

## Geography



This update contains information relevant to your subject and details of the support available to you.

We also publish updates on the new National Courses 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.

**Angela Baird**  
Qualifications Manager

---

## The Qualifications Team

Angela Baird  
Qualifications Manager

Tahir Mohammed  
Qualifications Officer

## Documents and assessment support materials

Assessment support materials are now available for the new National 1 to Advanced Higher Qualifications, marking a significant milestone. It is important that you read the full suite of documents for your Course, as well as those relating to assessment.

Further information on documents and assessment support materials can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments)

### Updates to documents

#### Advanced Higher documents

We are making planned updates to Advanced Higher documents. This follows the publication of Advanced Higher Specimen Question Papers, Coursework information and Unit assessment support packs. The updated Advanced Higher **Unit Specifications**, **Course Specifications** and **Course Assessment Specifications** are available now.

We will also update the Advanced Higher **Course and Unit Support Notes**, and finalise all packages of Advanced Higher **Unit assessment support** by the end of May 2015.

#### Advanced Higher Coursework

Following feedback from the recent Subject Implementation Events, the word limit for Section B of the Project–folio has been increased to 1,800 words.

In addition, the wording of the requirements around word limits for each Section of the Project–folio have been amended to improve clarity. Please refer to the published [\*\*Coursework \(General assessment information\)\*\*](#) document for details.

#### Advanced Higher Unit assessments

In order to improve clarity for readers, the title page of Unit assessment support packs 1 and 2 for the *Geographical Skills* (Advanced Higher) Units has been amended from 'Portfolio' to 'Unit-by-Unit'. The assessment tasks and Judging Evidence Table are unchanged.

Further details of changes to Advanced Higher documents are outlined in the [\*\*January 2015 subject update\*\*](#). The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges)

---

---

## National 3 to Higher documents

We have updated some mandatory documents in April.

The information in the Outcomes and Assessment Standards section in **Unit Specifications**, National 3 to Higher, has been refined to:

- provide clarity on the minimum standard required
- ease the assessment load on candidates and centres

Minor changes have been made to the mandatory information in the National 5 and Higher **Course Assessment Specifications** to provide clarity.

Updated **Unit Specifications** and **Course Assessment Specifications** are available now for:

- Higher Geography Course Assessment Specification
- National 5 Geography Course Assessment Specification
- National 3 to Higher Unit Specifications (*Geography: Global Issues*)
- National 3 to Higher Unit Specifications (*Geography: Physical Environments*)
- National 3 to Higher Unit Specifications (*Geography: Human Environments*)

Where required, **Course and Unit Support Notes** will be updated to correspond with these changes and will be published by the end of May 2015. Work will then begin on updating the Unit assessment support packs for publication in August 2015. Relevant Understanding Standards packs and prior verified assessments will be reviewed in due course.

Following publication of the **Higher Exemplar Question Paper** for Geography, in January 2015, an error was noticed in Question 11b, where the question and Marking Instructions do not match. The question asks about a non-renewable energy source, but the Marking Instructions contain examples relating to renewable energy sources. In response to this, the Higher Exemplar Question Paper will be amended, so that both the question and Marking Instructions relate to renewable energy sources.

The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges)

## Support and guidance

The [Geography key messages](#) report from Round 1 of verification is now available.

## Looking ahead to 2015/16

### Understanding Standards

In June 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs for National 3 to Higher, which will contain candidate evidence and commentaries for Unit assessment and Course assessment.

---

---

The Understanding Standards programme will continue throughout session 2015/16, and will include Nominee training events and Understanding Standards events for Higher Geography.

For more information on Understanding Standards, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards](http://www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards)

## Continuing Professional Development support

We will continue to offer subject-specific CPD support for new National Courses, where particular areas of concern are identified that are not already addressed by the Understanding Standards programme.

From August 2015, we will also offer subject-specific CPD support to assist teachers and lecturers with the implementation of the new Advanced Higher Courses.

## Use of National 4 Added Value Units

From August 2015 onwards, you will have the option of developing your own National 4 Added Value Unit assessments for use with candidates. Please note that this is not a requirement and you can continue to use SQA-produced Added Value Unit assessments until further notice. Most SQA-produced Added Value Unit assessments already allow considerable flexibility in the choice of a context for the assessment, while some provide a context that you can change.

Further information can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment)

## Advanced Higher Exemplar Question Papers

In December 2015, we will publish Exemplar Question Papers for all new Advanced Higher Courses that include a question paper as part of the Course assessment.

Further information on Exemplar Question Papers, and other available assessment support materials, can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments)

### Contact SQA

For centre enquiries, please contact our Customer Support Team:

**Tel:** 0303 333 0330

**Fax:** 0345 213 5000

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

---