

Your National Qualifications

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

School edition



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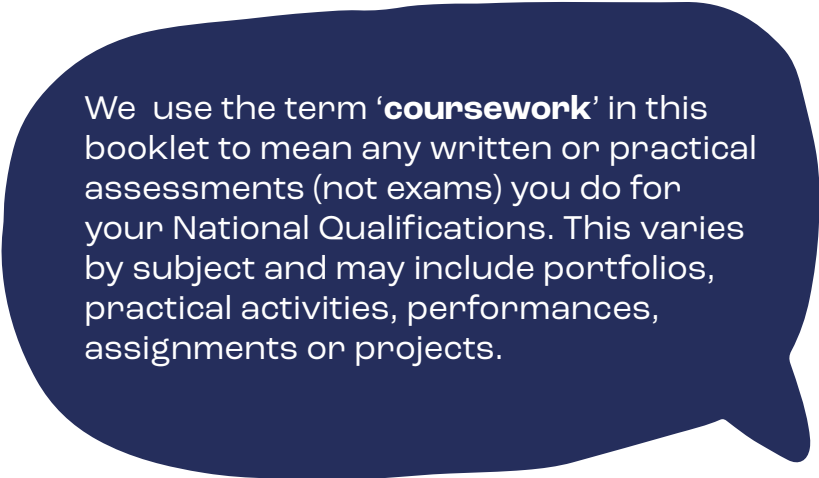
Your National Qualifications

This guide tells you what you need to do when completing your coursework for National Qualifications. It also has useful information about how to prepare for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams.

Your teachers can also explain all of this to you.

You might want to show this guide to your parents or carers to help keep them up to date.

If you need this information in a different format (such as in large type, Braille or a different language) please email **customer@sqa.org.uk** 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 and may include portfolios, practical activities, performances, assignments or projects.

What are National Qualifications?



National Qualifications are mainly taken by learners in secondary schools, colleges and some 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



Your teacher will assess these as either a 'pass' or 'fail'. They involve unit assessments, which you will complete throughout the year.



National 4 courses also include an added value unit assessment that you will complete towards the end of the year. This is usually an assignment or a test.



National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses

These usually involve coursework and end-of-year exams, which we mark and grade from A to D.

Skills for Work courses

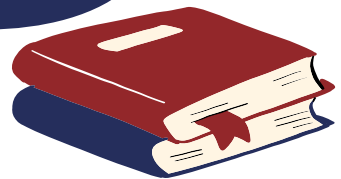
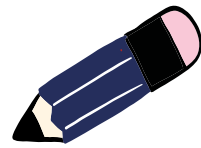
These focus on the general skills needed in the workplace. Your teacher will usually assess these through practical activities.

Scottish Baccalaureates

These are available to learners in S5 and S6. They are made up of a group of Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications, as well as an 'interdisciplinary project' that is graded A to C. Completing a Scottish Baccalaureate is a chance to develop your skills and show evidence of initiative, responsibility and the ability to work independently.

An 'interdisciplinary project'

is a large piece of work that will help give you the skills, attitude and confidence you will need to make the transition into higher education or employment.



Awards

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

Assessment arrangements

If you need additional support because of a disability or additional support need, your school can arrange this to give you an equal chance to show what you know, understand and can do. You don't need to be formally diagnosed by a medical professional to receive this support.

Your teachers can put assessment arrangements in place for coursework, performances and exams.

You still need to show the same skills and knowledge as other learners and you will be marked in the same way. This is to make sure your grade can be directly compared with the grades of everyone else who achieved the qualification.

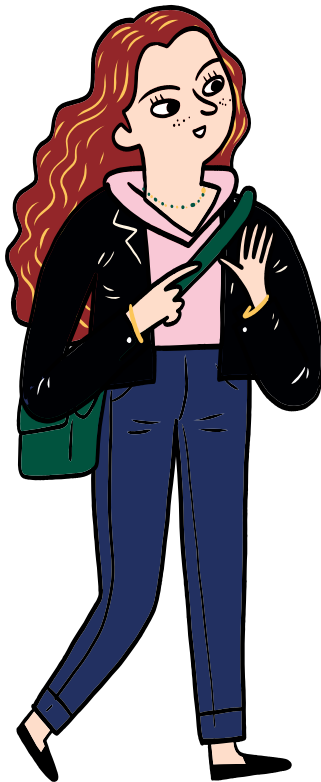
If you would like to know more about these arrangements, it is important that you speak to your teacher as soon as possible so they can discuss the most appropriate assessment arrangements with you. If you prefer, your parent or carer can speak to your teacher for you.

