will be instructed to stop marking when the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%. Candidates who exceed the maximum by more than 10% will therefore self-penalise.

While the assessor will have a supporting role, the candidate should take the initiative in the planning, management and completion of the task.

Reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, for example, advice on how to find information for a discursive essay. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis.

It is acceptable for the assessor or a third party to provide:

- ◆ an initial discussion with the candidate on the selection of the topic leading to an outline plan
- ◆ oral or written suggestions for improvements to a first draft

Once work on the assessment has begun, the candidate should be working independently.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access, for example, spellcheckers and dictionaries.

Assessors should not provide specific advice on how to re-phrase or improve responses, or provide model answers specific to the candidate's task. It is not acceptable for the assessor to provide key ideas, to provide a structure or plan, to suggest specific wording or to correct errors in spelling and/or punctuation. This would go beyond reasonable assistance.

The final writing of both texts will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress to ensure that the work is the candidate's own, and that plagiarism has not taken place. In the final writing stage this need not entail formal, timed and supervised conditions, but at all stages of the preparation for and the production of the piece there should be careful monitoring to ensure that it is entirely the candidate's work.

Mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence could include:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ an accurate record of sources consulted

Any direct quotations from source material used in discursive writing must be clearly acknowledged by the use of quotation marks. Specific details of sources must be given – eg dates and writers of newspaper articles, specific web pages, titles and dates of publication of books; it is not acceptable to say, for example, ‘various newspaper articles’ or ‘environmental websites’ or ‘the internet’. Unacknowledged use of others’ material such as copying and pasting from the internet or any other source, or re-wording or summarising information from another source without acknowledgement, is plagiarism and this carries severe penalties.

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate’s own work.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ one piece of writing which is broadly discursive
- ◆ one piece of writing which is broadly creative

The written texts should each be of no more than 1,300 words.

Types of writing

The candidate will produce two written texts for the portfolio drawn from the genres identified in group A and group B.

One should be drawn from group A and one from group B.

Group A: broadly creative

- ◆ a personal essay
- ◆ a reflective essay
- ◆ an imaginative piece

Group B: broadly discursive

- ◆ an argumentative essay
- ◆ a persuasive essay
- ◆ a report for a specified purpose

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general marking instructions are addressed to the Marker. Marking instructions are provided for examining teams in the case of externally marked Course assessment. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

General Marking Principles for the portfolio

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this portfolio. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) The candidate's writing will be marked in terms of content and style.
- (d) Assessment should be holistic. There will be strengths and weaknesses in every piece of writing; assessment should focus as far as possible on the strengths, taking account of weaknesses only when they significantly detract from the overall performance. Marks should be awarded for the quality of the writing, and not deducted for errors or omissions. Writing does not have to be perfect to gain full marks.

Detailed Marking Instructions for the portfolio

Consistent technical accuracy is a requirement for a mark of 8 or above. Consistent technical accuracy means that few errors will be present: paragraphs, sentences and punctuation will be accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood; and spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) should be infrequent.

Assessors should assess the essay in terms of content and style and arrive at a final mark. The following tables for each genre of writing should be used in helping assessors arrive at a mark. The band descriptors in the tables refer to the middle of each marks band.

For each of the texts, the Marker should select the band containing the descriptors that most closely describe the piece of writing.

Once that best fit has been decided, then:

- ◆ where the evidence almost matches the level above, the highest available mark from that band range should be awarded
- ◆ where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from that band range should be awarded

Otherwise the mark from the middle of that band range should be awarded.

Writing which is broadly creative

Range of marks	Marks 15-13	Marks 12-10	Marks 9-7	Marks 6-4	Marks 3-1	Marks 0
<p><u>Content</u></p> <p>The creative piece demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ committed attention to purpose and audience ◆ strong creative qualities ◆ evident command of the genre ◆ thematic concerns which are clearly introduced and developed ◆ ideas/feelings/experiences which are explored with a strong degree of mature reflection/self-awareness/involvement/insight/sensitivity ◆ the writer's personality and individuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ clear attention to purpose and audience ◆ clear creative qualities ◆ insight into the genre ◆ thematic concerns which are introduced and developed ◆ ideas/feelings/experiences are explored with a clear sense of reflection/self-awareness/involvement/insight/sensitivity ◆ the writer's personality clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ adequate attention to purpose and audience ◆ adequate creative qualities ◆ understanding of the genre ◆ thematic concerns which are introduced ◆ ideas/feelings/experiences which are explored with an adequate sense of reflection and involvement ◆ the writer's personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ limited attention to purpose and audience ◆ limited creative qualities ◆ a limited use of conventions of genre ◆ limited thematic concerns ◆ limited ideas/feelings/experiences explored ◆ limited sense of the writer's personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ little attention to purpose and audience ◆ few creative qualities ◆ little use of conventions of genre ◆ little thematic concerns ◆ little evidence of exploration of ideas or feelings ◆ little sense of the writer's personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no evidence of the skills required in terms of content, style and accuracy
<p><u>Style</u></p> <p>The creative piece demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used skilfully to create a strong impact ◆ confident and varied expression ◆ an effective structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used successfully to create impact ◆ confident expression ◆ a clear structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used successfully ◆ adequate expression ◆ an adequate structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ limited linguistic features of the chosen genre ◆ limited expression ◆ a limited use of structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no attempt at using language effectively ◆ many errors in punctuation/syntax/spelling ◆ little use of structure 	

Writing which is broadly discursive

Range of marks	Marks 15-13	Marks 12-10	Marks 9-7	Marks 6-4	Marks 3-1	Marks 0
<p><u>Content</u></p> <p>The discursive essay demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ committed attention to purpose and audience ◆ full understanding and engagement ◆ evidence of full research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a clear and sustained line of thought/convincing stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ clear attention to purpose and audience ◆ clear understanding and engagement ◆ evidence of careful research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a clear line of thought/clear, engaged stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ adequate attention to purpose and audience ◆ adequate understanding ◆ evidence of relevant research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a line of thought/clear stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ limited attention to purpose and audience ◆ limited understanding ◆ evidence of limited relevant research, as appropriate ◆ an unclear line of thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ little attention to purpose and audience ◆ little understanding ◆ little evidence of research ◆ a confused line of thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no evidence of the skills required in terms of content, style and accuracy
<p><u>Style</u></p> <p>The discursive essay demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used comprehensively to argue/discuss/persuade and convey depth and complexity of thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ confident and varied expression ◆ an effective structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used clearly to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ confident expression ◆ a structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used adequately to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ adequate expression ◆ an adequate structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used in a limited way to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ limited expression ◆ a limited use of structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no attempt at using language effectively ◆ many errors in punctuation/syntax/spelling ◆ little use of structure 	

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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