



Common questions about National 4 and National 5 Practical Electronics

Delivering this qualification at National 4 and National 5

What software does SQA recommend?

SQA does not recommend any specific software. We do, however, give a list of what candidates need to have access to complete the tasks given within the course.

Our centre has an OLE server that won't work for images. Is it acceptable to use an attachment field instead?

Yes, an attachment field is acceptable.

Can centres deliver this course if they already do Physics and/or Engineering Science

No. Centres need to apply for approval before delivering the qualification for the first time, and must consider what resources are available to them to do this.

To deliver this qualification in the next academic session, and for candidates to be certificated in August the following year, centres must apply for approval by the end of September of the previous year. You can find out more about the [National Qualification approval process](#) on our website.

What subject-specific requirements are needed for this course?

Teachers and lecturers delivering or assessing Practical Electronics must have one of the following:

- ◆ a physics or technology teaching degree
- ◆ a degree in a physics, electronics, electrical engineering or a technology area, with a post-graduate teaching qualification and relevant experience in electronics

Centres must have available to all candidates:

- ◆ a laboratory or electronics workshop, equipped with power and appropriately ventilated
- ◆ soldering equipment and a range of electronic components, and circuit construction and testing tools
- ◆ IT equipment, including appropriate circuit-simulation software
- ◆ personal protective equipment
- ◆ a health and safety policy, and risk assessment in place

National 4

Does the National 4 added value unit change from year to year?

Centres can currently choose between three assessments. After the second year of implementation, centres can create their own added value unit assessments.

Can the National 4 added value unit be created from coursework tasks candidates have seen as part of the National 5 course?

If you are registering the candidate for the National 4 added value unit, you must compare the evidence generated from the National 5 assignment against the assessment standards in the National 4 added value unit assignment. You must use an SQA National 4 added value unit in the first two years of delivery, without any changes. While they may be similar in context, both the National 4 added value unit and the National 5 assignment are separate assessments, and learners must achieve both. You can find the National 4 and National 5 assessments on the [secure area of our website](#).

What are the conditions of award for National 4?

To achieve the National 4 Practical Electronics course, candidates must pass all the mandatory units, including the added value unit. National 4 courses are not graded. You can find more information about the units in the [course specification](#).

Has there been an update to the National 4 assessment standards?

Yes. Based on feedback from teachers, and as part of our ongoing review and maintenance of National Courses, we're updating the assessment standards for National 4 Practical Electronics to better streamline the assessments and remove any unintended duplication. You can find out about [updated National 4 assessment standards](#) on our website.

Do you provide any sources of information to help me teach the course?

Yes. We provide advice and guidance for teachers and lecturers on learning, teaching and assessments in [course and unit support notes](#) on our website. You'll also find [verification, course reports and understanding standards material](#) in the same place.

How should we gather and judge evidence?

Your SQA co-ordinator can help you access unit assessment support tasks on the [SQA secure site](#).

You may also find useful information on the secure, closed Facebook group page 'Stripboard'.

National 5

Do all candidates have to complete the added value unit and the National 5 coursework task?

National 5 candidates do not have to complete the National 4 added value unit. Centres should enter candidates at the most appropriate level.

How can I prepare my candidates for the formal exam?

You can find past papers, marking instructions and course reports on [our website](#). All centres should read the course reports for both the exam and verification visits.

Practical activity

When can I start the practical activity?

You can start the practical activity when you feel your candidates are fully prepared, and have covered all the course content.

What evidence do I need to gather?

The following candidate evidence is required for the assessment:

- ◆ the completed solution (constructed circuit or photographs and/or hard copy from simulation software)
- ◆ a record of progress through the task, including all items of evidence specified within the assessment task
- ◆ a short report on testing the solution (in written, electronic and/or oral form)
- ◆ evidence of the candidate's degree of independence and safe working (detailed assessor observation notes). You must retain evidence for quality assurance purposes.

Is there a word count or page limit for the assessment?

No. There is no word count or page limit.

Assessment arrangements

My candidate has assessment arrangements in place for the question paper, how do I apply these to the coursework?

Please email the Assessment Arrangements Team at aarequests@sqa.org.uk, or call 0345 213 6890 to discuss.

Assessment conditions

What are the assessment conditions for the practical activity?

The practical activity is set by SQA, from a bank of four, available on the [SQA secure site](#). You should carry out the practical activity under open-book conditions, but supervised to ensure that the work presented is the candidate's own. Evidence is internally marked by centre staff and all marking is quality assured by SQA. You can find further information on assessment conditions in the [course specification](#) (page 13 onwards).

How much time are candidates allowed?

There is no specific allocation of hours for the practical activity. Centres should, however, manage the timeframe of each assessed area appropriately, and set check-points throughout the assessment.

Estimates

Do I need to estimate a grade for my candidates?

Yes. Providing a grade estimate is a condition of offering the qualification, and is necessary for those candidates who use our exceptional circumstances service. You should base the estimate for each candidate on evidence generated from the assessment and formal exam experiences throughout the session.

You can find more information about Curriculum for Excellence on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.