

## Sociology



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.

**Elaine McFadyen**  
Qualifications Manager

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## The Qualifications Team

Elaine McFadyen  
Qualifications Manager

Erin McCabe  
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## 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 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 1 to Advanced Higher can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments](http://www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments)

### Higher documents

In August 2015, we updated some documents for Higher Sociology. This follows feedback gathered from centres during session 2014–15. Further information on the reasons for these changes and guidance on the next steps to take, is provided below.

This information was also communicated to centres in August 2015.

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Subject	Document	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
Higher Sociology	Course Assessment Specification	Clarification made within Culture and Identity section to emphasise that aspects of identify must include <b>both</b> age and gender.	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.
Higher Sociology	Human Society Unit Specification  &  Course and Unit Support Notes — Human Society Unit section.	<p>Outcome 2, Assessment Standard 1 has been amended to include theories.</p> <p><i>2.1 Explaining features, strengths and weaknesses of structural and action perspectives <b>and theories</b></i></p> <p>This amendment brings the Unit Assessment Standard in line with the Course Assessment Specification which states that all of the following theories must be studied: Consensus, Conflict, Functionalism, Marxism, Feminism, Symbolic Interactionism, Labelling, Weberism and can be assessed within the question paper.</p> <p>Amending the Assessment Standard reduces the gap between Unit and Course assessment, ensuring the assessment of both perspectives and theories is embedded from Unit level through to Course assessment.</p>	<p>Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised document.</p> <p>Please note:</p> <p>Course and Unit Support Notes have also been updated to include these changes to the Human Society Unit.</p>
Higher Sociology	Unit assessment support pack: Human Society package 1 Unit-by-Unit approach	<p>As above, Assessment Standard 2.1 has been amended to include theories. As a result, the judging evidence table has been updated for Assessment Standard 2.1 and the assessment for candidates has been amended to ensure theories and perspectives are being assessed.</p>	<p>Centres are advised to be aware of these changes.</p>
Higher Sociology	Unit assessment support pack: package 2 portfolio approach		
Higher Sociology	Unit assessment support pack: package 3 combined approach		

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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.

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 Coursework information**

Following feedback from the 2014–15 diet, updated versions of the following documents were published at the end of September 2015:

- National 5 Sociology Coursework General Assessment Information
- National 5 Sociology Course Assessment Task

### **Summary of changes:**

The Detailed Marking Instructions and Marking Instructions summary table for the National 5 Sociology assignment have been amended to clarify the requirements of the task and the way in which marks are awarded. The section regarding word count penalty has also been amended. Candidate instructions have also been updated to include this amended advice regarding word count penalty.

## **Higher Coursework information**

Following feedback from the 2014–15 diet, it was determined that overall, the Higher Sociology assignment did not sufficiently test higher order skills and differentiate appropriately. It was therefore agreed that the Marking Instructions and documentation for the Coursework would be reviewed and revised for clarification and to realign the marks with the skills expected at SCQF level 6.

Updated versions of the following documents were published at the end of September 2015:

- Higher Sociology Coursework General Assessment Information
- Higher Sociology Course Assessment Task

### **Summary of changes:**

The Detailed Marking Instructions for the Higher Sociology assignment have been amended to clarify the requirements of the task and the way in which marks are awarded. Some changes have been made to the allocation of marks within specific sections of the Marking Instructions;

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the overall mark allocation remains unchanged. The Candidate instructions have been updated to clarify task requirements and reflect changes made to Detailed Marking Instructions. Amended advice regarding word count penalty has also been incorporated into all three documents.

Please note that the Course Assessment Task document is available from our secure website and you can arrange access to it through your SQA Co-ordinator.

You can 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)

## Advice and guidance

### Approval criteria

Centres are reminded that teachers and lecturers delivering and assessing Sociology within centres are required to have the following qualifications:

- at least two years' successful study of sociology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level

Individuals undertaking the Internal Verifier role for Sociology within centres must have sufficient subject knowledge to understand the content of assessments and national standards for the Course. They also need to be able to confirm that reliable assessment judgements have been made.

Internal Verifiers **do not** require at least two years' successful study of sociology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

## Coming up in 2015–16

### Understanding Standards 2015–16

From the end of October 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs for National 1 to 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. An Understanding Standards event for Higher Sociology will take place on the following date:

- Tuesday 8 December 2015 (Glasgow)

Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website.

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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](#)

## 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. To become a Marker, a minimum of two years' Sociology teaching experience is required.

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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