

Psychology



Welcome to the first edition of the new-look subject update which replaces the letter centres you would have previously received. This complements the regular monthly and weekly SQA communications, with more information relevant to Psychology.

Please share the contents with colleagues involved in the delivery of NQ Psychology.

Contacting the team

Should you require further information, the customer services team will be happy to assist.

Customer Support Team

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Updates to documents

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

National 5 — C763 75

The National 5 assignment assessment task has been amended. While the assessment task itself remains unchanged, points have been added for clarity where required, both in the task instructions and candidate instructions. Changes have also been made to the way in which marks are allocated within the Marking Instructions. Overall marks for the assessment task remain unchanged.

Practitioners are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the latest versions of the general assessment information document available on SQA's website and the assignment assessment task published on SQA's secure website. Items held on SQA's secure site can be accessed through the centre's SQA Co-ordinator.

The Marking Instructions for the 2014 National 5 Psychology question paper were updated during this year's main diet. This was to assist Markers by providing further clarity to ensure consistency across marking. These Marking Instructions were updated in September 2014 and relevant associated documents were updated accordingly.

A high-level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for National 5 Health and Wellbeing, on **www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges**

New Higher — C763 76

Some documents containing mandatory information on the new Higher were reviewed and revised in April and May 2014, along with the Higher Unit assessment support packs.

A high-level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for Higher Health and Wellbeing, on **www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges**

Example question paper

An additional example question paper for the new Higher Course will be published. This will demonstrate how existing past paper questions or items have been amended and adapted for use as support for Course assessment preparation. This will provide an additional support for centres, alongside the specimen question paper previously published and the guidance on the use of past papers document.

2014–15 research investigation briefs

The new Higher Psychology Coursework assignment assessment task has been updated to include research investigation briefs for use in session 2014–15. These can be found in Appendix 2 within the document. The Coursework assignment assessment task is currently held on SQA's secure website and can be accessed through the centre's SQA Co-ordinator.

Centres should note that much of the generic detail which was provided in the existing Higher briefs now appears within the general assessment information. Additionally, candidates now receive marks for finding and referencing their own sources. For these reasons the research investigation briefs for the new Psychology Higher are shorter and more concise than those provided for the existing Higher.

Briefs have been designed to allow candidates, should they wish, to base their research on the optional topic studied in class.

- ◆ Optional topic suggestions for the Individual Behaviour Unit, detailed in the Unit Support Notes include:
 - happiness; fixed/growth mind sets; memory; stress; personality; psychopathology; intelligence; addition; creativity; or any other suitable topic.
- ◆ Optional topic suggestions for the Social Behaviour Unit include:
 - aggression; love and attraction; leadership and decision making; prejudice; propaganda; or any other suitable topic.

As detailed within the general assessment information, the assessor is expected to support the candidate to choose a suitable brief. The assessor will need to consider the suitability of the topic and the resources available to enable the candidate to complete the task. The assessor must also check the research plan with the candidate to ensure that any ethical considerations are being addressed.

Individual Behaviour Unit

Centres are asked to note the following:

The Course Assessment Specification currently states: 'Learners will cover at least three psychological approaches to demonstrate understanding of topics from different psychological points of view'.

The Course and Unit Support Notes will be updated during the next Course review to reflect this mandatory content, as they currently incorrectly state that learners will be able to evaluate at least four different approaches.

Sleep, Dreams and Sleep Disorders

The mandatory studies outlined in the Course Assessment Specification are:

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- ◆ Dement, W. and Kleitman, N. (1957). *The relation of eye movements during sleep to dream activity: an objective method for the study of dreaming*. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 53, 339–46.
 - ◆ Czeisler, C. A., Johnson, M. P., Duffy, J. F., Brown, E. N., Ronda, J. M. and Kronauer, R. E. (1990). *Exposure to bright light and darkness to treat physiologic maladaptation to night work*. *New England Journal of Medicine* 322, 1253–59.

