

Politics



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.

Jillian Hendry
Qualifications Manager

The Qualifications Team

Jillian Hendry
Qualifications Manager

Duncan Cox
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 verification in session 2014–15 were published in March 2015. 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 can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments

Higher Unit assessment support

In August 2015, we updated some Unit assessment support materials for Higher Politics. This follows the revisions to Unit Specifications that were made in April 2015, 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 Politics	<p>The following Unit assessment support packs have been updated to reflect the change to the Unit Specification (noted below) for Political Theory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political Theory package 1: Unit-by-Unit approach• Politics package 2: combined approach• Politics package 3: portfolio approach <p>Political Theory (Higher) Unit Specification change: Outcomes 1 and 2 ‘...different political ideologies and political concepts’ changed to ‘...different political ideologies or political concepts’.</p>	Centres are advised to be aware of these changes.

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

Higher Coursework information

In response to feedback and our experience and reflection of the marking processes during the 2015 examination diet, we have made some changes to the mark allocations to Higher Politics. There is no change to the approach or content of the assignment nor is there any change to the total mark available. The changes relate to the number of marks available in some sections of the assignment and how these marks are awarded.

A summary of the changes to the mark allocations is shown below. Further details on how the marks are awarded can be found in the General Assessment Information document on the subject page; more detailed marking instructions can be found in the Course Assessment Task document which is available on our secure website.

Section A: Identifying and demonstrating factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding of the issue, its significance and showing an awareness of different points of view (10 marks)

Section B: Analysing and synthesising information in a structured manner (14 marks)
(4 additional marks)

Section C: Communicating and referring to relevant political sources (2 marks) (*new section — previously sections C & D*)

Section D: Drawing a detailed and reasoned conclusion(s) about the issue (4 marks) (*previously section E*)

In addition to the mark changes, guidance on Resource Sheets has been updated in the Course Assessment Task and General Assessment Information documents. A suggested word limit of 250 words for Higher has been included in the guidance in order to encourage candidates to use the Resource Sheets as an aid when writing their assignments. Candidates should not pre-write their assignments as no marks are awarded for extended text/narrative that has been copied from the Resource Sheet; however, copying quotations in full is allowed.

Coming up in 2015–16

Understanding Standards 2015–16

From the end of October 2015, we will publish further Understanding Standards packs. 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 Politics will take place on the following date.

- 29 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](#)

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.

Contact us

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