

Environmental 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.

Andy Shield
Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

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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.

Finalised 2015 Marking Instructions

The finalised 2015 Marking Instructions for Environmental Science question papers have been published on the [past papers](#) section of our website.

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 5 to Higher documents

As we communicated in our May 2015 subject update, we updated some documents for National 5 and Higher Environmental Science for use in session 2015–16. These updates were made in April and May 2015.

The main change was the removal of Assessments Standards 2.2 and 2.3 and the renumbering of Assessment Standard 2.4 as 2.2 at National 5. Other changes were limited to correcting typographical errors.

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

National 4 to Higher Unit assessment support

In August 2015, we updated some Unit assessment support materials for National 4 to Higher. This follows the revisions to Unit Specifications that were made in April 2015, and feedback gathered from 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

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
Environmental Science National 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• H24P 74 Environmental Science: Living Environment package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach Minor formatting changes made and numbering of one question amended, since the numbering did not follow usual convention for questions.• H24S 74 Environmental Science: Sustainability package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach Formatting of numbers in some questions has been corrected, since the numbering did not follow usual convention for questions. Wording of 1(b)(ii) corrected to remove an ambiguity highlighted through verification.	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.

<p>Environmental Science National 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H24P 75 Environmental Science: Living Environment package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach • H24S 75 Environmental Science: Sustainability package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach • H24R 75 Environmental Science: Earth's Resources package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach • Environmental Science package 2: combined approach • Environmental Science package 3: portfolio approach <p>Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 and all related activities removed. Assessment Standard 2.4 renumbered as 2.2. Activity 3 renumbered as Activity 2.</p> <p>The removal of Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 followed considerable stakeholder feedback and results in a reduction in the volume of assessment at National 5 level.</p>	<p>Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.</p>
<p>Environmental Science Higher</p>	<p>The numbering of questions and responses in the marking guidance for all of the Unit assessment support packs below were amended to conform to usual question conventions. Issues with diagrams and layout of questions has been addressed following feedback from stakeholders. Specific changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H24P 76 Environmental Science: Living Environment package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach Minor corrections to wording of questions and diagram for question 2 fixed so that it can be read and printed. Numbering of questions corrected. • H24S 76 Environmental Science: Sustainability package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach Corrections to numbering of questions and marking guidance. • H24R 76 Environmental Science: Earth's Resources package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach Numbering of questions and marking guidance corrected. Corrections to layout of some questions. • Environmental Science package 2: combined approach Numbering of questions and marking guidance corrected. Issues with question layout fixed. 	<p>Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.</p>

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

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

National 5 and Higher Coursework information

The National 5 and Higher Coursework General Assessment Information and Course Assessment Task documents have all been updated with the Marking Instructions used by markers for the 2015 examination diet. Additional clarification was added to the Marking Instructions at both National 5 and Higher level and some changes were made to the Higher Marking Instructions to the benefit of candidates.

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 and internally assessed Components of Course 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. An Understanding Standards event for Higher Environmental Science will take place on 20 November 2015 in Glasgow.

Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website. For more information, visit 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

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.

Contact us

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