

## Psychology

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This update contains information on any recent updates to documents for Higher Psychology along with further information and guidance.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Elaine McFadyen**  
Qualifications Manager



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## The Qualifications Team

**Elaine McFadyen**

Qualifications Manager

**Erin McCabe**

Qualifications Officer

**Lynn Findlay**

Subject Implementation Manager

## Changes to documents in August and September

As part of our agreed schedule of planned changes to documents for session 2016–17, the following documents have been revised.

### Higher

#### Unit assessment support

An updated unit assessment support pack (UASP) package 1 (unit-by-unit approach) for the *Research Unit* (H260 76) was published at the end of August 2016 for use in session 2016–17. Following feedback obtained during verification, the research unit has been amended to clarify that in order to meet the requirements of outcome 1, assessment standard 1.1, all stages of the research process must be explained. Previously the document had suggested candidates could explain two stages in depth to achieve this standard, this option has now been removed.

UASP package 2 (portfolio approach) and UASP package 3 (combined approach) have also been updated to reflect this same change.

#### Coursework

The *General Assessment Information* and the *Course Assessment Task* have both been updated for session 2016–17. Minor changes have been made to clarify content and amended marking instructions which reflect changes made by the examining team during the 2016–17 diet. The overall mark and mark allocation for each individual section of the assignment has not changed.

#### 2016–17 Assignment Research Briefs

Please note that the same Higher Assignment Research Briefs used in session 2015–16 will also be used in session 2016–17. Appendix 2 within the *Course Assessment Task* has been updated to emphasise that the same briefs will be used.

The Notification of Changes spreadsheets have been updated to reflect the latest changes to documents. You can view these spreadsheets at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjectchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjectchanges)

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## Further information and guidance

### Changes to National Courses

In September 2016, the Deputy First Minister announced that unit assessments will be removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. These changes will be implemented over a three-year period and we have started to review how each course is assessed.

[Find out more about the changes to National Courses](#)

### What's next for Subject Review Reports?

Following the Scottish Government decision to make changes to unit assessment in National Courses, we are reviewing current activities with regard to the Subject Review Reports and associated guidance notes.

Completed review report actions for 2016–17 will remain. Actions for 2017–18 onwards may be cancelled or rescheduled in light of the work associated with the revisions to National Courses, especially those relating to unit assessments.

Further information and subject-specific updates will continue to be communicated via Centre News and the subject web pages.

### Removal of exemplar question papers

Exemplar question papers were created as a revision resource for learners during the implementation of the new Higher and Advanced Higher National Qualifications. As we now have two years' worth of past papers for new Higher as well as a specimen question paper for each subject with an exam, the exemplar question papers will be removed from our website in the week commencing 24 October 2016. Associated guidance documents and guidance on the use of past paper questions documents will also be removed at this time.

The Advanced Higher exemplar question papers and associated guidance will remain for session 2016–17 and will be removed from the website in July 2017.

### Course Reports

We strongly recommend that you read the annual Course Reports for the subject(s) and levels you are teaching. These reports are produced following the annual diet of exams and are published by the end of October. The reports provide informed and valuable commentary on the assessment for each component in the course, and include a summary of:

- candidate performance in the course assessment
  - areas in which candidates performed well
  - areas which candidates found demanding
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The reports also contain advice on preparing future candidates, and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course Reports will be available from the relevant subject pages of our website at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects)

## Verification Key Messages

Key messages from rounds 1 and 2 of verification in session 2015–16 are available on the relevant subject pages of our website at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects). You can access them from the 'Verification and Course Reports' tab.

## Looking ahead to session 2016–17

### National Qualification Support Team

Ahead of the 2016 meeting of the Psychology National Qualification 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 internal and external 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqst)

### Marker recruitment opportunities for 2017

We are now accepting marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2017 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/appointees) regularly for other appointee opportunities which may be of interest to you.

### Understanding Standards programme

Our Understanding Standards programme will continue in the coming session and will include nominee training events, subject-specific course events and the publication of further Understanding Standards materials.

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## Understanding Standards course events 2016–17

We are running a programme of subject-specific Understanding Standards events from October 2016 until January 2017. The majority of these events will focus on the standards required for course assessment at Advanced Higher.

For more information and to book your place, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents](http://www.sqa.org.uk/ngevents). Please note that for each subject there is a maximum of one place per centre.

## Understanding Standards materials

Understanding Standards materials contain real examples of candidate evidence from course and unit 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 locations:

SQA Understanding Standards website ( <a href="http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk">www.understandingstandards.org.uk</a> )	SQA Secure website ( <a href="https://secure.sqa.org.uk">https://secure.sqa.org.uk</a> )
Candidate evidence and commentaries for <b>externally assessed</b> components of course assessment (including question papers).	Candidate evidence and commentaries for unit assessment and <b>internally assessed</b> components of course assessment.

You can arrange access to our secure website through your SQA co-ordinator. Any materials downloaded from our secure website must be stored securely and treated as confidential.

## Extra support to help you deliver your courses

### 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/cpdform](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cpdform)

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## Subject Implementation Manager

Lynn Findlay is the Subject Implementation Manager for Psychology.

Lynn has worked in further education for over twenty years and has held a position as an examiner with SQA for twelve of those years. She is currently the Deputy Principal Assessor and Deputy Principal Verifier for National 5 and Higher Psychology. She is also a Qualifications and Approval Verifier for HN Psychology. Lynn took up the position of Subject Implementation Manager at the end of September 2016 and looks forward to supporting centres with the delivery and assessment of National 5 and Higher Psychology.

## Approval Criteria

Centres are reminded that teachers and lecturers delivering or assessing Psychology within centres are required to have the following qualifications:

- at least two years' successful study of Psychology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level, including study of research methods in psychology

Individuals undertaking the internal verifier role for Psychology within centres must have sufficient subject knowledge to understand the content of assessments and national standards for the course. They also need to be able to confirm that reliable assessment judgements have been made.

Internal verifiers do not require at least two years' successful study of Psychology at University or Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

## Ethics

In session 2015–16 there was a noticeable increase in the number of Higher Psychology Assignment reports submitted by candidates which involved procedures that are unethical with regard to the implementation of British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines and SQA Higher Psychology ethical guidance. Given this increase we have issued correspondence to all centres that are delivering Higher Psychology to make staff aware of these ethical breaches so these can be avoided in future.

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## Stay informed

### Subscribe to Centre News

Our weekly Centre News newsletter contains the latest news and updates for centres delivering SQA qualifications. It also includes subject-specific news and a regular reminder of key dates during the session.

To subscribe, visit <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk>

### Visit your subject pages

Make sure you regularly visit your subject pages, where you can access documents and assessment support materials for your courses, Verification Key Messages and information on coursework. You will also find the latest news updates for your courses in the 'Updates and announcements' section.

Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects)

### Sign up to MyAlerts

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YouTube: [SQAonline](https://www.youtube.com/SQAonline)

#### Contact us

For centre enquiries, please contact our Customer Support Team:

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