

Biology and Human Biology

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Diet 2018

Changes to documents following Diet 2018

National 5 Biology

We have made minor amendments to the *National 5 Biology Course Specification* to clarify the resources for the report stage.

We have made corresponding amendments to the *National 5 Biology Coursework Assessment Task*, which clarify the research and report stages of the assignment. We have also made minor changes to the marking instructions, based on the 2018 exam diet.

Both documents are published on the [National 5 Biology](#) page of our website.

Higher Human Biology

We have made a correction in appendix 1 of the *Higher Human Biology Course Specification*. The term 'agonist' was used incorrectly in a suggested learning activity in the course support notes. We have amended this learning activity.

The *Higher Human Biology Course Specification* is published on the [Higher Human Biology](#) page of our website.

Course reports

Please read the annual course reports for Biology and Human Biology. We produce these reports following the exam diet and they provide information on how candidates performed in course assessment for National Qualifications. This year's course reports highlighted the importance of giving candidates sufficient practical experience.

The course reports include a summary of areas candidates performed well in and areas candidates found demanding. They also contain advice on preparing future candidates and statistical data relating to grade boundaries. Course reports are available from the subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqssubjects.

Coursework

Conditions of assessment for coursework

To ensure fairness for all candidates, it is essential that you apply the specified assessment conditions for coursework. During the 2018 diet, we saw an increase in incidences of potential malpractice, where some centres had not followed the required conditions of assessment.

Please ensure you refer to the following documents when conducting coursework with your candidates. These documents detail the specific conditions of assessment that must be applied for each assessment:

- course specification (National 5 and Higher)
- course assessment specification (Advanced Higher)
- coursework assessment task

National 5 Biology

From session 2018–19, we have updated and clarified the assessment guidance in relation to the information candidates can access during the report stage. To support underlying biology, in the report stage candidates must only use extracts from an internet/literature source. The guidance previously stated that candidates were permitted to use 'information' on the underlying biology.

Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology

We have revised the Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology courses. Each course has a new coursework assessment task, with associated assessment conditions that centres must adhere to. You must be familiar with the coursework assessment task before undertaking any coursework with candidates. The coursework assessment tasks are published in the coursework section on the [Higher Biology](#) and [Higher Human Biology](#) subject pages of our website.

You must also refer to our [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#), which provides important information on the time and volume of assessment, the use of resources, and the supervision, control and authentication of assessment — including examples.

Submitting coursework

Please ensure your candidates use the current, published coursework assessment tasks.

Higher

Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology

As part of the revisions to National Qualifications, we have published documents relating to Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology.

These include:

- course specification with course support notes as an appendix
- coursework assessment task
- specimen question papers

These documents are available on the [Higher Biology](#) and [Higher Human Biology](#) subject pages on our website.

Clarification of course content in the revised Higher Biology and Human Biology courses

As a result of feedback from stakeholders, we reviewed the Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology course content to address key issues. We removed some content, re-ordered some content, and clarified the depth of knowledge candidates require.

We did not change the order of the key areas for Higher Biology; however we have removed some content. We made more significant content changes to Higher Human Biology.

The course content change comparison documents outline the differences between the previous Higher and revised Higher courses. These documents are published in the 'course specification' section of the relevant subject page of our website:

- [Higher Biology Course Content Change Comparison](#)
- [Higher Human Biology Course Content Change Comparison](#)

Online resources to help you prepare for Higher assessment

As part of our Understanding Standards programme, we are providing a range of online resources to help you develop your understanding of the standards required in the revised course assessments for Higher. We have tailored this to each subject. Resources include:

- **Presentations with audio** — a subject-specific presentation with an audio narration, to talk you through the requirements of the Higher assessment.
 - **Candidate evidence and commentaries** — examples of candidate assessment evidence with a written commentary, to explain why the evidence has or has not met the required standards for the revised assessment.
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You can access these materials via the 'Understanding Standards' tab on the Higher subject page.

Find out more about the Understanding Standards programme at www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards.

Units that were previously part of the Higher courses

The units that were previously part of the Higher Biology and Higher Human Biology courses are now available as freestanding units at SCQF level 6. These units no longer contribute to the Higher courses.

Unit specifications for freestanding units for [Biology](#) and [Human Biology](#) at SCQF level 6 are available from the freestanding units web page for each subject. The unit specifications contain unit content, threshold information and unit support notes. We have removed references to Higher courses from the freestanding unit specifications.

Centres delivering the Higher Biology **course** or Higher Human Biology **course** from session 2018–19 must deliver the revised course content. Candidates will be assessed through the course assessment only.

Assessments for freestanding SCQF level 6 units

We have received a number of enquiries about unit assessment support (UAS) packs for the freestanding SCQF level 6 units.

The **revised** Higher courses do not contain units. The UAS packs are **not** affected by the recent changes to the content of the Higher courses and they will **not** be revised. The previous course content is contained within the freestanding SCQF level 6 units and, therefore, the previous course content is assessed in the UAS packs. If a centre is delivering a freestanding SCQF level 6 unit, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all of the content of the key areas pertaining to that unit are covered.

Last year we published a bespoke guidance document that included information about how to adapt UAS packs to assess candidates for outcome 2 of freestanding units at SCQF level 5, which were previously part of the National 5 Biology course. This was for the purpose of recognising positive achievement. Recognising positive achievement does not apply to freestanding units at SCQF level 6, therefore such guidance will not be provided.

Advanced Higher

Changes to assessment in Advanced Higher courses from session 2019–20

We will remove units and unit assessments from Advanced Higher courses for session 2019–20. We have started our review of the Advanced Higher course assessments and we have been working closely with our National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) to identify the appropriate changes for each subject. Our NQSTs include teachers and lecturers who currently deliver National Courses and representatives of professional associations.

New and revised Advanced Higher materials will be published as follows:

End of April 2019	Revised Advanced Higher course specifications
End of May to end of September 2019	Course support notes New and revised specimen question papers New and revised coursework assessment tasks

We will provide further information about the changes to Advanced Higher assessment by the end of January 2019.

As with the Higher Biology and Human Biology courses, we will be removing content for Advanced Higher Biology, re-ordering content, and providing clarification of the depth of knowledge candidates require.

Further information and guidance

SCQF level 5 freestanding units

We have published unit specifications for freestanding Biology units at SCQF level 5. These are available from the [freestanding units](#) web page for the subject. The unit specifications contain unit content and threshold information.

We have updated the unit specifications to include content tables, which were part of the previous *National 5 Biology Course and Unit Support Notes*. We have also included amended assessment guidance from the *Understanding the delivery of freestanding Biology units at SCQF level 5* document, which was originally published in session 2016–17.

As recognising positive achievement is still available for National 5 Biology, centres currently have the option of teaching old or new content when delivering the freestanding SCQF level 5 units. We have added guidance to the relevant unit specifications about adapting the UAS packs for the specific purpose of recognising positive achievement.

Recruitment opportunities for 2019

We would like to thank all appointees who worked with us in session 2017–18.

We are now accepting marker applications from teaching professionals to contribute to the 2019 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 appointee opportunities regularly for other openings that may be of interest.

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