

Modern Languages



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

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

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Qualifications Managers



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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 5 **Coursework**

We have made a number of changes to *General Assessment Information* (GAI) and the *Course Assessment Task* (CAT) documents in relation to performance–talking. Changes are outlined as follows:

- Addition of pegged mark category (1 mark) in the Sustaining the conversation section. Colleagues have asked us to include this additional mark to better reflect the range of candidate performance in this element.
- Insertion of General Marking Instruction section. This was previously omitted.
- Clarifications in Assessment conditions section.
- Minor amendments and updates to Introduction and What this assessment covers sections in the GAI in order to align with the CAT.
- Minor amendments to detail in the Detailed Marking Instruction in order to articulate with changes in the Higher Detailed Marking Instruction.

Higher **Coursework**

We have made more wide-ranging changes to the *General Assessment Information* (GAI) and the *Course Assessment Task* (CAT) documents in relation to performance–talking at Higher. Changes have been made to provide better articulation between coursework information at this level and National 5. Changes are outlined as follows:

- Addition of pegged mark category (1 mark) in the Sustaining the conversation section. Colleagues have asked us to include this additional mark to better reflect the range of candidate performance in this element.
 - Amendments to pegged mark descriptors in the Detailed Marking Instruction: separate tables created for Presentation and Conversation, with descriptors expanded and clarified.
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- Clarifications in Assessment overview and Assessment conditions sections.
 - Minor changes to align some detail in Higher and National 5 GAI and CAT.

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 – Modern Languages](#)

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.

Updating specimen question papers

In the Modern Languages Review Report we outlined the removal of the overall purpose question in course assessment in and after 2017 in the following instances:

- National 5 Reading and Listening
- Higher Listening
- Advanced Higher Listening

Associated specimen question papers are being updated to reflect these changes, and will be published early in 2017. The *Course Assessment Specification* is also being updated to reflect these changes.

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.

Visiting Assessor Opportunities

We are currently recruiting visiting assessors (VA) to conduct Modern Languages Advanced Higher performance–talking assessments in the following subjects:

- [Cantonese](#)
- [French](#)
- [Gaelic \(learners\)](#)
- [Gàidhlig](#)
- [German](#)
- [Italian](#)
- [Mandarin](#)
- [Spanish](#)

Visiting assessors carry out an important role, assessing candidates in the candidates' own centres. Visiting assessors take part in standardisation and training activities ahead of VA duties. Further information and details on how to apply are available by following the links in the subject areas listed above.

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 from October 2016 until January 2017. The majority of these events will focus on the standards required for course assessment at Advanced Higher.

For more information and to book your place, visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqevents. 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.

Extra support to help you deliver your courses

Modern Languages webinars

We are hosting two Modern Languages webinars this session. The first webinar, on 08 November 2016 focuses on performance—talking at National 5 and Higher and discusses the revised *General Marking Instructions* (GAI) and *Course Assessment Task* (CAT).

The second webinar is designed for colleagues who are unable to attend the Advanced Higher Understanding Standards events in December. The webinar will provide a recap of these events, allowing a focus on aspects of candidate performance discussed at the Understanding Standards events. The webinar will take place on 18 January 2017.

Both webinars will be led by SQA's Modern Languages Subject Implementation Managers. You can find details of our webinar programme at www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

We will continue to offer subject-specific CPD support at a local authority, independent school or 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 Implementation Managers

Maureen Andrew and Lorna McMurray are the Subject Implementation Managers for Modern Languages.

Both Maureen and Lorna have a wealth of experience in teaching and assessment, and have previously been principal teachers of Modern Languages. Lorna is also Principal Verifier for Spanish, and Maureen has previously been Principal Assessor for Standard Grade Spanish. The subject implementation manager role is to support centres in delivering qualifications and to develop resources to support SQA's Understanding Standards programme.

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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