

Computing Science



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 our website. Visit www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts to register.

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

Dave Main
Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

Dave Main
Qualifications Manager

Anna Deacon
Qualifications Officer

Key messages from Diet 2014–15

Course Reports

We strongly recommend that you read the annual Course Reports for the subject(s) and levels you are teaching. These reports are produced following the annual diet of exams and are published by the end of October. The reports provide informed and valuable comment on the assessment for each Component in the Course, and include a summary of:

- candidate performance in the Course assessment
- areas in which candidates performed well
- areas which candidates found demanding

The reports also contain advice on preparing future candidates, and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course Reports are available from the relevant [subject pages](#) of our website.

Verification Key Messages

Key messages from round 2 of verification in session 2014–15 were published over the summer. They are available from the relevant [subject pages](#), where you can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' heading in the 'Assessment Support' section.

Documents and assessment support materials

It is important that you read the full suite of documents for your Course, as well as those relating to assessment, and that you refer to the latest versions.

Information on documents and assessment support materials for National 1 to Advanced Higher can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments.

National 3 to Higher documents

As we communicated in our May 2015 subject update, we updated some documents for National 3 to Higher Computing Science for use in session 2015–16. These updates were published in June 2015 and the following revisions were made:

- Removal of Outcome 3 from Software Design and Development Unit (National 4 to Higher).
- Revision of Assessment Standards throughout.
- Additional clarity, where required.

You can find more details of these revisions in the [May 2015 subject update](#).

National 3 to Higher Unit assessment support

In August 2015, we updated some Unit assessment support materials for National 3 to Higher. This follows the revisions to Unit Specifications and feedback gathered from centres during session 2014–15.

Please refer to the ‘Notification of Changes’ spreadsheets for your curricular area, as these provide a summary of the changes to each document and include details of the revised version numbers. These are available from www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges.

The use of SQA-produced Unit assessments is not mandatory; however, if you are using them, we strongly encourage you to use the most up-to-date versions. Please note that you may continue to use existing versions of the Unit assessments until the end of session 2015–16 and both will be accepted for verification purposes.

The updated Unit assessment support materials are available from our secure website and you can arrange access to them through your SQA Co-ordinator.

Further information on the reasons for the changes to Unit assessment support, and guidance on the next steps to take, is provided below. This information was also communicated to centres in August 2015.

Subject	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
Computing Science	<p>Following engagement with deliverers, numerous changes were made to the Unit Specifications of this Course at all levels. These changes ranged from rationalising Assessment Standards to the removal of complete Outcomes. The Unit assessment support packs have been amended to reflect these changes and to streamline assessments where possible. Centres should make use of these documents with immediate effect.</p> <p>Full details of the revisions to the Unit Specifications were included in our May 2015 subject update.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.

To find out more about using our Unit assessment support packs, visit www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment.

National 5 and Higher Coursework information

Following feedback from deliverers, we have revised the detail in the Marking Instructions for our Course assignments at National 5 and Higher and these must be used for the current diet. The assessment tasks themselves are largely unchanged (there are slight alterations in some places to make them more consistent with each other) and, like the Marking Instructions, the revised tasks must be used in the current diet.

Advanced Higher documents

In April and May 2015, we updated the mandatory documents, Course/Unit Support Notes and Unit assessment support for Advanced Higher. The following revisions were made:

- The documents were amended to reflect changes to Unit Specifications and the Coursework project.
- Adjustments were made to the comparative tables in the Course/Unit Support Notes for consistency with the Course Assessment Specification.
- The duration of the examination was increased to 2 hours.
- There was a general restructuring of the documents to improve overall readability.

Further information on these revisions can be found in the [May 2015 subject update](#).

You can also view the 'Notification of Changes' spreadsheets for National 3 to National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges.

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.

Advice and guidance

Please note that a revised 'Reference language document' is available on our website and we will make use of this when preparing question papers. As always, there will be no obligation for candidates to use this language in their responses to question paper assessments (however, they are free to do so, should they choose to). Additionally, it should be noted that, as this is an implemented language, it should not be used as a design notation in our Course assignments.

Internal assessment/external assessment approach

We continue to receive feedback relating to the internal assessment of Course assignments. Whilst this is something that we always consider, Course assignments for session 2015-16 will still be internally assessed, supported by visiting verification.

Coming up in 2015–16

Understanding Standards 2015–16

In September 2015, we held subject-specific Understanding Standards events for teachers and lecturers. The main focus of these events was on Course assessment at Higher.

Details of the Understanding Standards materials for each subject are available from the [subject pages](#).

Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website.

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

National 4 Added Value Units

You now 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. 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.

If you choose to develop your own Added Value Unit assessment, we strongly advise submitting it to us for prior verification before using it with candidates. Further information can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment

Marker recruitment opportunities for 2016

We are now accepting Marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2016 examination diet. If you are interested in joining us as a Marker please visit the [appointee opportunities](#) section of our website where you will find a marker advert for all subjects and levels, with details of the role.

Our current Markers will confirm to you that the experience of marking helps increase their awareness of the demands of Course assessment and that marking is excellent professional and personal development.

Please check www.sqa.org.uk/appointees regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

Briefs for question papers

Later this session, we will publish briefs for the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher question papers. The briefs should be read in conjunction with our Course Assessment

Specifications and will provide information on the structure and make-up of the question papers.

Contact us

For centre enquiries, please contact our Customer Support Team:

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