

## Sociology

### The Qualifications Team

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## 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](http://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.

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## Changes to assessment in National 5

The National 5 Sociology course is now assessed through the following components:

| Component      | Marks |
|----------------|-------|
| Question paper | 70    |
| Assignment     | 30    |

## Clarification of course content in the National 5 course

The following points, which relate to the question paper, may provide some useful guidance for centres:

- Questions about common sense and sociological interpretations of human social behaviour can now be asked in the question paper.
- There are now six specified research methods, which must be understood for the Human Society section of the question paper.
- Differences between the structural and action perspectives may now be asked about.
- In the Social Issues section the “and/or”, wording has been replaced by “and” to make it clear that each of class, gender and ethnicity must be studied in relation to each social issue.
- In the Social Issues section of the question paper, candidates may be asked to explain the role of research in sociology.

## 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.

We are working closely with our National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) for each subject. Our NQSTs include teachers and lecturers who 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:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>End of April 2018</b>                   | Revised Higher course specifications  |
| <b>End of May to end of September 2018</b> | Course support notes<br>New/revised specimen question papers<br>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.

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## 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
- 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 Sociology 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 revised assessment support materials for the National 5 courses, 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](http://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 Sociology course specification is available on the [National 5 Sociology web page](#).

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## Specimen question paper

The question paper for National 5 Sociology has increased from 50 to 70 marks. The time allowed for the question paper has also increased and is now 2 hours. The three sections, Human Society, Culture and Identity, and Social Issues, remain. Human Society is now worth 30 marks, the other two sections are worth 20 marks each. A new specimen question paper has been developed for National 5 Sociology and can be found on the [National 5 Sociology web page](#).

## Coursework assessment task

The course assessment retains an assignment worth 30 marks. Very few changes have been made in relation to the assignment. A revised course assessment task can be found on the [National 5 Sociology web page](#).

The main change that has been made to the assignment is that candidates may no longer use either of the mandatory research studies from the course in their assignment. These are:

- Rosenthal R, and Jacobson L, 1968. Pygmalion in the classroom
- Kingdon G, and Cassen R, 2007. Understanding low achievement in English schools

## Changes to documents following Diet 2017

Changes were made to the specific marking instructions for the Higher Sociology assignment during the 2017 diet. The purpose of these changes was to provide clarification about the ways in which marks can be allocated. No change was made to the overall marks available for the assignment or to the mark allocations within individual sections of the assignment.

## Supportive resources

### National 5 audio presentation

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

This highlights all of the revisions that have been made to the question paper and the assignment.

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

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