

Psychology

The Qualifications Team

Angela Baird

Qualifications Manager

Erin McCabe

Qualifications Officer

Claudia Lambie

Qualifications Officer

Lynn Findlay

Subject Implementation Manager

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 Psychology course is now assessed through the following components:

Component	Marks
Question paper	70
Assignment	30

Clarification of course content in the National 5 course

Psychological approaches are no longer included in the mandatory content for the National 5 Psychology course assessment. Two options from each area of study — Individual Behaviour and Social Behaviour — are now specified. This means that centres must choose:

- **either** phobias **or** personality from Individual Behaviour and
- **either** altruism **or** non-verbal communication from Social Behaviour

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
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- course assessment specification (Higher and Advanced 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, Higher and Advanced Higher web pages:

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

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 Psychology course, we have strengthened the course assessment to ensure it assesses the full content of the course.

We have published revised course specifications and new and/or 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 Psychology course specification is available on the [National 5 Psychology web page](#).

Specimen question paper

A specimen question paper and marking instructions for the revised National 5 Psychology course is available on the [National 5 Psychology web page](#).

The question paper now has two sections:

- Section 1: Individual Behaviour (35 marks)
 - Section 2: Social Behaviour (35 marks)
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The duration of the question paper is now 2 hours.

Within section 1 there are three questions:

- Question 1 relates to the mandatory topic (Sleep and Dreams) and must be answered by all candidates.
- Questions 2 and 3 relate to the optional topics for Individual Behaviour (Personality and Phobias). Candidates respond to one.

Section 2 contains three questions that relate to Social Behaviour.

- Question 4 relates to the mandatory topic (Conformity) which all candidates should answer.
- Questions 5 and 6 relate to the optional topics (Altruism and Non-verbal Behaviour). Candidates choose one topic.

Each question of the specimen question paper is worth either 15 or 20 marks, and each question part can now be worth from 2–8 marks.

Candidates will no longer write their responses on the question paper itself, but will be provided with a separate answer booklet on the day of the exam.

The marking instructions available with the specimen question paper will give you some useful guidance on how candidates should respond to the command words, in both the General Marking Principles (page 2 of the marking instructions) and the Detailed Marking Instructions (page 3 onwards).

Coursework assessment task

The revised coursework assessment task for National 5 Psychology can be found on the [National 5 Psychology web page](#).

Only minor changes have been made to the assignment task. These are in Sections C and D and relate to the marks allocation for the aim and hypothesis. The aim is now worth 1 mark and the hypothesis is now worth 2 marks.

Changes to documents following Diet 2017

Minor changes were made to the Coursework general assessment information for Higher Psychology, which can be found on the [Higher Psychology web page](#). These changes were made for marking clarification only. No changes were made to mark allocations.

Supportive resources

National 5 CPD webinar

A webinar which will address key issues from the course assessment for the 2016–17 session took place on 19 October. The webinar will be published on the SQA Understanding Standards website in the coming weeks.

You can also find more information about the webinar on the [Centre News website](#).

Understanding Standards materials contain real examples of candidate evidence from course assessments, along with a commentary that explains why the evidence has or has not met the assessment standards. These materials are a really useful resource for helping you to strengthen your understanding of the standards required for assessment.

We will continue to publish new Understanding Standards materials throughout the coming session and you can access them from the following location:

SQA Understanding Standards website: www.understandingstandards.org.uk

National 5 audio presentation

We have published an audio presentation that focuses on the requirements of the revised National 5 course assessment.

The presentation covers what has changed and what has stayed the same in terms of course assessment, as well as hints and tips that can be used to enhance candidate experience and success in the course.

You can access the audio presentation from the **CPD webinar/audio and support** section on the [National 5 Psychology web page](#).

National 5 course events

We are hosting a series of subject-specific events that focus on the changes to assessment in National 5 courses. The events are running until January 2018 and provide delegates with the opportunity to participate in workshops and discuss the course documents, as well as have their questions answered by the senior examining team.

To view the event schedule and book your place, visit www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents

The National 5 Psychology event took place on 15 September, and the materials used are available on the [Understanding Standards website](#).

Further information and guidance

Continuing professional development (CPD)

We will continue to offer subject-specific CPD support at a local authority, independent school or college level, subject to request. This involves an experienced SQA appointee providing advice and guidance on any areas of concern that are not already addressed by the Understanding Standards programme.

Please note that CPD requests should be made by the appropriate representative from the local authority, independent school or college. For each request we will agree with the representative the content to be covered and the most appropriate way to deliver the support, eg in person, by webinar or by video conference/teleconference.

CPD requests can be made at www.sqa.org.uk/cpdfom

Marker recruitment opportunities for 2018

We are now accepting marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2018 exam diet. If you are interested in joining us as a marker please visit the appointee opportunities section of our website where you will find a marker advert for all subjects and levels, with details of the role.

Becoming a marker helps to increase your awareness of the demands of course assessment and provides excellent professional and personal development.

Please check www.sqa.org.uk/appointees regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

National Qualifications Support Team

Ahead of the 2017 meeting of the Psychology National Qualifications Support Team (NQST) we would like to add to the existing membership.

NQSTs are subject-specific stakeholder consultation groups that feed back to SQA on the assessment of National Qualifications.

These groups communicate via secure online discussion forums as well as an annual face-to-face meeting.

For more information and to express an interest in joining the team, visit www.sqa.org.uk/nqst

Ethics

Although the quantity of ethical breaches in both the National 5 and Higher Assignment plans and reports was reduced from the 2015–16 session, there is still an unacceptably high number of plans and reports submitted by candidates which involve procedures that are unethical with regard to the implementation of British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines and SQA ethical guidance. Correspondence has been issued to all centres that deliver National 5 and/or Higher Psychology to make staff aware of these ethical breaches so these can be avoided in future.

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Contact us

Please contact our Customer Support Team:

Tel: 0303 333 0330

Fax: 0345 213 5000

E-mail: mycentre@sqa.org.uk
