

Music

The Qualifications Team

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Changes to assessment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

As announced by the Deputy First Minister in September 2016, units and unit assessments are being removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses on a phased basis over three years:

- National 5 from 2017–18
- Higher from 2018–19
- Advanced Higher from 2019–20

For more information, including a Q&A on the implications of these changes, please visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges

Units that were previously part of National 5 courses

The units that were previously part of National 5 courses are now freestanding units at SCQF level 5. They can no longer be used to contribute to the achievement of a National 5 course.

We will remove all references to National 5 courses from the unit specifications, unit support notes and unit assessment support packs in due course, and the unit support notes will be added to the unit specifications as an appendix. The unit specifications will also be relocated to a new freestanding units web page for each subject.

Further information on the timescales for this will be provided in our weekly Centre News newsletter.

Changes to assessment in National 5

The National 5 Music course is now assessed through the following components:

| Component | Marks | Scaled marks |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Question paper | 40 | 35 |
| Assignment | 30 | 15 |
| Performance — instrument 1/voice | 30 | 25 |
| Performance — instrument 2/voice | 30 | 25 |

An example of how marks will be calculated when scaled is provide in the common questions document for Music. This is to support with centre estimates. All scaling for externally assessed components will be completed by SQA.

Changes to assessment in Higher courses from session 2018–19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from Higher courses from session 2018–19 and we have started our review of the Higher course assessments. For this, we are working closely with our National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) for each subject. Our NQSTs include teachers and lecturers who currently deliver national courses, and representatives of professional associations. We will also meet with a sample of teachers to gauge their views on the proposed changes and the implications of these.

The publication of new and revised Higher materials will follow a similar timescale to National 5:

| | |
|--|---|
| End of April 2018 | Revised Higher course specifications |
| End of May to end of September 2018 | Course support notes New/revised specimen question papers New/revised coursework assessment tasks |

We will provide further information on what the changes to assessment are for each subject by the end of January 2018.

Conditions of assessment for coursework

To ensure fairness for all candidates, it is essential that the specified assessment conditions for coursework are consistently applied in all centres. The following documents detail the specific conditions that must be followed in each assessment:

- course specification
- course assessment specification (Higher and Advanced Higher only)
- coursework assessment task

In addition to these documents, you must also refer to the following document, which is available from the 'Coursework' section of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher web pages:

- [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)

This document provides important information on the time and volume of assessment, the use of resources, and the supervision, control and authentication of assessment — including examples.

Changes to documents

New and revised National 5 documents and assessment support materials

Following the removal of units and unit assessments from the National 5 Music course, we have strengthened the course assessment to ensure it assesses the full content of the course.

We have published revised course specifications and new and revised assessment support materials for the National 5 course, which detail the requirements of the revised course assessments from session 2017–18 onwards. The documents are available from the National 5 subject web pages at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. Further information on the changes to documents and assessment support materials is provided below.

Course specification

In April 2017, we published a revised course specification which provided detailed information about the National 5 course and course assessment, including the conditions of assessment that must be followed. The revised document was produced by merging the previous course specifications, course assessment specifications and general assessment information into a single, streamlined document. Course support notes have been added to the course specification as an appendix.

The National 5 Music course specification is available on the [National 5 Music web page](#).

Specimen question paper

The specimen question paper for National 5 Music is available from the [National 5 Music web page](#).

Coursework assessment tasks

There are coursework assessment task documents for the National 5 Music assignment and performance components.

The coursework assessment task document for the assignment is available from the [National 5 Music web page](#) under the coursework tab.

Candidates must complete the composing review for the National 5 Music assignment on the template provided by SQA. This can be handwritten or word processed. PDF and Word versions are available under the coursework tab on the [National 5 Music web page](#).

The coursework assessment task document for Performance is available from under the 'Coursework' section on the [National 5 Music web page](#)

Supportive resources

National 5 audio presentation

We have published an audio presentation that focuses on the requirements of the revised National 5 course assessment.

You can access the audio presentation from the **CPD webinar/audio and support** tab on the [National 5 Music web page](#).

National 5 course events

Understanding standards events took place for National 5 Music throughout September 2017. Candidate evidence, along with commentaries explaining the marks awarded, which were exemplified at these events for the assignment and performance components are available from our secure site.

Understanding Standards materials

Additional candidate evidence, along with commentaries explaining the marks awarded, are available for the following levels and components on our secure site:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| National 5 Music | Performance |
| Higher Music | Performance |
| Advanced Higher Music | Performance |
| Advanced Higher Music | Portfolio |

Candidate evidence and commentaries for the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music **question papers** are available from the [SQA Understanding Standards website](#).

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

Common questions

The common questions documents for Music will be updated and republished in November 2017. This document will be available from the [Music subject page](#).

Centre News, our weekly newsletter, informs centres of the publication date for this document.

Further information and guidance

2017–18 Music external assessment timetable and year planner

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| November 2017 to December 2017 | Week commencing 6 November 2017 : centres will be asked to notify SQA via an online survey of the number of candidates being presented for bagpipes and pipe band drumming. SQA must be notified by 10 December 2017 . All centres must respond even if there are no bagpipes or pipe band drumming candidates being presented. |
| February 2018 to March 2018 | The visiting assessment period (performing exams) starts on 12 February 2018 for National 5 and Higher. The visiting assessment period ends on 23 March 2018 . |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| April 2018 to May 2018 | <p>19 April 2018 is the SQA uplift date for the National 5 Music assignment. This coursework is marked by SQA.</p> <p>The visiting assessment period (performing exams) starts on 30 April 2018 for Advanced Higher Music. The visiting assessment period for Advanced Higher Music ends on 18 May 2018.</p> <p>Wednesday 2 May 2018 (morning) Question paper for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National 5 Music <p>Wednesday 2 May 2018 (afternoon) Question paper for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Music • Advanced Higher Music <p>11 May 2018 is the SQA uplift date for the Advanced Higher Music portfolio. This coursework is marked by SQA.</p> |
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