

## English



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](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.

**Emma Bratchell**  
Qualifications Manager

---

## The Qualifications Team

**Emma Bratchell**  
Qualifications Manager

**Lindsay Thomson**  
Qualifications Officer

## Key messages from Diet 2014–15

### Course Reports

2014–15 was a successful exam diet for all levels of English qualifications. For more information on this exam diet we strongly recommend that you read the annual Course Reports for the subject and levels you are teaching. These reports are produced following the annual diet of exams and are published by the end of October. They 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments).

---

---

## National 3 to Higher mandatory documents

As we communicated in our May 2015 subject update, we updated some documents for National 5 and Higher English as well as National 5 Literacy for use in session 2015–16. The following revisions were made in April 2015:

- The addition of audience and purpose to Assessment standards 1.2 and 2.2 in National 5 Literacy Unit and the subsequent revision of related Unit assessment support packs.
- Minor amendment to clarify that the Course assessment section includes two question papers in the National 5 Course Specification and Course Assessment Specification and the Higher Course Specification.

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 feedback gathered from verification events and centres during session 2014–15.

Please refer to the ‘Notification of Changes’ tables 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](http://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.

The changes to the Unit assessment support packs are relatively minor and should not necessitate a change in assessment practice.

Following feedback from practitioners and live verification events, alterations have been made to allow for ease and clarity in meeting Assessment Standards. The assessment of Listening and Talking has been separated in the following Unit assessment support packs to allow for clearer identification of audience and purpose:

- National 3 English and Literacy Listening and Talking combined pack 1 (Reality TV)
  - National 4 Literacy pack 2 (Community Group)
  - National 4 English and Literacy Listening and Talking combined pack 2 (Sitcom)
  - National 5 Literacy pack 1 (World War II)
-

---

There has been a revision of the questions which assess Reading in National 4 English Reading and Listening pack 3 (Hero), in order to achieve greater correspondence between evidence generated and Assessment Standards.

For Higher English, judging evidence tables for Writing have been amended to achieve more consistency in approach across all Unit assessment support packs.

Please note that the amendments to the judging evidence tables of SQA-produced Unit assessment support packs relate only to column four and should be considered for information and exemplification of standards only. They do not have any impact on centre-devised Unit assessments. Centre-devised assessments would only have to be modified in the case of a change to an Assessment Standard.

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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment).

### **Higher Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers**

The Critical Reading Marking Instructions in the Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers have been updated based on marker feedback and grade boundary discussions. The new Marking Instructions will be valid from the 2016 exam onwards. The only change is to the final 10 mark question in the Scottish Text section. Originally 3 marks out of the ten were available for quotation/reference relating to rest of the text/other text. These 3 marks are no longer available for quotation/reference alone. As with the other marks in this question comment is now required to gain credit.

The updated [Specimen Question Paper](#) and [Exemplar Question Paper](#) were published on our website in September 2015.

### **Key information on Advanced Higher**

In April and May 2015, we updated the mandatory documents and Course/Unit Support Notes for Advanced Higher. These updates were made to ensure consistency between the assessment support materials, advice and guidance documents and the documents containing mandatory information.

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

You can also view the Notification of changes spreadsheets for National 3 to Higher, and Advanced Higher at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://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.

The Literary Study Exemplar Question Paper for Advanced Higher English will vary slightly from the Specimen Question Paper, following further development as a consequence of additional targeted engagement with stakeholders. There are no references to specific time periods or movements, in order to make the questions relevant to a wider range of texts, and each section contains an equal number of questions. Additionally, there is a greater range of question styles, incorporating command words such as analyse and compare, as well as discuss, which is the main command used in the Specimen Question Paper. This is to provide candidates with additional support to structure an appropriate response to the ideas and expectations of particular questions.

## **Advanced Higher Marking Instructions**

Please note the Specimen Marking Instructions for Literary Study and Textual Analysis have recently been updated to mirror the successful approach applied at Higher. The Specimen Question Papers for [Literary Study](#) and [Textual Analysis](#) have been amended to reflect these changes.

## **Advanced Higher additional guidance**

Additional guidance materials will be produced to exemplify the marking of candidate work in the Literary Study question paper for Advanced Higher English. This follows the pattern of materials produced for National 5 and Higher which are available on our secure website.

This resource will be produced by Advanced Higher Examiners to exemplify the new Advanced Higher Literary Study question paper and updated Marking Instructions. This will include marked candidate exemplars with accompanying commentaries.

The material will be published on our secure website later this year. An update will be provided in Centre News when this resource is available.

---

---

# Coming up in 2015–16

## Understanding Standards 2015–16

From the end of October 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs for National 1 to Higher. These packs contain candidate evidence and commentaries for Unit assessment.

From November 2015 to January 2016, we will hold subject-specific Understanding Standards events for teachers and lecturers. The main focus of these events will be on Course assessment at Higher. Understanding Standards events for Higher English will take place on the following dates:

- Saturday 16 January 2016 (Glasgow)
- Tuesday 19 January 2016 (Edinburgh)
- Wednesday 20 January 2016 (Aberdeen)
- Thursday 23 January 2016 (Stirling)

## Internal assessment

We are also holding an NQ Literacy event. The focus will be on National 5 Literacy and will include sessions on Understanding Standards and delivery. This will take place on:

- Saturday 7 November 2015 (Stirling)

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

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

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

## 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment).

---

---

## 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.

In English we are also recruiting for the following roles:

- National 5 Team Leaders
- Higher Team Leaders
- Advanced Higher Team Leaders
- Advanced Higher Senior Team Leaders

Please check [www.sqa.org.uk/appointees](http://www.sqa.org.uk/appointees) regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have undertaken duties in 2014–15. We appreciate all the work the teams carry out and look forward to continuing to work with them during session 2015–16.

## New resource

We have recently published a new [audio presentation resource](#) for English. The presentation and accompanying audio gives an overview of all Units, Assessment Standards and Course assessment at all levels.

### Contact us

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)

### Follow us online

**Twitter:** [@sganews](#)

**Facebook:** [ScottishQualificationsAuthority](#)

Subscribe to our **YouTube** channel, [SQAonline](#)

---