

Psychology



This update contains information on any recent updates to documents for your subject along with further information and guidance.

I hope you find this information helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

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Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

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Subject Review Report

The development and implementation of the whole suite of National Qualifications has been a huge programme of work dating from 2010 and included many stakeholders. As part of the review and evaluation of this programme, SQA has been engaging with teachers and lecturers on an ongoing basis, as well as gathering intelligence from the awarding and verification process. As a result of this work, SQA has created subject reports to give teachers and lecturers an insight into our planned incremental changes and further areas of investigation for each subject. Each report identifies the key issues for that subject and an associated action plan. Find out more information and what this means for your subject [here](#).

Planned changes to documents in session 2016/17

We have put in place an agreed schedule of planned changes to documents for National Qualifications in session 2016/17.

Publication date	Documents
End of April 2016	Course Specifications, Course Assessment Specifications and Unit Specifications
End of May 2016	Course and Unit Support Notes
End of August 2016	Unit assessment support packs
End of September 2016	Coursework assessment tasks, specimen question papers and exemplar question papers

This schedule takes into account any necessary changes that are identified as a result of verification activities, the exam diet and feedback received from centres throughout the current session. It is anticipated that additional, critical changes may be identified for some subjects following the grade boundary meetings which take place during the summer months. Where such changes are identified, we will make further updates and publish these documents by the following dates:

Publication date	Documents
End of August 2016	Course Specifications, Course Assessment Specifications and Unit Specifications (<i>further critical changes only</i>)
End of September 2016	Course and Unit Support Notes (<i>further critical changes only</i>)

Changes to documents in April and May 2016

Please ensure that you read the following updated documents in preparation for session 2016/17. To help you quickly and easily identify what has been updated, for every updated mandatory document we have also published a comparison document that clearly illustrates the changes.

These are published alongside the updated documents on our subject pages at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have also been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjectchanges

National 5 documents

Course Assessment Specification

Minor changes have been made to clarify existing content and quantify existing descriptions.

For the topic of sleep and dreams within the *Individual Behaviour* Unit a command word has been changed from 'describe' to 'explain' to create parity with the terms used within the *Social Behaviour* Unit.

The number of studies required within the *Individual Behaviour* Unit, Optional Topic section has been raised from one to two, to reflect the same requirement as the *Social Behaviour* Unit.

Higher documents

Course Assessment Specification

Minor changes have been made to clarify existing content and quantify existing descriptions.

Within the Research Unit section the word 'questionnaire' has replaced 'survey'.

Within the Sleep, Dreams and Sleep Disorders section of the *Individual Behaviour* Unit the number of sleep disorders to be studied has been specified and the word 'homeostasis' has been removed from the Biological Approach section.

Factors affecting sleep have been clarified to specify that the impact of drugs and the impact of light must be studied.

The number of key concepts/features to be studied for the additional approach of choice within both the *Individual Behaviour* Unit and the *Social Behaviour* Unit has now been specified.

Further information and guidance

Approval criteria

Centres are reminded that teachers and lecturers delivering or assessing psychology within centres are required to have the following qualifications:

- at least two years' successful study of psychology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level, including study of research methods in psychology

Individuals undertaking the Internal Verifier role for psychology within centres must have sufficient subject knowledge to understand the content of assessments and national standards for the Course. They also need to be able to confirm that reliable assessment judgements have been made.

Internal Verifiers do not require at least two years' successful study of psychology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

Higher — Mandatory studies

As specified within the Course Assessment Specification for Higher Psychology, one of the mandatory theories for the Sleep Dreams and Sleep Disorders section of the *Individual Behaviour* Unit is: the Crick and Mitchison (1986) Reorganisational theory of dreaming.

Following enquiries received from Centres we would like to confirm that reference to the 1983 Crick and Mitchison Reverse Learning theory is also acceptable.

Higher — Exemplar question paper

The Higher Exemplar question paper was published in December 2014. Question 4 within the Individual Behaviour section of the paper is stated as follows:

Some people are affected by circadian rhythm sleep disorders.

Use psychological approaches, theories and relevant research to analyse circadian rhythm sleep disorders and their effects on behaviour.

Following discussion with psychology practitioners we have determined that this question is too demanding in terms of the current requirements of the Course. The Exemplar question paper is not being amended as we will be reviewing the Course next session, with any changes being implemented for session 2017/18.

Verification Key Messages

Key messages from round 1 of verification in session 2015/16 are available from the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. You can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' heading in the Assessment support section.

Looking ahead to session 2016/17

Understanding Standards programme

Our Understanding Standards programme will continue in session 2016/17 when we will publish more candidate evidence and commentary materials. In addition to this, throughout the session we will gather and publish assessment case studies to share good practice in assessment.

From November 2016 to January 2017, we will hold subject-specific Understanding Standards events for teachers and lecturers. The main focus of these events will be on Course assessment at Advanced Higher. However, we will also be planning Understanding Standards Course events for National 5 and Higher Psychology. These dates and venues will be confirmed shortly.

To access candidate evidence and commentaries for externally assessed Components of Course assessment, visit www.understandingstandards.org.uk

Candidate evidence and commentaries for Units and internally assessed Components of Course assessment are available from our secure website.

For more information on Understanding Standards, visit www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training

We are still offering free CPD training for teachers and lecturers, where particular areas of concern are identified which are not addressed by the Understanding Standards programme. This CPD support is subject-specific and is tailored to cover one or more qualification levels according to requirements.

Where there is sufficient demand, we may deliver CPD training through online webinars and, where appropriate, publish the recordings and related materials on our website after the webinar has taken place.

During session 2015/16 we delivered a CPD webinar for National 5 and Higher Unit assessment and you can access the associated materials from www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

Stay informed

Subscribe to our newsletters

We currently issue two key newsletters for teachers and lecturers:

- Centre News (weekly)
- New National Qualifications update (monthly)

Both of these newsletters contain the latest news and updates for the National Qualifications. Centre News also includes subject-specific news and a regular reminder of key dates during the session.

To subscribe to our newsletters, visit <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk>

Visit your subject pages

Make sure you regularly visit your subject pages, where you can access documents and assessment support materials for your Courses, Verification Key Messages and information on coursework. You will also find the latest news updates for your Courses in the 'Updates and announcements' section.

Visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

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Contact us

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