

## Geography



This update focuses on the development of Advanced Higher, with information relevant to your subject and details of the support available to you.

Updates regarding National 3 to National 5 and Higher can be found in the 'Updates and Announcements' section of the relevant **subject pages**. I would encourage you to make regular use of our subject pages, where you will find support documents, answers to common questions, and links to other areas of interest. You can also sign up for 'My Alerts', SQA's e-mail update service, that notifies you whenever content you are interested in is added or updated on SQA's website. Visit **[www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts](http://www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts)** to register.

I hope you find the following update helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

**Dylan White**  
Qualifications Development Manager

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## The Qualifications Development Team

**Dylan White**  
Qualifications Development Manager

**Maggie Zvandasara**  
Qualifications Development Officer

## Assessment support

Package 1 of Unit assessment support for Advanced Higher is available now from SQA's secure website. You can arrange access to secure materials through your SQA Co-ordinator; these must be stored securely and treated as confidential.

Over the coming year, we will publish the following assessment support materials for Advanced Higher Courses:

<b>January 2015</b>	Course Comparison document Guidance on the use of past papers
<b>February 2015</b>	Specimen Question Paper(s) and Marking Instructions Unit assessment support package 2
<b>March 2015</b>	Coursework information
<b>April 2015</b>	Unit assessment support package 3
<b>December 2015</b>	Exemplar Question Paper(s) and Marking Instructions

## Updates to documents

We will make planned updates to the Advanced Higher documents, following the publication of Advanced Higher Specimen Question Papers, Coursework information and Unit assessment support packs. We will also finalise package 1 of Unit assessment support, following the publication of packages 2 and 3.

The schedule for publishing the updated documents is as follows:

<b>April 2015</b>	Mandatory documents (Unit Specifications, Course Specifications and Course Assessment Specifications)
<b>May 2015</b>	Advice and guidance documents (Course and Unit Support Notes) and Unit assessment support packs

These updates are to ensure consistency between the assessment support materials, advice and guidance documents and the documents containing mandatory information.

The Notification of Changes spreadsheet will be updated for Advanced Higher following the publication of any revised documents.

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## Planned changes to Advanced Higher Geography documents:

The following changes are planned following extensive consultation with a wide range of subject specialists. These changes are to provide clarity regarding the skills required in Advanced Higher and to remove unnecessary duplication and over-assessment:

### Course Assessment Specification

The Course Assessment Specification will be amended as follows:

Question paper	
<b>The question paper will be marked out of 50 marks and will cover the following three skill areas with accompanying supplementary items. Candidates will answer all questions.</b>	
Map Interpretation (20 marks)	This will assess geographical skills and techniques using a range of 1:25000 scale Ordnance Survey maps and supplementary items in the form of a decision-making exercise.
Gathering and Processing Techniques (10 marks)	This will assess knowledge of research/fieldwork gathering and processing techniques and the analysis/evaluation of data which might be obtained as a result of using those techniques. This skill may use the supplementary items supplied with the question paper.
Geographical Data Handling (20 marks)	This will assess the interpretation and analysis of a given set of data, including statistical data to evaluate techniques used and their effectiveness in explaining geographical relationships. This skill will use the supplementary items supplied with the question paper.
<b>Candidates will not be asked to carry out calculations or complete tables of data in the question paper. These are assessed at Unit level and in the Coursework project: folio.</b>	

