English

Portfolio: writing

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the Portfolio component of National 5 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.

Valid from session 2013/14 and until further notice

Contents

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for National 5 English portfolio.

This portfolio is worth 30 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 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 two Components of Course assessment.
The other Component is a question paper.

This portfolio (writing) will have 30 marks and will contain two essays. Up to fifteen marks will be awarded for each essay 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 pieces 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 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

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 Units in the Course.

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 of no more than 1,000 words each, but full marks can be achieved in a shorter piece, if appropriate to purpose. Markers will be instructed to stop marking when the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%.

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 pieces 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 and passing it off as the candidate's own, 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 pieces of writing should each be of no more than 1,000 words.

Types of writing
The candidate will produce two pieces of writing 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/reflective essay
♦ a piece of prose fiction (eg short story, episode from a novel)
♦ a poem or set of thematically linked poems
♦ a dramatic script (eg scene, monologue, sketch)

Group B: Broadly discursive

♦ a persuasive essay
♦ an argumentative essay
♦ a report for a specified purpose
♦ a piece of transactional writing

General Marking Instructions

Marking instructions are provided for examining teams in the case of externally marked Course assessment and will be provided for assessors where the Course assessment is internally marked and verified by SQA.

Externally marked assessments

This assessment will be externally marked by SQA. Separate information will be given on arrangements for submission of evidence.

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 15 marks.

Assessors should assess the essay in terms of content and style and arrive at a final mark. The descriptors for awarding marks for content and style refer to the middle of the range.

For each of the essays, the marker should select the band descriptor that most closely describes the piece of writing.

Once the best fit has been decided, then:

♦ where the evidence almost matches the level above, the highest available mark from the range should be awarded
♦ where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from the range should be awarded
♦ otherwise the mark from the middle of the range should be awarded

Satisfactory technical accuracy is a requirement for the piece to meet the minimum requirements for the 9-7 Band. Writing may contain errors, but these will not be significant. Paragraphing, sentence construction, spelling and punctuation should be sufficiently accurate so that meaning is clear at the first reading.

The following tables for each genre of writing should be used in helping assessors arrive at a mark.

	15-13	12-10	9-7	6-4	3-1
Discursive: content	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is consistent ♦ Information shows evidence of careful research, is presented to maximise impact and is sequenced to highlight key points ♦ Ideas/techniques deployed to inform/argue/discuss/ persuade have a very good degree of objectivity/depth/ insight/persuasive force and are used to convey a clear line of thought/ appropriate stance/point of view	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is consistent in the main ♦ Information shows evidence of relevant research and is presented in a clear sequence ♦ Ideas/techniques deployed to inform/argue/discuss/p ersuade have a good degree of objectivity/depth/ insight/ persuasive force and are used to convey a clear line of thought/stance/ point of view	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is reasonably well sustained ♦ Information shows evidence of some research and is presented in a clear sequence ♦ Ideas/techniques deployed to inform/argue/discuss/ persuade convey a line of thought/ stance/ point of view	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is not always sustained ♦ Information shows a little relevant research but is not always presented in a manner that enhances meaning ♦ Ideas/techniques used to inform/argue, discuss/persuade are not always convincing and the line of thought is not consistently clear. The stance may tend towards the personal or anecdotal	Writing pieces in this category are likely to be very rare and would be characterised by one or more of the following: ♦ weak attention to purpose and audience ♦ very thin content ♦ no attempt at using language effectively ♦ brevity of response
Discursive: style	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed effectively ♦ Language is varied and often used to create particular effects ♦ The structure of the	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed, mostly successfully ♦ Language is apposite and used at times to create an effect ♦ The structure of the	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed with a degree of success ♦ Language is effective in the main ♦ The structure of the piece is appropriate to	♦ There is an attempt to deploy the features of the chosen genre ♦ Language lacks variety ♦ The structure of the piece is not appropriate to purpose/meaning ♦ significant errors in	♦ irrelevance

	15-13	12-10	9-7	6-4	3-1
	piece enhances the purpose/meaning	piece supports the purpose/meaning	purpose/meaning	sentence construction/ paragraphing/ spelling	
Creative: content	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is consistent. As appropriate to genre: ♦ The piece displays very good creativity ♦ Feelings/reactions/ experiences are expressed/explored with a very good degree of self-awareness/ involvement/ insight /sensitivity	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is consistent in the main. As appropriate to genre: ♦ The piece displays good creativity ♦ Feelings/reactions/ experiences are expressed/explored with a good degree of self-awareness/ involvement/ insight /sensitivity	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is reasonably well sustained. As appropriate to genre: ♦ The piece shows some creativity ♦ Feelings/reactions/ experiences are explored with a sense of involvement	♦ Attention to purpose and audience is not always sustained. As appropriate to genre: ♦ The piece has a little evidence of creativity ♦ Experiences are expressed, but not always convincingly	
Creative: style	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed effectively ♦ Language is varied and often used to create particular effects ♦ The structure of the piece enhances the purpose/meaning	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed, mostly successfully ♦ Language is apposite and used at times to create an effect ♦ The structure of the piece supports the purpose/meaning	♦ The features of the chosen genre are deployed with a degree of success ♦ Language is effective in the main ♦ The structure of the piece is appropriate to purpose/meaning	♦ There is an attempt to deploy the features of the chosen genre ♦ Language lacks variety ♦ The structure of the piece is not appropriate to purpose/meaning ♦ significant errors in sentence construction/ paragraphing/ spelling	

Administrative information

Published: September 2014 (version 1.1)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Marking Instructions table has been updated	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

Security and confidentiality

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