

Environmental Science

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Diet 2018

Changes to documents following Diet 2018

National 3 and National 4 Environmental Science

We have updated the National 3 and National 4 unit specifications to include amended assessment guidance outlined in the *Understanding the Next Steps* document, which was originally published for session 2016–17.

National 5 Environmental Science

In response to feedback from centres and our analysis of candidate performance, we have made minor amendments to the following National 5 documents to provide clarification:

- coursework assessment task
- course specification

Please see the 'History of changes' section of the documents for information about the changes.

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

SCQF level 5 freestanding units

We have updated the unit specifications for this level to include amended assessment guidance from the *Understanding the Next Steps* document, which was originally published for session 2016–17. We have also added content tables, which were part of the previous *National 5 Course and Unit Support Notes*, to the specifications.

Higher Environmental Science

As part of the revision to National Qualifications, we have published documents relating to Higher Environmental Science over the last six months.

These include:

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

SCQF level 6 freestanding units

We have updated the unit specifications for this level to include amended assessment guidance from the *Understanding the Next Steps* document, which was originally published for session 2016–17. We have also added content tables, which were part of the previous *Higher Course and Unit Support Notes*, to the specifications.

Course reports

Please read the annual course reports for National 5 and Higher Environmental Science. We produce these reports following the exam diet and they provide information on how candidates performed in course assessment for National Qualifications.

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
 - coursework assessment task
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National 5 Environmental Science

From session 2018–19, we have updated and clarified the assessment guidance in relation to the information candidates can bring with them to the report stage. To support underlying environmental science, candidates must only bring extracts from internet/literature sources into the report stage. This guidance previously stated candidates were permitted to take ‘information’ in support of underlying environmental science, which some centres found difficult to interpret and to distinguish from a draft.

Higher Environmental Science

The Higher Environmental Science course has been revised and has a new coursework assessment task, with assessment conditions that must be adhered to. Centres must familiarise themselves with the coursework assessment task before undertaking any coursework with candidates.

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

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.

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 course

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

We have removed references to Higher courses from the freestanding unit specifications, which are available from the freestanding units web page for each subject. There is a link to the freestanding units page from the 'see also' section on the subject landing page at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects.

Further information and guidance

Unit assessments for SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6 units that were formerly part of the National 5 and Higher Environmental Science courses

We have received a number of enquiries relating to updating unit assessments for the units that were formerly part of National 5 and Higher Environmental Science to reflect content removal, additional clarification of content and/or restructuring of content.

Units and unit assessments have been removed from the National 5 and Higher Environmental Science courses and candidates will be assessed through the course assessment only. The units that were previously part of the National 5 and Higher courses are now available as freestanding units at SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6, and the unit assessment support packs can still be used to assess these units. However, if centres choose to present candidates for the freestanding units, they should be aware that there is no change to the content of these units, and they will not be updated to reflect any changes to the National 5 and Higher courses.

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