

Biology, Biotechnology,  
Environmental Science,  
Human Biology and Science

---



Welcome to the first edition of our new look subject update, which replaces the letter you would have received previously. This complements our regular monthly and weekly communications, with more information relevant to your subject and details of what we have been working on.

I would encourage you to make regular use of your subject page, where you will find support documents, answers to common questions, and links to other areas of interest. Documents that must be treated confidentially can be found on our secure site.

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

**Jonathan Gillies**  
Qualifications Manager

---

## Staff news

Paula Greenwood has taken over from Liz Sinclair as the Qualifications Officer in my team.

### Environmental Science

Responsibility for Environmental Science has now moved to Andrew Shield, Qualifications Manager, with immediate effect.

Any enquiries relating to Environmental Science should now be directed to the following persons:

Andrew Shield, Qualifications Manager

Tel: 0345 213 5510

[andrew.shield@sqa.org.uk](mailto:andrew.shield@sqa.org.uk)

Sheron Ross, Qualifications Officer

Tel: 0345 213 5513

[sheron.ross@sqa.org.uk](mailto:sheron.ross@sqa.org.uk)

## Contacting the team

**Jonathan Gillies**

**Qualifications Manager**

Tel: 0345 213 5482

[jonathan.gillies@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jonathan.gillies@sqa.org.uk)

**Lynn Wallwork**

**Qualifications Co-ordinator**

Tel: 0345 213 5484

[lynn.wallwork@sqa.org.uk](mailto:lynn.wallwork@sqa.org.uk)

**Paula Greenwood**

**Qualifications Officer**

Tel: 0345 213 5613

[Paula.greenwood@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Paula.greenwood@sqa.org.uk)

## Updates to documents

### Specifications for National 3 to National 5 Courses

In the **special edition June 2014 update** on the new National Qualifications, we explained that we would be making updates to documents containing mandatory information on National 3 to National 5 Courses, along with the associated Unit assessment support packs.

Only minor amendments have been made to the mandatory content, to provide clarification in certain key areas and reorganise the notes. All amendments have been carefully managed to minimise additional content, as well as disruption. A high level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for National 3 to National 5 Sciences at **[www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges)**

We have published comparative documents on your subject pages, illustrating the changes made to Course Assessment Specifications for **National 5 Biology** and **National 5 Environmental Science**.

We have also published an **extract of the Course and Unit Support Notes** for National 5 Biology that illustrates the changes made. This document can be accessed via your subject page.

---

---

## Unit assessment support for National 3 to National 5 Courses

Unit assessment support packs have been updated for the following Courses:

- Biology – National 3, National 4 and National 5
- Environmental Science – National 3, National 4 and National 5
- Science – National 3 and National 4

These updates are to ensure consistency between the Unit assessment support packs and the revised mandatory documents.

## Specifications for new Higher Courses

All documents containing mandatory information on new Higher Courses were reviewed and revised in April and May 2014. A high level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for Higher Sciences at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges)

Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 have been removed from the 'standard' Higher Units in Biology, Environmental Science and Human Biology. All relevant Higher documents have been updated to reflect this change.

## Unit assessment support for new Higher Courses

All Higher Unit assessment support packs have been updated to ensure consistency with the revised mandatory documents.

## Coursework Marking Instructions

The Assignment Marking Instructions for all National 5 Sciences Courses were updated during this year's main diet. This was to assist markers by providing further clarity to ensure consistency across marking. To reflect this, we have updated the Marking Instructions in the National 5 coursework information documents. These are available from the relevant **subject pages** of SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects). Any relevant associated documents will be updated accordingly.

In order to ensure consistency with the updates to the National 5 Assignment Marking Instructions, we intend to make similar changes to the Higher Assignment Marking Instructions. We will do this by adding an extra column to enhance and clarify understanding of the existing Higher Marking Instructions.

The updated Higher Assignment Marking Instructions will be published by the end of September 2014.

---

---

## Support and guidance

### 2014 question paper Marking Instructions

We have published Marking Instructions for the 2014 Biology, Biotechnology, Environmental Science and Human Biology question papers. These are available from the relevant subject pages of SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects)

### Course assessment reports

We annually publish guidance on performance in externally marked Course assessments and evidence generated from internal assessments. This includes Course Reports, External Assessment Reports and Verification Key Messages Reports; all of which will be available in the autumn via the relevant subject pages of SQA's website.

Please note that Internal Assessment Reports will not be published for the new National Courses.

The following Verification Key Messages Reports are now available:

- [National 3 to National 5 Biology](#)
- [National 3 to National 5 Environmental Science](#)
- [National 3 and National 4 Science](#)

Please take time to read each of the above reports as they contain useful feedback on candidate performance in 2013-2014.

## Looking ahead to 2014/15

We would like to express our gratitude and extend our thanks to all those who have undertaken duties in session 2013/14. We appreciate the work that all the teams carry out and look forward to continuing to work with them during session 2014/15.

### Recruitment opportunities

We are currently in the process of recruiting for a number of vacancies that we are looking to fill between now and February 2015. Vacancies include new and replacement appointments for the following roles in relation to the new qualifications:

- Advanced Higher Question Paper Reviewers and Question Paper Validators (Biology)
- Advanced Higher Item Writers and Item Checkers (Biology)
- Higher Marking Senior Team Leaders (Biology and Human Biology)
- Higher Marking Team Leaders (Biology and Human Biology)
- Higher Markers (Biology and Human Biology)
- National 5 Markers (Biology)
- Senior Team Leader – Verification (Science)

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

---

---

## **Understanding Standards**

Throughout session 2014-15, we will be publishing a range of Understanding Standards materials for both Unit and Course assessment. These materials will include candidate evidence with commentaries and can be used by centres for training and bench-marking purposes. We will also run Understanding Standards events for Unit assessment, for Nominees to share knowledge of Unit assessment with their colleagues. In addition, we will run Understanding Standards events for Course assessment for National 5, which will be open to all subject specialists. Further information will follow in SQA's weekly and monthly centre updates

---