

**Modern Languages: Cantonese, French, Gaelic (Learners),
German, Italian, Mandarin (Simplified),
Mandarin (Traditional), Spanish, Urdu**



Welcome to the first edition of our new-look subject update, which replaces the letter you 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 us if you have any questions.

Jim McDonald and Marilyn Waters
Qualifications Managers

Information on new Advanced Higher Courses

Some important changes are being made to Advanced Higher Modern Languages Courses for Cantonese, French, Gaelic (Learners), German, Italian, Mandarin (Simplified), Mandarin (Traditional) and Spanish.

The Course documents currently state that the Courses will comprise of one mandatory Unit (Understanding and Using Language) and two optional Units (Extended Reading and Viewing, and Language in Work). During the development process, it was proposed that the Outcomes and Assessment Standards, which are currently spread across the three Units, should be repackaged into two Units of *Understanding Language* and *Using Language*, and that the current optional Units should come together as one *Specialist Study* Unit with options for literature-based, or language in work, research.

After targeted engagement and consultation with a range of key stakeholders, the proposals were adopted. They represent a repackaging of Outcomes and Assessment Standards, as opposed to any radical reworking of the Courses.

The two Units of *Understanding Language* and *Using Language* will mirror those in the hierarchy from National 3 to Higher. The *Specialist Study* Unit will comprise an Outcome and Assessment Standards focused on building the skills required for planning and carrying out literature-based, or language in work, research. These skills are already required in the existing qualifications, and the new Unit will formally provide for them. The final product of the research will be assessed in the externally assessed portfolio, as it is at present.

More information will be made available on the relevant [subject pages](#). Unit assessment support and coursework information currently for the new Advanced Higher Courses is currently under development and will reflect these changes.

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. Please note that there are no further changes to documents containing mandatory information in Modern Languages at these levels. However, some Unit assessment support packs have been amended as a result of feedback from practitioners, to provide clarification.

National 3 to National 5

As indicated above, Modern Languages Unit assessment support packs have been updated to better reflect practitioner experience and feedback.

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

National 5 Reading and Writing question papers

To help facilitate the e-marking process for the Reading and Writing question papers, some structural changes are being made to the question and answer booklets from 2015 onwards.

When sitting the Reading and Writing exam, candidates will now be presented with the following separate booklets:

- Reading Question and Answer booklet
- Writing Question and Answer booklet

Please note that there is no change to the timetabling of the Reading and Writing exam; candidates will continue to complete the question papers in one sitting. **It is important for centres and candidates to note that the time stated on each booklet refers to the overall time allocated to the examination and not to each of the components.** Exemplars of the new booklet covers are available via the following links: [Reading booklet cover](#), [Writing booklet cover](#).

National 5 Reading and Writing past papers and Specimen Question Papers

The live Reading and Writing question papers that were used in the 2014 exam diet are now available to download as SQA past papers. To reflect the structural changes to the question and answer booklets from 2015 onwards, we have published a second set of these past papers in the new format. These are available alongside the existing [past papers](#) and may be useful to candidates revising for the 2015 exam.

We have also updated the Specimen Question Papers to reflect these changes. These are available from the Specimen Question Paper link below. The latest versions are labelled August 2014 and we urge all practitioners to use these versions when preparing their candidates. These are available from the [National 5 Modern Languages web page](#).

New Higher

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. A high-level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for Higher Modern Languages at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges

New Higher Reading and Directed Writing question papers

To help facilitate the e-marking process for the new Higher Reading and Directed Writing question papers, candidates will be presented with three separate booklets, as follows:

- Reading question paper
- Reading answer booklet
- Directed Writing question and answer booklet

Exemplars of the new booklet covers are available via the following links: [Reading booklet cover](#), [Directed Writing booklet cover](#).

Please note that there is no change to the timetabling of the Reading and Directed Writing exam; candidates will continue to complete the question papers in one sitting. **It is important for centres and candidates to note that the time stated on each booklet refers to the overall time allocated to the examination and not to each of the components**

New Higher Reading and Directed Writing Specimen Question Papers

We have updated the Specimen Question Papers for Reading and Directed Writing to reflect the structural changes to the question and answer booklets from 2015 onwards. The latest versions are labelled August 2014 and we urge all practitioners to use these versions when preparing their candidates.

These are available from the Specimen Question Paper tab on the [Higher Modern Languages subject page](#).

Support and guidance

2014 Marking Instructions for National 5 question papers

Finalised Marking Instructions for the 2014 National 5 Modern Languages question papers will be published on the relevant [subject pages](#) of SQA's website by the end of September 2014.

Assessment reports

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. Please note that 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 French](#)
- [National 4 and National 5 Gaelic \(Learners\)](#)
- [National 4 and National 5 German](#)
- [National 4 and National 5 Italian](#)
- [National 3 to National 5 Mandarin \(Simplified\)](#)
- [National 3 to National 5 Mandarin \(Traditional\)](#)
- [National 3 to National 5 Spanish](#)
- [National 3 to National 5 Urdu](#)

Centre evidence submissions for Chinese languages were not sufficient in quantity to produce a Key Messages Report in Round 1 or 3. Verification of Chinese languages took place in Round 2. There was however, no Verification activity for Cantonese for Round 2 of Verification and therefore there are no subject specific Key Messages available. Verification activities were related to Mandarin (Simplified) and Mandarin (Traditional) only. Colleagues delivering National

Courses in Cantonese at National 3, 4 and 5 may find it useful to consult Key Messages for other Modern Languages Courses at these levels.

Key Messages Reports can be downloaded from the **National 5 Modern Languages subject page** under 'Assessment Support' (verification tab)

Please take time to read each of the above reports as they contain 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:

- Advanced Higher Visiting Assessors (all Modern Languages)

We are seeking to recruit additional Visiting Assessors (VAs) to conduct Advanced Higher Talking assessments with candidates in candidates' own centres.

For more information, including an application form, please visit **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.
