



NQ Next Steps — Guide to what this means for teachers and lecturers

The Course design at National 5 to Advanced Higher was intended to be straightforward. To achieve the Course award, candidates had to pass the Units in the Course and produce work of sufficient quality in the Coursework task and question paper in order to achieve a grade A–D. To pass the Unit, the candidate had to pass all the Assessment Standards.

We recently conducted a thematic review and fieldwork research in which many teachers and candidates said to us that they were spending more time on Unit assessment than they had anticipated and that this bar for passing a Unit seemed rather high. This was leading to a significant number of candidates failing a Unit by a narrow margin and thus requiring re-assessment. This also was leading to complex recording of Assessment Standard 'pass/fail' data by staff, which many felt was very bureaucratic and time consuming.

When we looked at how we might address these issues it became evident that one approach did not fit all subjects. Hence, three approaches have been developed to support re-assessment and recording, all of which will help to reduce workload for teachers and learners. The three approaches have been accelerated for 2016/17. In addition, as indicated directly above the table on page 2, there are further changes for 2017/18 that will reduce workload further.

Approach 1 applies mostly to mathematics and science subjects, where the broad intention is to apply a threshold score to Unit assessment.

For example, the Biology Review Report recognises issues at National 5 with regard to duplication and overlap of assessment, and with re-assessment. An action for 2016/17 is that the Unit assessment support packs will be revised to introduce a single test for Assessment Standards 2.1 (KU) and 2.2 (PS) that will contain marks and a cut-off score of 50%. There will also be a review of the mandatory content of the Units during the coming session to make sure they are manageable. The Biology Review Report obviously goes into this in much more detail and includes other actions for National 5 and the other levels.

Approach 2 applies primarily to social subjects, business subjects and technical subjects, where there can be more Assessment Standards in a Unit than in other subjects. The intention here is to apply a threshold to the number of Assessment Standards that all candidates must meet to achieve a Unit.

For example, in the *Management of Marketing and Operations* Unit of Higher Business Management the threshold for this Unit will be six out of eight Assessment Standards. If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of Assessment Standards they will be judged to have passed the Unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

Each Review Report will explain the changes in more detail.

Approach 3 applies to creative/performance-based subjects that have Units with relatively few and broad Assessment Standards — like Physical Education, Performing Arts and English.

In these subjects, SQA will continue to provide advice and exemplify the holistic judgement of Assessment Standards. In effect, teachers apply a threshold judgement within and across Assessment Standards. If a candidate broadly meets the requirements of the Assessment Standards then there is no need for re-assessment. In addition, for subjects in this approach, if individual Assessment Standards are judged to be contributing to unnecessary additional assessment then these will be removed — for example, the ‘Purpose and Audience’ Assessment Standard at all levels of English. The English report goes into more detail and includes other actions such as a review of the assessment of ‘Listening’.

This approach also applies to some social subjects, such as RMPS and Philosophy.

The table below indicates broadly which of the above approaches will apply to your subject. In some cases there will be a mix of approaches and this is indicated in the table. Full details are available in each Subject Review Report, which are structured the same way:

- ◆ Background
- ◆ Key issues
- ◆ Action plan session 2016/17, with subsections
- ◆ Action plan session 2017/18 and beyond, with subsections

Subject	Broad Approach
Accounting	Approach 2
Administration and IT	Approach 2
Art and Design	Approach 2 and Approach 3
Biology	Approach 1 and Approach 2
Business and Business Management	Approach 2
Care	Approach 2
Chemistry	Approach 1 and Approach 2
Childcare and Development	Approach 2
Classical Studies	Approach 2
Computing Science	Approach 2
Dance	Approach 3
Design and Manufacture and Design and Technology	Approach 2
Drama	Approach 3
Economics	Approach 2
Engineering Science	Approach 2
English	Approach 3

Environmental Science	Approach 1 and Approach 2
ESOL	Approach 3
Fashion and Textile Technology	Approach 2
Gàidhlig	Approach 3
Geography	Approach 2
Graphic Communication	Approach 2
Health and Food Technology	Approach 2
History	Approach 2
Hospitality: Practical Cake Craft	Approach 3
Hospitality: Practical Cookery	Approach 2
Human Biology	Approach 1 and Approach 2
Latin	Approach 3
Lifeskills Mathematics	Approach 1
Mathematics	Approach 1
Mathematics of Mechanics	Approach 1
Media	Approach 3
Modern Languages	Approach 3
Modern Studies	Approach 2
Music	Approach 3
Music Technology	Approach 2 and Approach 3
People and Society	Approach 3
Philosophy	Approach 3
Photography	Approach 3
Physical Education	Approach 2 and Approach 3
Physics	Approach 1 and Approach 2
Politics	Approach 2
Practical Crafts Skills	Approach 2
Practical Electronics	Approach 2
Practical Metalworking	Approach 2
Practical Woodworking	Approach 2
Psychology	Approach 3
RMPS	Approach 3
Science	Approach 1 and Approach 2
Sociology	Approach 2
Statistics	Approach 1