

SCOTTISH  
QUALIFICATIONS  
AUTHORITY



**YOUR** coursework **2007**

a guide for candidates



This leaflet contains important information which you must read carefully. Before you submit any coursework to SQA for marking, you must sign a declaration confirming that you have read and understood this leaflet, so if there is anything that you do not understand, you must ask your teacher or lecturer.

## Introduction

Some National Courses require you to submit work which is produced throughout the year for marking. This could be a project, portfolio, or a collection of essays. The marks which you are awarded for this work will contribute to your final grade. This leaflet tells you about some things that you must and must not do when you are submitting coursework — either to your school/college or to SQA — for a National Course. Coursework provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a subject. There is a lot of material in the world for you to learn from — not just textbooks, encyclopaedias and journals — but also TV, radio, the World Wide Web and speaking to friends and family. Using information from other sources as the building blocks for your own work is a great way to expand your knowledge, but you must not try to pass this information off as your own. You need to make sure that you give proper references for everything you use in your work. If you don't, you will be committing plagiarism — and that's cheating. Working with others on a task you should be doing on your own is also cheating — this is defined as 'collusion'.





## The penalties if you are caught

If your work is submitted to SQA and plagiarism or collusion is identified, one of the following penalties will be applied:

- **Cancellation of all of your subject entries for that year.**
- **Cancellation of the entry of the subject/level concerned.**
- **The piece of work will be awarded zero marks.**
- **A warning will be issued.**

SQA will decide which penalty is appropriate. If any of these penalties are applied, your school or college will not be able to submit an Assessment Appeal on your behalf. These are severe penalties, and not ones which SQA applies lightly. SQA imposes these penalties because plagiarism and collusion are very serious offences and if you are found to have submitted work that is not entirely your own, one of these actions will be taken.

## Preparing your coursework — advice and good practice

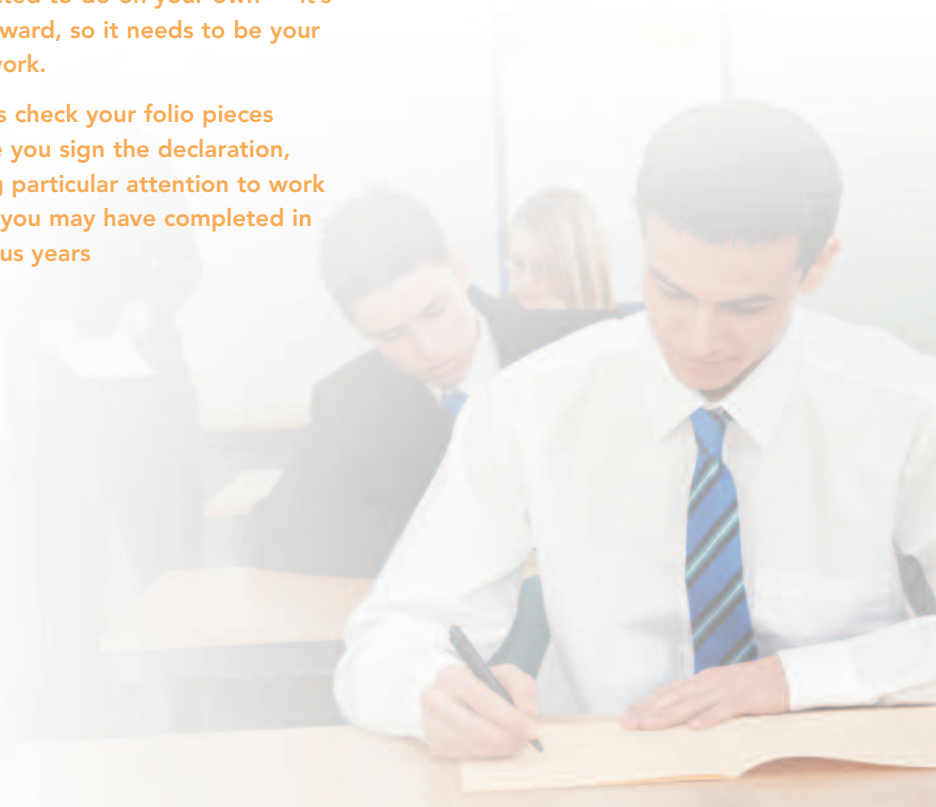
There are some simple things that you can do to ensure that you don't risk having any of these penalties applied to your work:

- **Clearly acknowledge/reference your sources of information. Use quotation marks around any text that you are using from other sources, and include a bibliography at the end of your work. Your teacher or lecturer will be able to explain in more detail how to do this.**
- **If you need more guidance on how to acknowledge the sources which you have used, ask your teacher/lecturer — it's better to be safe than sorry.**
- **Make sure that you clearly label any diagrams/illustrations that you are using.**
- **Make sure that you meet the deadlines that your teacher/lecturer gives you for submitting drafts and final pieces of work. Your teachers/lecturers are there to guide and assist you — showing them your work as it progresses will allow you and your teacher/lecturer time to address any areas of concern as they arise.**



- If you have been off sick or are having trouble keeping to the deadlines, talk to your teacher/lecturer — there may be something that can be done to help you.
- Don't be tempted to use essays from online essay banks — they may not be any good and you will also be running the risk of being caught out. SQA has electronic tools to detect this sort of copying.
- Don't be tempted to work with other pupils on a task which you have been instructed to do on your own — it's your award, so it needs to be your own work.
- Always check your folio pieces before you sign the declaration, paying particular attention to work which you may have completed in previous years

Of course you can talk about your work with your friends and family, share their experiences and seek advice, but always remember that, when the time comes to hand in your work, what you submit must be your own. You must make sure that you properly reference everything. If you don't, you run the risk of being caught cheating and having a penalty applied.





## About plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words or ideas and trying to pass them off as your own. This includes failing to acknowledge sources of information that you have used in your work. Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Including parts of someone else's work in your own without using quotation marks and identifying the source. This includes cutting and pasting information from the internet.
- Copying, re-wording or summarising someone else's work and including it as your own without acknowledging the source.
- Not labelling diagrams/illustrations that you have used.

## About collusion

Collusion involves working together with other students on a task that should have been done on your own. This includes

giving assistance to or lending materials to another candidate which they then submit as their own work.

## How are plagiarism and collusion identified?

There are many ways to identify plagiarism and collusion, including:

- Teachers/lecturers checking drafts of work may be able to spot changes in the style of writing and use of language.
- Markers are highly experienced subject specialists who are very familiar with work on the topic concerned — they may have read the source you are using (or even marked the essay you are thinking about copying from!).
- SQA has computer software which is used to detect changes in grammar and style of writing or punctuation, and to match phrases or pieces of text with original sources.

Plagiarism and collusion are both forms of cheating  
— something that SQA takes very seriously.

## Declaration

Before your school or college sends us your coursework you will be required to sign a declaration on the flyleaf — the cover in which your coursework is enclosed.

An example of the declaration is below:

### Candidate Declaration

I confirm that the materials submitted within are my own work; I confirm that I have read the *Your Coursework* booklet and understand the consequences of submitting work that is not my own/has been plagiarised from another source.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you know that you will not be in school or college when your coursework is being submitted, and that you will therefore be unavailable to sign the flyleaf, please let your teacher/lecturer know in advance.

## Finally

Do remember that no-one wants to see you fail — not your friends and family, not SQA, and certainly not your teachers or lecturers. If you have any doubt whatsoever about how to avoid plagiarism and collusion, please ask your teachers or lecturers for advice. They are there to help you.



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