

Physics



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.

Andrew Shield
Qualifications Manager

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. However, please note that there were **no** revisions made to documents containing mandatory information on National 3 to National 5 Physics.

Contacting the team

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National 3 to National 5

Unit assessment support packs have been updated and are available from SQA's secure site. These updates are to ensure consistency between the Unit assessment support packs and the mandatory documents, and address issues with wording and Marking Instructions. To arrange access to these documents, please speak to your SQA Co-ordinator.

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

The Common Questions document will also be updated in the near future to include additional guidance on the National 3 to National 5 Courses.

New Higher

All 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.

Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 have been removed from the 'standard' Higher Units in Physics. Outcome 3 had already been removed from the Researching Physics Unit. All relevant documents have been updated to reflect this change. Centres should ensure they are referring to the most up-to-date versions of the documentation.

A high level summary of these updates can be found in the Notification of changes spreadsheet for Higher Sciences, via www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjectchanges

National 5: assignment Marking Instructions

The assignment Marking Instructions for all National 5 Science Courses were updated during this year's main diet. This was to assist Markers by providing further clarity to ensure consistency across marking. These Marking Instructions will be published at the end of September 2014 and relevant associated documents will be updated accordingly.

In order to ensure consistency with the updates to the National 5 assignment Marking Instructions, we intend to add similar guidance to the Higher assignment Marking Instructions, by adding an additional column to enhance and clarify the existing instructions.

These updated Higher assignment Marking Instructions will also be published at the end of September 2014. Centres are encouraged to share this information with their candidates, once it has been published.

Support and guidance

2014 question paper Marking Instructions

Finalised Marking Instructions for the 2014 Physics question papers have now been published on the [National 5 Physics page](#).

Reports on assessment performance

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 Physics](#)

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

National 3 to National 5: Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3

These Assessment Standards have been removed from the Higher Units but remain part of the evidence requirements for National 3 to National 5. Centres are encouraged to use a holistic approach in assessing these Assessment Standards. One possible approach is to use evidence generated as part of the National 4 Added Value Unit or in a copy of the National 5 assignment, which clearly meets the evidence requirements for AS 2.2 and 2.3.

The evidence should be clearly annotated by the assessor for both internal and external verification purposes. A separate 2.2 and 2.3 report is not required if centres are taking a more holistic approach and the Common Questions document will be updated to reflect this message.

Centres are reminded that, if selected for verification, the evidence being submitted for a Unit does not have to be complete evidence. So if these Assessment Standards are being covered in the way outlined, it may well be later in the Course, ie after round 1 of verification, before evidence is gathered.

New Higher: Course assessment and the Researching Physics Unit

We have received a number of enquiries recently that relate to the relationship between the new Higher Researching Physics Unit and the assignment component of the Course assessment.

The recommended approach is to use a similar model to Advanced Higher, ie candidates undertake background research and investigative practical work in the Researching Unit and assess the evidence generated by the candidate against the requirements detailed in the Unit Specification. This evidence may take the form of a 'daybook' and appropriate assessor checklists. The candidates will then use the information and data they have gathered in the Researching Unit to produce their assignment reports.

Unlike the current Advanced Higher Investigation Unit, group-work approaches are permitted for the investigative practical work at Higher.

It is not compulsory for centres to follow this model; a centre may choose to have candidates doing different topics for the Researching Unit and the assignment, if they wish.

The Higher assignment report should contain experimental data obtained by the candidate, either individually or as part of a group.

The exemplars that were produced for Revised Higher Physics are still valid for the new Higher Course, and partner organisations have been working on additional exemplars. These materials can be accessed on the [**SSERC**](#) and [**Education Scotland**](#) websites.

Extensive support materials were developed for the Revised Higher Physics Course and these materials can be used for the new Higher Course.

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 Question Paper Reviewers and Question Paper Validators
 - ◆ Advanced Higher Item Writers and Item Checkers
 - ◆ Higher Principal Assessor
 - ◆ Higher Marking Senior Team Leaders
 - ◆ Higher Marking Team Leaders
 - ◆ Higher Markers
 - ◆ National 5 Markers
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For more information, 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.
