

Technologies (Engineering Science, Graphic Communication, Practical Electronics, Practical Woodworking)



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 to register.

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

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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 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 1 to Advanced Higher can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments.

National 4 to Higher documents

As we communicated in our May 2015 subject update, we updated some documents for National 4 to Higher some of these subjects for use in session 2015–16. These updates were made in April and May 2015 and details of these revisions are in the [May 2015 subject update](#).

National 4 to Higher Unit assessment support

In August 2015, we updated some Unit assessment support materials for National 4 to Higher. This follows the revisions to Unit Specifications and 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.

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
Higher Engineering Science	<p>Following the minor alteration to Assessment Standard 3.1 of the <i>Electronics & Control</i> Unit, where the term 'digital input' was changed to 'input'. This change has been reflected in the Unit assessment support packs that feature this Unit.</p> <p>Centres are advised to make this change to Unit assessment support packs that are already downloaded.</p> <p>Additionally, clarification has been added to the <i>Course Assessment Specification</i> regarding integration of Unit content in Course assignment.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.

Subject	Reason for change	Next steps for centres
Graphic Communication	<p>Following engagement with deliverers, the terms 'CAD/D' and 'computer-aided design/draughting' have been replaced with 'CAD' and 'computer-aided design' respectively.</p> <p>These changes were made across all of our documents including Unit assessment support packs. Centres can continue using the previous version as this change, whilst necessary, won't directly affect Unit assessment.</p>	Centres are advised to download new copies of the revised documents.

To find out more about using our Unit assessment support packs, visit www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment.

National 5 and Higher Coursework information

Following feedback from deliverers, we have revised the detail of the Marking Instructions for our Course assignments at National 5 and Higher in Graphic Communication and Engineering Science, and this must be used for all assessments in the current diet. The Course assignment for Practical Woodworking (Toy truck) had two minor amendments made to the drawings.

Advanced Higher documents

In April and May 2015, we updated the mandatory documents, Course/Unit Support Notes and Unit assessment support for Advanced Higher. The following revisions were made to the Course/Unit Support Notes:

Engineering Science

- An additional example of Course structure and delivery has been included, with a diagram showing a combined approach to assessment.
- Further advice has been given on delivery of Units within the 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section.
- Adjustments have been made to the comparative tables in the 'Comparison of skills, knowledge and understanding for Higher and Advanced Higher' section, for consistency with the Course Assessment Specification.
- There has been a general restructuring of the document to signpost information available within other documents, and improve general readability.

Graphic Communication

- Additional information on Course assessment has been provided.
- The mandatory content has been updated following revision to the Course Assessment Specification.
- The 'Approaches to Assessment' section has been reviewed following the publication of Unit assessment support materials.

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 National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher at 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

Internal assessment/external assessment approach

We continue to receive feedback relating to the internal assessment of Course assignments. Whilst this is something that we always consider, Course assignments for session 2015-16 will still be internally assessed, supported by visiting verification.

Engineering Science

Course assignments — following feedback from deliverers, the 'Care home' task for National 5 Course assignments has been withdrawn and will not be valid for use in session 2015-16. A replacement task 'BMX gate system' has been published and it, or one of the other two, can be used moving forward.

Significant figures — it has been brought to our attention that more clarity is needed regarding the use of significant figures. The following statement is applicable to all levels of Engineering Science:

The number of significant figures expressed in a final answer should be equivalent to the least significant data value given in the question; however, we will accept answers that have two more figures or one less figure than this.

This statement will be repeated on the front cover of our question papers and also in our Marking Instructions.

Practical Woodworking and Practical Metalworking

Unit assessments — we have found from recent verification activity that, in some instances, Unit assessment has not been taking place. This is because deliverers believed that it was either unnecessary or that the National 4 Added Value Unit/National 5 Course assessment would meet this requirement. Please remember that, as with every subject, candidates need to be assessed on all Units before they undertake the National 4 Added Value Unit or the National 5 Course assessments. You will only know if your candidates are ready if they have had Unit assessment to inform this.

It should also be noted that National 4 Added Value Unit/ National 5 Course assessments do not meet all of the requirements of the Assessment Standards of the constituent Units because they **sample content**. Further details on this point can be found in the '[common questions](#)' section on the subject pages of our website.

Graphic Communication

Standards and conventions — a supplementary resource of drawing conventions and British Standards Institution (BSI) symbols has been produced and can be found in the 'Related Information' section on the subject page. Whilst this resource can't be taken into an examination, it is very useful for both deliverers and candidates, and we recommend that you share this with your candidates.

Advanced Higher Course project — we have been made aware there could be some confusion when allocating marks in the 'Producing a graphic specification' section, in particular, where candidates adopt a hybrid approach rather than specifically focusing their efforts towards technical or commercial and visual media graphics. We will update this document when it is next republished, but in the meantime:

- If a candidate has taken a hybrid approach, then the marks from both sets of work that apply to this section (as detailed in the band descriptor tables on pages 16-18) **cannot** be added together, to give a maximum of 20 marks. This is rewarding the volume of work produced (ie both technical and commercial and visual graphics) rather than the quality of work produced. As such, both sets of work should be assessed and the higher mark of the two awarded.

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. Understanding Standards events for Technologies subjects at Higher will take place on the following dates:

- Engineering Science — 22 January 2016, Dundee
- Graphic Communication — 10 December 2015, Inverness
- Graphic Communication — 11 December 2015, Stirling
- Graphic Communication — 15 January 2016, Edinburgh
- Graphic Communication — 19 January 2016, Glasgow

Materials from the recent Nominee training events will also be published on our website. For more information, visit 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.

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 regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

Briefs for question papers

Later this session, we will publish briefs for the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher question papers. The briefs should be read in conjunction with our Course Assessment Specifications and will provide information on the structure and make-up of the question papers.

Contact us

For centre enquiries, please contact our Customer Support Team:

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