The Course and Unit Support Notes will be updated during the next Course review to reflect this mandatory content, as they currently incorrectly state that the mandatory studies are Dement and Kleitman (1957) and Van der Werf et al. (2009).

Support and guidance

Finalised Marking Instructions for the 2014 Psychology question papers have been published on the relevant subject pages of SQA's website.

Guidance on performance in external Course assessments and evidence generated for internal assessment is published annually. This includes Course Reports, External Assessment Reports and Verification Key Messages, all of which are available via the relevant subject pages of SQA's website. Internal Assessment Reports will not be published for the new National Courses.

The following Verification Key Messages from round 1 of verification are available:

- ◆ **National 5 Psychology**

There was no verification activity for this subject for round 2 and 3 of verification, therefore there are no subject specific Key Messages available for those rounds.

Please take time to read the above report as it contains useful feedback on candidate performance in 2013–14.

New quality assurance verification events will restart this session.

2013–14 Higher research investigation assignments for existing Higher Psychology Course — C263 12

During session 2013–14 some students submitted reports which breached the British Psychological Society (BPS) Ethical Guidelines. In addition, some scripts also deviated from the prescribed range of Higher Psychology research investigation briefs provided by SQA. Specific centres where this has occurred have been advised.

A number of documents are available to centres advising staff on the importance of adhering to ethical guidelines. For the existing Higher (C263 12) this ethical guidance can be found within the Higher Psychology **Research Investigation Guidelines** (revised August 2010), issued by

SQA. In Section 4, the guidelines laid down by both the BPS and the Association of Teachers of Psychology (ATP) are summarised and an Ethical Checklist is provided.

Centres must ensure that learners choose their topic of investigation from the research investigation briefs provided by SQA for the current year. In addition, learners must fully adhere to the brief; following the design and conditions detailed for their chosen investigation.

For the new Higher (C763 76) ethical guidance is contained within Appendix 3 of the **Higher Psychology Course Support Notes**.

Looking ahead to 2014–15

SQA would like to express gratitude and extend thanks to all those who have undertaken duties in session 2013–14. The work that all the teams carry out is appreciated and SQA looks forward to continuing work with them during session 2014–15.

Existing Higher — C263 12

The Coursework assessment task 2015 research investigation briefs, for use in session 2014–15 are now available on the Higher Psychology subject pages of SQA's website under **Announcements. Research investigation briefs** which were used in session 2013–14 have also been added to SQA's website.

Please note that the final exams for the following subjects will take place during the 2015 diet:

- ◆ C236 12 Psychology Higher
- ◆ C236 11 Psychology Intermediate 2
- ◆ C236 10 Psychology Intermediate 1

Recruitment opportunities

SQA is currently in the process of recruiting for a number of vacancies looking to be filled between now and February 2015. Opportunities are still available in Higher Psychology and National 5 for:

- ◆ Item Writers
- ◆ Item Checkers
- ◆ Question Paper Reviewers
- ◆ Question Paper Validators

Application forms and information on each of these roles are available on the Appointee Management section of SQA's website. For more information, please visit:

CfE — Appointee Vacancies.

SQA Markers

SQA welcomes applications from teachers/lecturers to mark Psychology question papers and assignments at all levels. If teachers or learners are interested in becoming a Marker in Psychology, information and application forms are available on the Appointee Management section of SQA's website.

To become a Marker, a minimum of two years' Psychology teaching experience is required. In a number of subject areas there have been examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the marking team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands of Course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

For more information, please visit the [**Marker Information**](#) web page.

Understanding Standards

Throughout session 2014–15, SQA 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. Understanding Standards events for Unit assessment will also be held, where Nominees will share knowledge of Unit assessment with their colleagues. In addition, Understanding Standards events for Course assessment for National 5 will take place, which will be open to all subject specialists.

Further information will follow in SQA's weekly and monthly centre updates.
