

English



This update contains information on any recent updates to documents for English along with further information and guidance.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Qualifications Manager



The Qualifications Team

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Changes to documents in August and September

As part of our agreed schedule of planned changes to documents for session 2016–17, the following documents have been revised.

National 4

Unit assessment support

Reading and Listening package 3 unit-by-unit

- Minor changes to questions 3 and 6 in reading assessment.

Higher

Coursework

- Minor updates to general and detailed marking instructions for portfolio.
- Transactional writing added as an option for broadly discursive category to align with National 5.

Advanced Higher

Unit assessment support

Analysis & Evaluation packages 1, 2 and 3

Outcome 1

- Clarified nature of analysis required across different genre.
- Clarified requirement for 'range of sources'.
- Clarified that there is no requirement to deal with both texts in the same depth and breadth.

Outcome 2

- Log book template updated.

Creation & Production packages 1, 2 and 3

- Clarified that critical reflection is only required for one of the two drafts of writing.

Coursework

Dissertation

- Word count clarification: includes quotation and excludes footnotes and bibliography.
 - Text selection: clarification that candidates cannot choose *writers and/or texts* which they are also studying for the literary study question paper.
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Course and Unit Support Notes

In response to practitioner feedback we have added advice and guidance on Textual Analysis and dissertation. Much of the additional advice on dissertation has been carried over from previous guidance documents. Furthermore, we have clarified and added to information related to integrating unit and course assessment based on intelligence from verification activity.

The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at www.sqa.org.uk/ngsubjectchanges

Further information and guidance

Changes to National Courses

In September 2016, the Deputy First Minister announced that unit assessments will be removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. These changes will be implemented over a three-year period and we have started to review how each course is assessed.

[Find out more about the changes to National Courses.](#)

What's next for Subject Review Reports?

Following the Scottish Government decision to make changes to unit assessment in National Courses, we are reviewing current activities with regard to the Subject Review Reports and associated guidance notes.

Completed review report actions for 2016–17 will remain. Actions for 2017–18 onwards may be cancelled or rescheduled in light of the work associated with the revisions to National Courses, especially those relating to unit assessments.

Further information and subject-specific updates will continue to be communicated via Centre News and the subject web pages.

Guidance notes

- [Understanding the next steps for National Qualifications – English](#)

This document outlines the specific actions to take or points to be aware of when carrying out assessments with your candidates in session 2016–17.

Removal of exemplar question papers

Exemplar question papers were created as a revision resource for learners during the implementation of the new Higher and Advanced Higher National Qualifications. As we now have two years' worth of past papers for new Higher as well as a specimen question paper for each subject with an exam, the exemplar question papers will be removed from our website in the week commencing 24 October 2016. Associated guidance documents and guidance on the use of past paper questions documents will also be removed at this time.

The Advanced Higher exemplar question papers and associated guidance will remain for session 2016–17 and will be removed from the website in July 2017.

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 commentary 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 will be available from the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

Verification Key Messages

Key messages from rounds 1 and 2 of verification in session 2015–16 are available on the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. You can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' tab.

Looking ahead to session 2016–17

Marker recruitment opportunities for 2017

We are now accepting marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2017 exam 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.

Becoming a marker helps to increase your awareness of the demands of course assessment and provides excellent professional and personal development.

Please check www.sqa.org.uk/appointees regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

Understanding Standards programme

Our Understanding Standards programme will continue in the coming session and will include nominee training events, subject-specific course events and the publication of further Understanding Standards materials.

Understanding Standards course events 2016–17

We are running a programme of subject-specific Understanding Standards events in December 2016. The majority of these events will focus on the standards required for course assessment at Advanced Higher.

The events will provide opportunities for delegates to attend workshops on three Advanced Higher components. The mandatory workshops are dissertation and textual analysis and delegates will have the option to attend a workshop on either portfolio or literary study. This arrangement is due to event time constraints. Materials for all workshops will be provided in the event pack. However, for those who wish, there will be the opportunity to participate in a webinar for portfolio or literary study.

For more information and to book your place for the event and the webinar, visit www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents. Please note that for each subject there is a maximum of one place per centre.

Understanding Standards materials

Understanding Standards materials contain real examples of candidate evidence from course and unit assessments, along with a commentary that explains why the evidence has or has not met the assessment standards. These materials are a really useful resource for helping you to strengthen your understanding of the standards required for assessment.

We will continue to publish new Understanding Standards materials throughout the coming session and you can access them from the following locations:

SQA Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk)	SQA Secure website (https://secure.sqa.org.uk)
Candidate evidence and commentaries for externally assessed components of course assessment (including question papers).	Candidate evidence and commentaries for unit assessment and internally assessed components of course assessment.

You can arrange access to our secure website through your SQA co-ordinator. Any materials downloaded from our secure website must be stored securely and treated as confidential.

English National 5 and Higher Portfolio template

We would like to thank centres for their support and co-operation in the implementation of the portfolio template for National 5 and Higher English. Following feedback, we have refined and re-published the template and accompanying instructions. There is now only one template and we recommend you download this for use this session. It can be found under the 'Submitting Coursework' tab on the National 5 and Higher English pages.

Extra support to help you deliver your courses

Advanced Higher English webinar

We held two Advanced Higher English webinars in December last year. The video recording along with the chat transcript is available [here](#).

You can find details of our webinar programme at www.sqa.org.uk/nqevents

Continuing professional development (CPD)

We will continue to offer subject-specific CPD support at a local authority, independent school and college level, subject to request. This involves an experienced SQA appointee providing advice and guidance on any areas of concern that are not already addressed by the Understanding Standards programme.

Please note that CPD requests should be made by the appropriate representative from the local authority, independent school or college. For each request we will agree with the representative the content to be covered and the most appropriate way to deliver the support, eg in person, by webinar or by video conference/teleconference.

CPD requests can be made at www.sqa.org.uk/cpdfom

Subject-specific audio presentations

Following a successful pilot in session 2015–16, we are publishing subject-specific PowerPoint presentations with accompanying audio which will provide an overview of standards and assessment for units and courses. The English audio presentation is published on our Understanding Standards website and can be accessed [here](#).

Subject Implementation Manager

David Swinney is the Subject Implementation Manager for English.

David is also Principal Assessor for National 5 English and has over 25 years' experience of teaching English. He is a former Head of Department and Head of Faculty. In his subject implementation manager role, David continues to support centres through webinars and visits.

Scottish Set Text refresh

The consultation period for the refresh of the Scottish Text is now underway. The national survey closed on 16 September and we appreciate all of those who took the time to complete the survey. The findings of this survey will inform the decision as to the composition of the refreshed list. In addition to these findings, we will consult with the National Qualification Support Team (NQST) and a group consisting of senior appointees closely involved in the delivery of N5 and Higher course assessment.

The revised list will be published in January 2017. The intention is that the refresh will be light touch in order that the impact on resources will be limited.

In recognition of workload, the decision to delay implementation of the list was made and communicated last session. The implementation of the refreshed list will take place in session 2018–19. This means the first question paper containing content from the new list will be in May 2019.

Updates will be available in the 'Scottish Set Text' section of the English subject pages and communicated in Centre News.

Stay informed

Subscribe to Centre News

Our weekly Centre News newsletter contains the latest news and updates for centres delivering SQA qualifications. It also includes subject-specific news and a regular reminder of key dates during the session.

To subscribe, visit <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk>

Visit your subject pages

Make sure you regularly visit your subject pages, where you can access documents and assessment support materials for your courses, Verification Key Messages and information on coursework. You will also find the latest news updates for your courses in the 'Updates and announcements' section.

Visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects

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Contact us

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