More information is available at

www.sqa.org.uk/learnerassessmentarrangements

'Assessment arrangements'

are adjustments that can be made to the assessment process. They allow learners with disabilities or additional support needs to show the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding of the course.



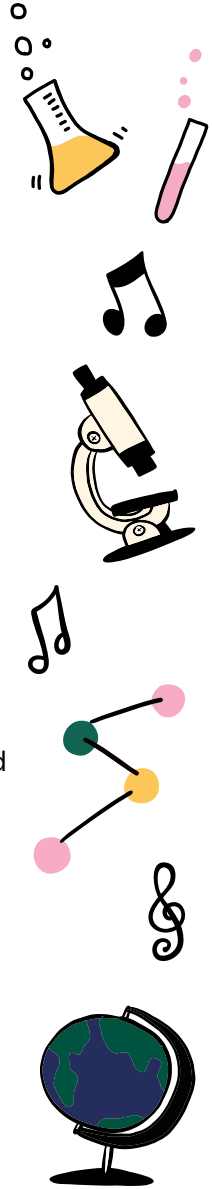
Types of coursework

National Qualifications can be made up of different types of coursework, including portfolios, practical activities, performances, assignments and projects. The type of coursework you do will depend on the course you are studying.

Coursework gives you the chance to show that you understand your subject and gain marks that could make a difference to your final grade. Each piece of coursework will have different requirements. Your teacher will tell you about these.

There are rules that you must follow and information you need to know about your coursework. It is important that you understand the rules because they are there to make sure coursework assessments are fair to everyone.

If you don't understand the rules, speak to your teacher. They can also tell you what could happen if you break the rules.



Completing your coursework



Sources

You may be able to use lots of different sources (including books, the internet and TV programmes) in your work. Using different sources is a great way to learn, but it is important that you reference them correctly.

You can't just copy information from other sources and include it as if it were your own work. You must keep a note of all material you use from other sources, and where it is from, so you can tell it apart from your own work. Your teacher can tell you how to do this, but here are some general rules.

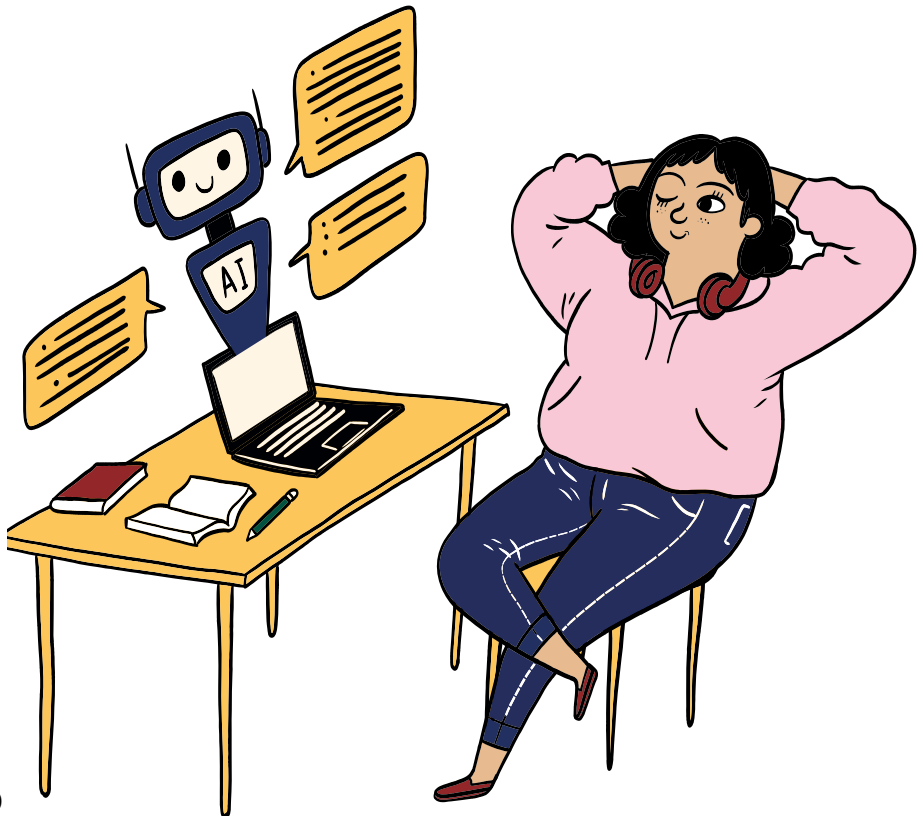
- Use 'quotation marks' around any text that has come from other sources and clearly say where that text is from.
- Provide a reference for any diagrams or illustrations you've used from other sources.
- Create a bibliography (a list of sources you have used). This will go at the end of your work.



