

Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics



Welcome to the first edition of our new-look subject update, which replaces the letter you would have received previously. This update complements our regular monthly and weekly communications, with more information relevant to your subject, and details of what we have been working on.

I would encourage you to make regular use of our subject pages, where you will find support documents, answers to Common Questions, and links to other areas of interest. Documents that must be treated confidentially can be found on our secure site and you can arrange access to these through your SQA Co-ordinator.

I hope you find the following update helpful, and please contact me if you have any questions.

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Contacting the team

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Updates to documents

In the **special edition June 2014 update** on the new National Qualifications, we explained that we would be making updates to documents containing mandatory information on National 3 to National 5 Courses, along with the associated Unit assessment support packs.

National 3 to National 5

Mandatory documents

We have published comparative documents on the subject pages, illustrating the changes made to the following mandatory documents over recent months: National 3 Shape, Space and Measure Unit Specification and National 4 Mathematics Added Value Unit Specification.

Unit assessment support packs

Unit assessment support packs have been updated. The History of Changes table gives the date of the latest change, and further information about the changes.

These updates have been made in the light of feedback from centres or issues identified during verification; the majority have been made in order to make the assessments more accessible to candidates or to clarify marking guidance and simplify tracking for assessors.

A high level summary of these updates can be found in the notification of changes spreadsheet for National 3 to National 5 Mathematics, at **www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges**.

Further clarification

Centres do not need to reassess candidates who have already been assessed using previous versions of the Unit assessment support packs.

New Higher

Mandatory documents

Some documents containing mandatory information on the new Higher were reviewed and revised in April and May 2014, along with the Higher Unit assessment support packs. We have published comparative documents on the subject pages, illustrating the changes made to the following mandatory documents: Course Specification and Course Assessment Specification.

Unit assessment support packs

Unit assessment support packs have been updated. The History of Changes table gives the date of the latest change, and further information about the changes.

Some of the changes were made to ensure consistent allocation of marks, especially with regard to Outcome 2 Assessment Standards.

A high level summary of these updates can be found in the notification of changes spreadsheet for National 3 to National 5 Mathematics, at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges.

Further clarification

Centres do not need to re-assess candidates who have already been assessed using previous versions of the Unit assessment support packs.

The majority of the questions have not been changed in the updated Unit assessment support packs. If centres are already preparing to use previous versions of Unit assessments with candidates, this is still acceptable as long as candidates achieve Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2 twice each (via questions which have been designated marks in the updated packs). There are several questions available across the updated Unit assessment support packs that provide the opportunity to assess Assessment Standards 2.1 and 2.2.

Please note that determining inverse functions is not restricted to linear functions.

The Course Assessment Specification refers to the 'intersection of circles'. Please note that candidates are not expected to find the points of intersection of two circles from the equations of the circles. Questions on this area of the Course could include common chords, common tangents, circles which touch internally or externally, concentric circles and so on as explained in the Course and Unit support notes.

The table at the end of this update summarises the various approaches to making assessment decisions across Numeracy, Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics, as illustrated in the various Unit assessment support packs on SQA's secure site.

Support and guidance

Finalised Marking Instructions for the 2014 Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics question papers have now been published on the relevant subject pages of SQA's website.

Guidance on performance in external Course assessments and evidence generated for internal assessment is published annually. This includes Course Reports, External Assessment Reports and Verification Key Messages, all of which will be available in the autumn via the relevant subject pages of SQA's website. Internal Assessment Reports will not be published for the new National Courses.

The following Verification Key Messages are now available:

◆ **National 3 to National 5 Mathematics Verification Key Messages**

Please take time to read the above report as it contains useful feedback on candidate performance in 2013–14.

Looking ahead to 2014–15

We would like to express our gratitude and extend our thanks to all those who have undertaken duties in session 2013–14. We appreciate the work that all the teams carry out and look forward to continuing to work with them during session 2014–15.

Recruitment opportunities

We are currently in the process of recruiting for a number of vacancies that we are looking to fill between now and February 2015. Vacancies include new and replacement appointments for the following roles in relation to the new qualifications:

- ◆ Senior Team Leader (verification)

For more information, please visit <http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeappointeevacancies>

Understanding Standards

Throughout session 2014–15, we will be publishing a range of Understanding Standards materials for both Unit and Course assessment. These materials will include candidate evidence with commentaries and can be used by centres for training and bench-marking purposes. We will also run Understanding Standards events for Unit assessment, for Nominees to share knowledge of Unit assessment with their colleagues. In addition, we will run Understanding Standards events for Course assessment for National 5, which will be open to all subject specialists.

Further information will follow in SQA's weekly and monthly centre updates.

Summary of assessment approaches in Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics Unit assessment support packs

The table below summarises the various approaches to making assessment decisions across Numeracy, Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics as illustrated in the various Unit assessment support packs on SQA's secure site. Note: AS stands for Assessment Standard.

Unit	Method 1	Method 2	SOLAR
Numeracy: National 3 – 5	Each Assessment Standard (AS) has been achieved.	The threshold mark for each outcome has been achieved. This is approximately 60% for each Outcome. The total mark for Outcome 1 includes three marks that are available for AS 1.1 (one mark each for time, money and measurement).	Y
National 3 Lifeskills (Shape, Space and Measure, and Manage Money and Data)	Each AS has been achieved.		Y
National 4 & 5 Lifeskills (Geometry and Measures, and Managing Finance and Statistics)	Each AS has been achieved.	The threshold mark for each Outcome has been achieved. This is approximately 60% for each Outcome.	Y
National 4 Mathematics (Relationships, and Expressions and Formulae)	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving at least half of the marks across the whole AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once (within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and from either Unit for those undertaking the Course).	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving more than half of the marks in at least half of the sub-skills from the AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once (within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and from either Unit for those undertaking the Course).	N
National 4 Lifeskills AV test	At least half of both the operational and reasoning marks.		N
National 4 Maths AV test	At least half of both the operational and reasoning marks.	Threshold of 60% across the whole test.	N
National 5 Mathematics	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving at least half of the marks across the whole AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and twice from any Unit(s) for those undertaking the Course.	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving more than half of the marks in at least half of the sub-skills from the AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and twice from any Unit(s) for those undertaking the Course.	N
Higher Mathematics	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving more than half of the marks across the whole AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and twice from any Unit(s) for those undertaking the Course.	Each AS in Outcome 1 has been met by achieving more than half of the marks in more than half of the sub-skills from the AS. Each AS in Outcome 2 has been demonstrated once within the context of the Unit for those undertaking a single Unit and twice from any Unit(s) for those undertaking the Course.	N