

Planned changes to Higher Economics from session 2018-19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from the Higher Economics 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 National Qualification Support Team (NQST), which includes teachers and lecturers.

Overview of changes to the Higher course assessment

Current course assessment	Revised course assessment
Question paper: 70 marks (70%) Assignment: 30 marks (30%)	Question paper: 90 marks (75%) Assignment: 30 marks (25%)

Changes to the question paper

Current question paper	Revised question paper from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hours• Worth 70 marks (70%)• 2 sections (Section 1 – 25 marks; Section 2 – 45 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hours 30 minutes• Worth 90 marks (75%)• 2 sections (Section 1 – 30 marks; Section 2 – 60 marks)

The question paper will be extended by 20 marks to allow more skills, knowledge and understanding to be sampled, following the removal of units and unit assessments from the course. The question paper will now be worth 90 marks in total and the duration of the exam will increase by 30 minutes, to 2 hours 30 minutes.

Changes to the assignment

Current assignment	Assignment from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worth 30 marks (30%)• Candidates research and analyse information from a range of economics sources in relation to a chosen topic and present their findings in a report• 8 hour completion period (6.5 hours to research topic, 1.5 hours to produce report)• Research stage may include group work• Report stage carried out under some supervision and control• Maximum page count of 6 pages for written report and up to 4 pages for appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worth 30 marks (25%)• Candidates research and analyse information from a range of economics sources in relation to a chosen topic and present their findings in a report• 8 hour completion period (no specified time for research and reporting stages)• Group work is not permitted• Carried out under some supervision and control• Maximum word count of 2,000 words and 4 pages of appendices

The assignment will still be worth 30 marks but the weighting of the assignment will reduce from 30% to 25%, following the extension of the question paper. There will be no change to the assignment task; however, some changes will be made to the conditions of assessment.

Candidates will now be required to carry out the research stage on an individual basis to ensure that they are able to demonstrate fully their research skills for assessment. We are also removing the discrete 'research' and 'write-up' phases during the recommended 8-hour completion period, to allow candidates more flexibility in completing each phase of the assignment. This also reflects business practice.

The report will no longer have a page count but will instead have a word count of 2,000 words. This will ensure all candidates adhere to a consistent standard of reporting. It will also enable candidates to integrate graphs and tables within the body of their report, to support their analysis, instead of presenting them only as appendices.

Documents and assessment support materials

More detail on the requirements for the Higher course assessment 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.

We will publish a revised specimen question paper to illustrate the requirements of the revised question papers. We will also update the coursework assessment task to reflect the above changes. These materials will be published between the end of May and the end of September 2018.

More information

For more information on changes to assessment in National Qualifications, please visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges. If you have any queries regarding the above changes, please e-mail mycentre@sqa.org.uk