Artificial Intelligence

You might have heard about or used artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT or Google Bard. Many of these AI tools have age restrictions, which means they are not suitable for everyone. The text they produce can be incorrect or contain biased information. As the information is not reliable, **you must not use or reference AI tools as sources for your work.**

You can speak to your teacher to find out more about the sources you can use to complete your coursework and prepare for exams.



Plagiarism

You must only submit your own work. Passing off other people's work and ideas as your own is called 'plagiarism' and it's cheating.

It's also plagiarism if you use other people's work and don't reference the sources as explained on page 9.

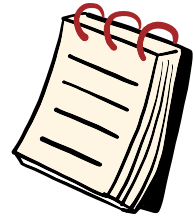
It's not your own work if:

- all or some of it has been done, or worked on, by someone else
- it has been done by someone who has produced similar work in the past (such as an older student)
- you use work that your teacher has prepared as an example
- you've copied it from a source, such as a book, website or an essay bank, without trying to put it in your own words or referencing it, or
- you've copied text, images or any other material produced by an AI tool.

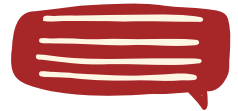


Collusion

Working with others when you should be working alone is called 'collusion'. This can mean giving or getting help and sharing files, passwords and paperwork.

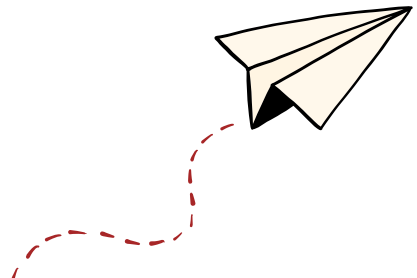


Everyone involved in collusion is breaking the rules, not just the person who has asked for help. If another learner (for example, someone in your class) asks you for help, you should tell them to speak to the teacher instead.



If you are working as part of a group (for example, on a group project), you must make sure the written work you provide as part of the group work is your own.

If you are finding any part of your course difficult, ask your teacher for advice. No other person can be involved, at any stage, in discussing or reviewing your coursework.



Don't risk it

Spotting plagiarism, collusion and the use of AI isn't difficult.

- Teachers are familiar with your work and can spot changes in your writing style and the language you use.
- Markers know their subject inside out, so they're familiar with lots of sources.
- We use software that identifies plagiarism, collusion and the use of AI. This software matches copied phrases and text with the sources they've been taken from.

If you do risk it, there may be a penalty.

See '**What if I break the rules?**' on page 19.



Language and writing

Don't include rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images in your work. If you do, markers will report it to us.

Remember that written coursework must be legible. Markers will do their best to read your work, but they might not be able to award marks if your writing is too difficult to read.

Word count

If your coursework states a minimum or maximum word count, you must stick to it. You might be penalised if you don't. The penalties you might face are explained further on in this guide.

See '[What if I break the rules?](#)' on page 19 for more information.



Resource sheets

In certain subjects you may be allowed to use resource sheets (also known as 'research sheets' or 'processed information sheets'). Your teacher will tell you if you need to use one as part of your coursework and will show you how to use it. If you are not sure whether you will need to use one, speak to your teacher.

If you need to use a resource sheet, it's important that you know the rules on how to use it because you could lose marks if you don't use it correctly.

You must hand in your resource sheet with your coursework. If you don't, you will automatically lose 20% of the marks for your coursework.

A cartoon illustration of a student with dark hair, wearing a green cardigan over a yellow shirt, sitting at a desk. The student has a spiral in their hair and is resting their head on their hand, looking stressed or tired. There are two open books on the desk in front of them, and a stack of three books (two green, one yellow) to the right. A yellow speech bubble points to the student.

See page 19

'What if I break the rules?'
for more information.

