

Philosophy

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 Philosophy course is now assessed through the following components:

Component	Marks
Question paper	80
Assignment	20

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 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 and Higher web pages:

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

Revised National 5 documents and assessment support materials

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

We have published revised course specifications 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 Philosophy course specification is available on the [National 5 Philosophy web page](#).

Specimen question paper

The specimen question paper and marking instructions have been revised to reflect the new assessment model, mark allocation of 80 marks and duration of 2 hours and 20 minutes. The specimen question paper is available on the [National 5 Philosophy web page](#).

Coursework assessment task

The coursework assessment task has been revised and it is now worth 20 marks. The conditions of assessment have changed and candidates now have one hour to write up their assignment under supervised conditions.

The coursework assessment task is available on the [National 5 Philosophy web page](#) under the Coursework tab.

Changes to documents following Diet 2017

Higher coursework assessment task

During the 2017 diet, changes were made to the wording in the detailed marking instructions for the Higher Philosophy Assignment. The purpose of these changes is to provide further clarity in relation to how marks can be awarded.

The coursework assessment task is available on our secure website.

<https://secure.sqa.org.uk/files/cfe/Philosophy/Higher/CATHigherPhilosophy.pdf>

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 Philosophy web page](#).

Additional CPD support

Where any particular areas of concern are identified, which are not addressed by our support materials, we will offer free continuing professional development (CPD) training. This is subject to request and provided by our Subject Implementation Manager, Marj Adams.

To find out more about this service visit our [CPD web page](#).

Further information and guidance

Course reports

We strongly recommend that you read the annual course reports for the subject 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 will be available from the relevant subject pages of our website at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects>

Verification Key Messages

Key messages from rounds 1 and 2 of verification in session 2016–17 are available on the relevant subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. You can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' tab.

The reports provide comments on good practice for assessment approaches and for making assessment judgements. Brief examples of candidate work which meet the assessment standard are included also to show good practice for individual assessment standards.

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