National Qualifications
Classical Studies
Review Report

May 2016, version 1.0

01 Background

As part of SQA's initial evaluation of the new National Qualifications, we carried out two pieces of research earlier this academic year:

- **Research and Evidence Report: Internal Unit Assessment in National Courses** which looked at the policy and guidance documents that shaped the new Courses, internal SQA discussions, National Qualifications Support Teams focus groups, an online SQA teacher survey, surveys undertaken by other stakeholders, and the approach taken to Unit and Course assessment.
- **Fieldwork visits** to over 40 schools (local authority, independent and special) to evaluate the first phase of implementation of the new Courses. The visits included separate focus groups of S5 and S6 pupils, teachers and senior managers.

We will be publishing these two pieces of research on our website, shortly.

Additionally, SQA reviewed each subject area and we are now publishing the results in individual Subject Review Reports. These were prepared using feedback from the National Qualifications Support Team together with insights from teachers gathered through the online survey and by SQA's Subject Implementation Managers. They also include intelligence gathered by the quality assurance of internal and external assessment.

Broader areas for consideration

All the evaluation work has identified some broader areas that schools and teachers need to consider. These issues include:

- Ensuring that the broad general education provides good preparation of candidates for progression into National Courses within each subject, taking account of the level and depth of skills and knowledge required.
- Ensuring that candidates are presented for Courses at the appropriate level, based on reliable and robust judgements of the curriculum level achieved. This, for example, means that pupils should be secure at Curriculum Level 4 prior to starting a National 5 Course; similarly, pupils should be secure at Curriculum Level 3 prior to embarking on a National 4 Course.
- Ensuring that sufficient time is being allocated for learning, teaching and assessment — 160 hours.

Another area which has come through from the evaluation work relates to the documentation associated with the National Courses. We are developing a plan to streamline the documentation in the medium term and will report on progress on this at a later date as we intend to consult practitioners on it.

Action plan

The action plan in section 3 indicates evidence-based adjustments and/or additional guidance and support that we believe are feasible and appropriate for your subject and will help to relieve workload concerns. Some of these are around the design and operation of Unit assessment, without compromising the credibility and integrity of the qualification.

Some of the changes have been prioritised for 2016/17 so we are sharing these findings as early as possible to help teachers and lecturers prepare for next session.

Benefits

We believe these changes and adjustments will have an immediate impact on workload concerns:

- The number of candidates who need to be re-assessed will be reduced.
- Tracking attainment in Units should be easier to log and more time for teaching and learning will be released as a result.
- More time will be released for completion of the Coursework task and/or preparation for the question paper.

02 Key issues

Feedback has highlighted concerns regarding the overlap between Unit and Course assessment. Similarly it has been raised that there is a degree of repetition of assessment across Units where similar skills are being tested in different contexts, in particular within *Life in Classical Greece* and *Life in the Roman World*.

There is a need for further guidance and exemplification around the use of combined assessment and naturally occurring evidence in Unit assessment.

At Advanced Higher level there has been some discussion around the appropriateness of the mandatory Course content in relation to the literature content.

Following the examination diet in 2015 changes were made to the Coursework Assessment Task Marking Instructions for use in 2016, at National 5 and Higher. Therefore a review during and post diet 2016 is required to ensure the revised Marking Instructions for the assignment are functioning at the appropriate level within the SCQF.

03 Action plan

Session 2016/17

Unit assessment

For session 2016/17 a threshold approach will apply to the judgement of Assessment Standards. If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of Assessment Standards they will be judged to have passed the Unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

The specific requirements for the Units will be as follows:

National 4

- Life in Classical Greece Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Life in the Roman World Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Classical Literature Unit: 1 Outcome, 3 Assessment Standards — no change.
- Added Value Unit: 1 Outcome, 6 Assessment Standards — no change.

National 5

- Life in Classical Greece Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Life in the Roman World Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Classical Literature Unit: 1 Outcome, 3 Assessment Standards – no change.

Higher

- Life in Classical Greece Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Life in the Roman World Unit: 2 Outcomes, 4 Assessment Standards, (2 out of 3 Assessment Standards required for Outcome 1).
- Classical Literature Unit: 1 Outcome, 3 Assessment Standards — no change.

Advanced Higher

- Social Aspects of the Classical World Unit: 3 Outcomes, 8 Assessment Standards — no change.
- Researching Classical Studies Issues Unit: 1 Outcome, 5 Assessment Standards — no change.

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all Assessment Standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment where that is required.

During session 2016/17 there will be a review of Assessment Standards in the above Units with a view to considering possible integration or revision to facilitate a more holistic approach to the judgement of assessment evidence. Any changes will be published for implementation in session 2017/18.

Course assessment

National 5 – Higher

- We will review and revise where appropriate Coursework Assessment Task and Marking Instructions, for implementation 2016/17.

Advanced Higher

- We will review and revise where appropriate the Coursework Assessment Task and Marking Instructions following first diet in 2016, for implementation 2016/17.
- We will review and revise where appropriate Course Assessment Specification to ensure content is appropriate following feedback in relation to mandatory content for literature, for implementation 2016/17.

During session 2016/17, a review of Course content (Course Assessment Specification and Course Unit Support Notes) will be undertaken to ensure consistency and appropriate progression across all levels. Any changes will be published for implementation in session 2017/18.

Guidance and support

- We will continue to provide guidance and exemplification to promote good assessment practice.
- We will encourage, identify and share good practice in the use of naturally occurring evidence arising from teaching and learning to meet the requirements of Unit assessment.

Session 2017/18

Unit assessment

We will implement any changes to Unit assessments as a result of the review in 2016/17.

Course assessment

We will implement any adaptations to the Course Assessment Specification, and the Course and Unit Support Notes, as a result of the review in 2016/17.

Guidance and support

- We will continue to provide guidance and exemplification to promote good assessment practice.
- We will continue to encourage, identify and share good practice in the use of naturally occurring evidence arising from teaching and learning to meet the requirements of Unit assessment.