Handing in your coursework

Check your work

Before you hand in your coursework, you must read through it and check that:

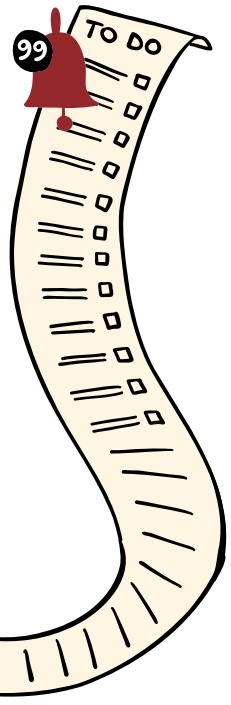
- everything is your own work, and you have properly referenced all sources of information, diagrams or illustrations you have used
- there is no rude, abusive or offensive language or images
- you have completed it in line with the instructions your teacher gave you, and
- you have not included any material produced using an AI tool.

Deadlines



Your teacher will set your coursework deadlines. It is important that you hand your work in before the deadline or it may not be marked.

If you are struggling to meet a deadline, talk to your teacher as early as possible to see what they can do to help.

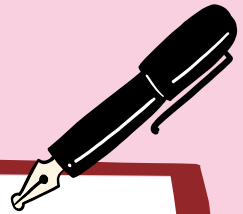


Declaration

Before your school sends your coursework to us for marking, they will give you a declaration to sign. It's really important that you understand the declaration. If you're not sure about anything, ask your teacher.

This is the declaration you'll need to sign.

I confirm the following.



- I have read SQA's 'Your National Qualifications' guide and understand its contents.
- I understand that SQA may reduce or cancel my grades if I have not followed the rules set out in the 'Your National Qualifications' guide.
- The coursework submitted with this declaration is all my own work with all sources of information clearly identified and acknowledged.
- If I have used a resource sheet, I have submitted it along with my coursework.
- I understand that this coursework will be submitted to SQA for marking.

If you plan to publish or share your work online, you must discuss this with your school.

What if I break the rules?



If an investigation finds you've broken any rules, there may be a penalty, which could include the following.

- Your marks can be reduced, or you can be awarded zero marks.
- Your qualification for that subject can be cancelled.
- All of your qualifications for the entire year can be cancelled.

Remember



You must:

- do all the work yourself
- properly reference all sources
- check your work before handing it in
- hand your work in on time, and
- hand in any resource sheets you have used.

You must not:

- copy someone else's work
- collude with someone else
- use AI tools to create your work, or
- use rude, abusive or offensive words or images in your work.

Your 2025 exams

You can see the exam timetable at www.sqa.org.uk/timetable. This shows the dates and times of your exams.

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

The 2025 exams will take place from **28 April to 2 June**. We'll give you more information about your exams in March. We will tell you what happens in the exams and what you'll need to do.



Questions we are often asked about exams...



What are prelims?

Prelim is short for 'preliminary exam'. Most schools choose to run prelims to help learners practise for their exams, to give them feedback on their performance and to help identify how well each learner is progressing with the course.

Your school will decide if and when they will run prelims this year.



Does SQA mark the prelims?

No, your school creates the question papers you sit during prelims and your teachers will mark them.



Who will mark my coursework and exams?

We will mark all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams. We will mark most of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher coursework too. Some coursework is assessed by your teacher. We do quality checks to make sure they are marking in line with the standard required to achieve your course.



When will I get my results?

You'll get your exam results by post on **Tuesday 5 August 2025**. We will also send your results to your school. If you have applied to a university or college through UCAS (University and College Admissions Service), they will also receive your results.

If you don't receive your certificate by post on Results Day, contact your school. They can tell you your results and will work with us to find out what has happened to your certificate



What is MySQA?

MySQA is your direct link to us. It holds your qualification information and personal details and, if you're sitting exams, you can get your results sent out by email or text. Sign up at www.mysqa.org.uk



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

Speak to your school. They will be able to look at possible alternative arrangements for you.

Support and information

Your school will give you your Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) card, along with more information about sitting your exams, by the end of March 2025. When you get your card, please write your name and SCN on it. There will also be a QR code on the card for you to scan with your smartphone. This will take you to more information on assessment. You can stay up to date with the latest information at www.sqa.org.uk/learners

To find out where you can get more support, including organisations who you can speak to if you are feeling anxious, visit www.sqa.org.uk/learnersupport



Got a question?

0345 279 1000

www.sqa.org.uk/learners



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