

## Planned changes to Environmental Science from session 2018-19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from the Higher Environmental 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 teachers and lecturers involved in the delivery of the course, and representatives from professional bodies.

### Overview of changes to the Higher course assessment

Current course assessment	Revised course assessment
Question paper: 100 marks (83.3%) Assignment: 20 marks (16.7%)	Two question papers: 120 marks (80%) Assignment: 20 marks (scaled to contribute 20%)

The Higher Environmental Science mandatory content is being reviewed in response to teacher survey feedback. Clarification and expansion of key areas will be provided, and some content will be removed from the course.

The focus will be on reducing breadth and clarifying depth of content. Retained mandatory content will be more detailed but any introduction of new content will be minimal. Details of apparatus and techniques which candidates should have experience of and be familiar with will be included, in order to ensure a strong fieldwork/practical element to the course. Some reorganisation of content is being undertaken to improve the flow and linkage of key areas.

### Changes to the question paper

Current question paper	Revised question papers from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 hours 30 minutes</li> <li>Worth 100 marks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 hours 15 minutes (This is the total exam time. The exam will be split into two question papers, with a break in between)</li> <li>Worth a combined 120 marks (allocation of marks to be confirmed by end of April 2018)</li> </ul>

From session 2018-19, candidates will sit two Higher Environmental Science question papers. The current question paper is being extended to allow more skills, knowledge and understanding to be sampled, following the removal of units from the course. It will then be split into two separate question papers to provide candidates with a break.

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A new Application of Environmental Science section will use a case study approach. It will include problem-solving questions that are based on practical work which centres around the case study scenario.

The timings and marks for each question paper will be confirmed in the revised course specification document, which will be published at the end of April 2018.

### **Changes to the assignment**

The assignment will be scaled from 20 marks to 30 marks to achieve a weighting of 20%. The assignment will be a report of fieldwork/experimental work and research undertaken by the candidate.

### **Documents and assessment support materials**

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.

The assignment assessment task, containing instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions and instructions for candidates will be published in May 2018. We will publish a specimen paper for each of the two papers that will make up the exam. These will illustrate the requirements of the examination from session 2018-19. 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](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)