

Planned changes to Higher Philosophy from session 2018-19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from the Higher Philosophy course from session 2018-19 onwards. We are strengthening the course assessment to ensure that candidates continue to be assessed 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 Teams (NQST), which includes teachers and lecturers.

Overview of changes to the Higher course assessment

Current course assessment	Revised course assessment
Question paper: 60 marks Assignment: 30 marks	Question paper 1: 50 marks Question paper 2: 60 marks

Changes to the current question paper

Current question paper	Revised question paper from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours 15 minutes • Worth 60 marks (67%) • 3 sections (Section 1: Argument in Action – 20 marks; Section 2: Knowledge and Doubt – 20 marks; Section 3: Moral Philosophy – 20 marks) 	<p>Question paper 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 45 minutes • Worth 50 marks (45%) • Short answer questions • 3 sections (Section 1: Arguments in Action – 30 marks; Section 2: Knowledge and Doubt – 10 marks; Section 3: Moral Philosophy – 10 marks)

Changes to the assignment

Current assignment	Replaced by question paper from 2018-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth 30 marks • 1500 – 2000 words • Carried out under supervision and control • Externally assessed by SQA • 10% penalty if word count is exceeded by 10% 	<p>Question paper 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours 15 minutes • Worth 60 marks (55%) • Extended essay questions • 2 sections (Section 1: Knowledge and Doubt – 30 marks; Section 2: Moral Philosophy – 30 marks)

From session 2018-19, the assignment will be replaced by a question paper. This follows concerns raised by teachers about the purpose and value of the assignment. The main benefit of the assignment is the process of research; however, the main source of information for this research is academic texts. These texts are generally too challenging for Higher level, while information available on the internet is variable in terms of accuracy.

The key skills assessed in the assignment are to present a sustained and focused argument followed by a clear and well-supported conclusion. Candidates will now be assessed on these skills by answering essay questions in a question paper, which will be conducted under closed-book exam conditions.

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.

We will publish a revised specimen question paper to illustrate the requirements of question paper 1, and a new specimen question paper to illustrate the requirements of question paper 2. 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