Coursework project — folio	
<b>The project will have 100 marks and will consist of two parts — <i>Folio A: Geographical Study</i> (60 marks) with a word count of 3,000 words and <i>Folio B: Geographical Issue</i> (40 marks) with a word count of 1,300 words (excluding any text used on front covers, list of contents, annotations to any illustrations, references, bibliography, appendices). The word count should be submitted with the project (Study and Issue). Markers will be instructed to stop marking when the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%.</b>	
In order to complete Geographical Study candidates will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>justify the choice of a complex geographical topic to research</li><li>plan and carry out detailed research, which could include fieldwork</li><li>evaluate the research techniques and the reliability of data gathered</li><li>demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of the topic being studied from wider reading</li><li>use a wide range of appropriate techniques to process the gathered information</li><li>analyse all the information that has been gathered and processed to identify and explain relationships</li><li>reach reasoned conclusions supported by a wide range of evidence</li></ul>	In order to complete Geographical Issue candidates will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>justify the choice of a current complex geographical issue to critically evaluate</li><li>undertake wider background reading from a wide range of sources relating to the geographical issue</li><li>summarise a wide range of viewpoints on the complex geographical issue</li><li>critically evaluate each of the viewpoints</li><li>reach reasoned conclusions supported by a wide range of evidence</li></ul>

## Unit Specifications

The Unit Specifications will be amended as follows:

<b>Geographical Skills Unit</b>	<b>Geographical Issues Unit</b>
<p><b>Outcome 4 becomes Outcome 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• no change to wording of Outcome</li><li>• no change to Assessment Standard 4.1 and 4.2, which now become 1.1 and 1.2</li><li>• Assessment Standard 4.3 becomes Assessment Standard 2.1 with the addition of ‘...valid and reliable information from at least two secondary sources’.</li><li>• Assessment Standards 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 removed</li></ul> <p><b>Outcome 1 becomes Outcome 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• change of Outcome to read ‘wide range...’</li><li>• change of Outcome to replace ‘fieldwork methods’ with ‘research methods’ to include secondary research</li><li>• new Assessment Standard 2.1</li><li>• Assessment Standard 1.1 becomes 2.1 with ‘Choosing’ removed as it is implied within ‘Applying’</li><li>• Assessment Standard 1.2 becomes 2.2 with ‘Choosing’ removed as it is implied within ‘Applying’</li></ul> <p><b>Outcome 2 becomes Outcome 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• no change to Outcome</li><li>• Assessment Standard 2.1 reworded. The new wording ‘Making a calculation...’ subsumes the original wording ‘Choosing and applying...’</li><li>• Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 combined to become 3.2</li></ul> <p><b>Outcome 3 becomes Outcome 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• complete rewording of Outcome and Assessment Standards for clarity and to focus on ‘Mapping Techniques’</li><li>• reduction in Assessment Standards from three to two</li><li>• Assessment Standards 3.1 and 3.2 combined and reworded in line with new Outcome 4 to become Assessment Standard 4.1</li><li>• Assessment Standard 3.3 reworded in line with new Outcome 4 to become Assessment Standard 4.2</li></ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• no change to wording of Outcome</li><li>• minor changes to wording of Assessment Standards as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Assessment Standard 1.1 — removal of ‘objectively’. Addition of the word ‘wide’</li><li>— Assessment Standard 1.2 — removal of ‘using evidence’. Addition of the word ‘wide’</li><li>— Assessment Standard 1.3 — removal of ‘...about a complex geographical issue’ as this is stated in the Outcome</li></ul></li></ul>

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***It is important that staff delivering the new Advanced Higher Courses in session 2015-16 read the full suite of documents for their subjects, as well as those relating to assessment. We also advise staff attending the Advanced Higher support events to read these documents in preparation.***

***For more information on documents and assessment support materials, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments)***

## **Looking ahead to 2015–16**

The new Advanced Higher Courses go live from August 2015. SQA will continue to work closely with centres throughout the implementation of these Courses to ensure you have the support you need to prepare your learners for assessment.

We will also work closely with centres during the verification process to identify exemplar materials for Advanced Higher that can be shared with you, to help enhance your understanding of the standards required.

A series of implementation events for Geography will take place on the following dates:

- 16 March 2015 (Glasgow)
- 18 March 2015 (Aberdeen)
- 20 March 2015 (Stirling)
- 23 March 2015 (Edinburgh)

If you wish to attend these events, please follow this [link](#).

### **Contact SQA**

For centre enquiries, please contact our Business Development and Customer Support Team on:

**Tel:** 0303 333 0330

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**E-mail enquiries:** [mycentre@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mycentre@sqa.org.uk)

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