

## Music



This update contains information relevant to your subject and details of the support available to you.

We also publish updates on the new National Courses in the 'Updates and Announcements' section of the relevant [subject pages](#). I would encourage you to make regular use of our subject pages, where you will find support documents, answers to common questions, and links to other areas of interest. You can also sign up for 'My Alerts', SQA's e-mail update service, that notifies you whenever content you are interested in is added or updated on our website. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts](http://www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts) to register.

I hope you find the following update helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

**Mary McDonald**  
Qualifications Manager

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## The Qualifications Team

**Mary McDonald**  
Qualifications Manager

**Jane Rimmer**  
Subject Implementation Manager

**Daniel Beadle**  
Qualifications Officer

## Key messages from Diet 2014–15

### 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 comment 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 are available from the relevant [subject pages](#) of our website.

### Verification Key Messages

Key messages from round 2 of verification in session 2014–15 were published over the summer. They are available from the relevant [subject pages](#), where you can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' heading in the 'Assessment Support' section.

## Documents and assessment support materials

It is important that you read the full suite of documents for your Course, as well as those relating to assessment, and that you refer to the latest versions.

Information on documents and assessment support materials for National 3 to Advanced Higher can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments).

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## National 5 and Higher documents

As we communicated in our May 2015 subject update, we updated some documents for National 5 and Higher Music for use in session 2015–16. These updates were made in April and May 2015 and the following revisions were made:

- The National 5 and Higher Course Assessment Specifications have been updated to include the revised grid of the approved combinations of instruments.

You can find more details of these revisions in the [May 2015 subject update](#).

## National 4 Unit assessment support

In August 2015, we updated some Unit assessment support materials for National 4 following feedback gathered from centres during session 2014–15.

Please refer to the ‘Notification of Changes’ tables for your curricular area, as these provide a summary of the changes to each document and include details of the revised version numbers. These are available from [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges).

The use of SQA-produced Unit assessments is not mandatory; however, if you are using them, we strongly encourage you to use the most up-to-date versions. Please note that you may continue to use existing versions of the Unit assessments until the end of session 2015–16 and both will be accepted for verification purposes.

The updated Unit assessment support materials are available from our secure website and you can arrange access to them through your SQA Co-ordinator.

Further information on the reasons for the changes to Unit assessment support, and guidance on the next steps to take, is provided below. This information was also communicated to centres in August 2015.

Subject	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
National 4 Music	<p>A minor amendment has been made to the judging evidence tables in Music: Performing Skills Unit assessment support packages 1 and 2.</p> <p>The ‘assessment for candidates’ column in the judging evidence tables for Assessment Standard 1.2 clarifies that candidates must reflect on the technical and musical aspects of their performing skills and not only their overall experience of assessment.</p> <p>Further information has been added to the ‘assessment overview’ section of the National 4 Music Performance Added Value Unit assessment. This section now details the specific requirements for particular instruments for this Unit.</p>	Centres are advised to be aware of these changes.

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Unit assessment support materials are available from our secure website and you can arrange access to them through your SQA Co-ordinator.

To find out more about using our Unit assessment support packs, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment).

## **National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Coursework information**

The general assessment information documents for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music have been updated to include specific requirements for a range of instruments for the performance Component. There has been no change to the requirements that have been in place for a number of years, however to improve access to the information, the general assessment information documents now include these requirements.

### **Advanced Higher documents**

In April and May 2015, we updated the mandatory documents and Course/Unit Support Notes for Advanced Higher.

Following feedback from practitioners during the development process, changes were made to the Course Assessment Specification and to the Outcomes and Assessment Standards in the, Music: Composing Skills and Understanding and Analysing Music Units.

All documents were updated to provide clarification and to reflect any changes made as a result of the development process.

Further information on these revisions can be found in the [May 2015 subject update](#).

You can also view the Notification of changes spreadsheets for National 3 to Higher, and Advanced Higher at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges).

### **Advanced Higher Exemplar Question Papers**

In December 2015, we will publish Exemplar Question Papers for all new Advanced Higher Courses that include a question paper as part of the Course assessment.

## **Advice and guidance**

The [common questions](#) document for National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music was updated in September 2015.

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## 2015–16 Music external assessment timetable and year planner

<b>February 2016 to March 2016</b>	<p>The visiting examination period (performing exams) starts on <b>15 February 2016</b> for National 5 and Higher.</p> <p>The visiting examination period ends on <b>25 March 2016</b>.</p>
<b>May 2016</b>	<p>The visiting examination period (performing exams) starts on <b>2 May 2016</b> for Advanced Higher Music.</p> <p>The visiting examination period for Advanced Higher Music ends on <b>20 May 2016</b>.</p> <p><b>Friday 13 May 2016 (morning)</b></p> <p>Question Paper examination for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National 5 Music</li></ul> <p><b>Friday 13 May 2016 (afternoon)</b></p> <p>Question Paper examinations for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher Music</li><li>• Advanced Higher Music</li></ul> <p><b>13 May 2016</b> is the SQA Uplift date for the X778 77 — Music: Portfolio Coursework. This Coursework is marked by SQA.</p>

## Coming up in 2015–16

### Understanding Standards 2015–16

From the end of October 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs for National 4 to Advanced Higher. These packs contain candidate evidence and commentaries for Unit assessment and internally assessed Components of Course assessment.

From November 2015 to January 2016, we will hold subject-specific Understanding Standards events for teachers and lecturers. The main focus of these events will be on Course assessment at Higher. Understanding Standards events for Higher Music will take place on the following dates:

- Tuesday 24 November — Stirling
  - Monday 30 November — Stirling
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Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website.

For more information, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards](http://www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards).

Details of the Understanding Standards materials for each subject are available from the [subject pages](#).

### **National 4 Added Value Units**

You now have the option of developing your own National 4 Added Value Unit assessments for use with candidates.

Please note that this is not a requirement and you can continue to use SQA-produced Added Value Unit assessments. Most SQA-produced Added Value Unit assessments already allow considerable flexibility in the choice of a context for the assessment, while some provide a context that you can change.

If you choose to develop your own Added Value Unit assessment, we strongly advise submitting it to us for prior verification before using it with candidates.

Further information can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment).

### **Marker recruitment opportunities for 2016**

We are now accepting Marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2016 examination 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.

Our current Markers will confirm to you that the experience of marking helps increase their awareness of the demands of Course assessment and that marking is excellent professional and personal development.

Please check [www.sqa.org.uk/appointees](http://www.sqa.org.uk/appointees) regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

#### **Contact us**

For centre enquiries, please contact our Customer Support Team:

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