

## Planned changes to Higher Computing Science from session 2018-19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from the Higher Computing Science course from session 2018-19 onwards. We are strengthening the course assessment to ensure that it continues to assess candidates on the full content of the course, and to maintain the current course value of 24 SCQF credit points.

In deciding the appropriate changes for the Higher course assessment, we consulted with our Computing Science National Qualification Support Team (NQST), which includes teachers and lecturers of Computing Science and representatives from Computing At School Scotland (CAS). We also took on board the general feedback we have received from teachers and lecturers throughout the session.

### Overview of changes to the Higher course assessment

Current course assessment	Revised course assessment
Question paper: 90 marks (60%) Assignment: 60 marks (40%)	Question paper: 110 marks (69%) Assignment: 50 marks (31%)

In addition to these changes, and in line with National 5, we will review and clarify the course content for Higher, including the following:

- Course content will be organised into the same four areas of study (software design and development, computer systems, database design and development, and web design and development)
- The use of SQL to meet the requirements for database implementation will become mandatory
- HTML and CSS will be clarified, with requirements that are appropriate for Higher, and will show progress from National 5
- We will remove some sections of the previous course content

### Changes to the assignment

Current assignment	Revised assignment from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worth 60 marks</li> <li>• Selected from a bank of tasks</li> <li>• No time limit</li> <li>• Internally assessed by the teacher or lecturer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worth 50 marks</li> <li>• One annually issued task</li> <li>• 8 hour time limit</li> <li>• Externally assessed by SQA</li> </ul>

The assignment will be reduced by 10 marks. It will continue to assess many of the same skills as the current assignment but will involve a series of smaller, individual tasks so that

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candidates can work through the assignment independently. Compared to the current assignment, there will be fewer marks for analysis, design, testing and evaluation, however there will be more marks for implementation (ie coding).

The assignment will be issued on an annual basis and will be externally marked by SQA. As such, the optional aspect of the assignment will be removed. The course specification will detail the mandatory requirements for the assignment, which must be followed.

## Changes to the question paper

Current question paper	Revised question paper from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worth 90 marks</li><li>• Contains 2 sections (20 marks for Section 1, 70 marks for Section 2)</li><li>• Candidates have 2 hours to complete the question paper</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worth 110 marks</li><li>• Consists of 2 sections (25 marks for Section 1, 85 marks for Section 2)</li><li>• Candidates have 2.5 hours to complete the question paper</li></ul>

The revised question paper will have a greater focus on problem solving and will be much more skills-based. Candidates will be assessed on the skills of analysis, design, testing and evaluation, which are mainly assessed through the assignment at present. Implementation in the question paper will focus on the skills of reading, understanding and explaining code.

## Assessment support materials

We will publish a new specimen question paper to illustrate the requirements of the revised question paper. We will also produce a specimen coursework assessment task to illustrate the requirements of the revised assignment. These materials will be published between the end of May and the end of September 2018.

## More information

More detail on the requirements for the Higher course will be provided in the revised Higher course specification, which will be published at the end of April 2018. Course support notes will be added to the revised course specification as an appendix by the end of September 2018, to provide additional clarity and guidance.

In advance of the course support notes being available, we will publish a supportive resources document that contains links to additional resources to support the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course.

For more information on changes to assessment in National Qualifications, please visit [www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges)

If you have any queries about these changes, please e-mail [mycentre@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mycentre@sqa.org.uk)