

English

The Qualifications Team

Emma Bratchell

Qualifications Manager

Jay de Pellette

Qualifications Officer

David Swinney

Subject Implementation Manager

Changes to assessment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher

As announced by the Deputy First Minister in September 2016, units and unit assessments are being removed from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses on a phased basis over three years:

- National 5 from 2017–18
- Higher from 2018–19
- Advanced Higher from 2019–20

For more information, including a Q&A on the implications of these changes, please visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/ngchanges

Units that were previously part of National 5 courses

The units that were previously part of National 5 courses are now freestanding units at SCQF level 5. They can no longer be used to contribute to the achievement of a National 5 course.

We will remove all references to National 5 courses from the unit specifications, unit support notes and unit assessment support packs in due course, and the unit support notes will be added to the unit specifications as an appendix. The unit specifications will also be relocated to a new freestanding units web page for each subject.

Further information on the timescales for this will be provided in our weekly Centre News newsletter.

Changes to assessment in National 5

The National 5 English course is now assessed through the following components:

Component	Marks
Reading for understanding, analysis and evaluation	30
Critical reading	40
Portfolio–writing	30
Performance–spoken language	Achieved/not achieved

Following the removal of units and unit assessments, the decision was taken to retain assessment of talking and listening skills within the National 5 English course through the creation of a new course component — performance–spoken language. The introduction of this new course component ensures that all four literacy skills continue to be assessed.

The performance–spoken language is internally assessed by teachers on an achieved/not achieved basis. Historic delivery experience in Scotland, and research from awarding bodies across the UK, indicates that the most successful way of assessing speaking and listening is on an achieved or not achieved basis.

Full details of the new performance–spoken language, including detailed marking instructions, can be found in the revised National 5 English course specification which was published in April 2017 and can be found on the [National 5 English web page](#).

An assessment checklist for this component can be found in the course assessment task document, also available on the [English subject page](#). The revised course specification contains information and guidance on all aspects of National 5 English course assessment.

Please note the spoken language component has a discrete code (HK57 75) which must be entered alongside the course code.

Changes to assessment in Higher courses from session 2018–19

Units and unit assessments will be removed from Higher courses from session 2018–19 and we have started our review of the Higher course assessments. For this, we are working closely with our National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) for each subject. Our NQSTs include teachers and lecturers who currently deliver National Courses, and representatives of professional associations. We will also meet with a sample of teachers to gauge their views on the proposed changes and the implications of these.

The publication of new and revised Higher materials will follow a similar timescale to National 5:

End of April 2018	Revised Higher course specifications
End of May to end of September 2018	Course support notes New/revised specimen question papers New/revised coursework assessment tasks

We will provide further information on what the changes to assessment are for each subject by the end of January 2018.

Conditions of assessment for coursework

To ensure fairness for all candidates, it is essential that the specified assessment conditions for coursework are consistently applied in all centres. The following documents detail the specific conditions that must be followed in each assessment:

- course specification
- course assessment specification (Higher and Advanced Higher only)
- coursework assessment task

In addition to these documents, you must also refer to the following document, which is available from the coursework section of the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher web pages:

- [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)

This document provides important information on the time and volume of assessment, the use of resources, and the supervision, control and authentication of assessment — including examples.

Changes to documents

New and revised National 5 documents and assessment support materials

Following the removal of units and unit assessments from the National 5 English course, we have strengthened the course assessment to ensure it assesses the full content of the course.

We have published a revised course specification and new assessment support materials for the National 5 English course, which detail the requirements of the revised course assessment from session 2017–18 onwards. The documents are available from the National 5 subject web page at www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects. Further information on the changes to documents and new assessment support materials is provided below.

Course specification

In April 2017, we published a revised course specification which provides detailed information about the National 5 course and course assessment, including the conditions of assessment that must be followed. The revised document was produced by merging the previous course specifications, course assessment specifications and general assessment information into a single, streamlined document. Course support notes have been added to the course specification as an appendix.

The National 5 English course specification is available on the [National 5 English web page](#).

Coursework assessment task

A revised coursework assessment task for the National 5 English course was published in May 2017. This document contains instructions for candidates for the National 5 English portfolio—writing and performance—spoken language. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

The coursework assessment task also contains a detailed assessment checklist for the performance—spoken language and other pro-forma for the recording of assessment evidence. The coursework assessment task is also available on the [subject page](#).

Changes to documents following 2017 examinations diet

Following this year's examinations diet, the following documents have been revised.

Advanced Higher

Coursework assessment task and general assessment information: minor changes have been made to the detailed marking instructions for Advanced Higher English dissertation. These changes reflect current marking practice.

Copies of updated documents can be downloaded from our secure (coursework assessment task) and public (general assessment information) websites.

Changes to documents following publication of the English subject review report

Last year, SQA reviewed each subject area and published the results in individual subject review reports (published May 2016). These were prepared using feedback from the National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) as well as from teachers via an online survey. They also included intelligence gathered from the quality assurance of internal and external assessment.

Within the English Subject Review Report, we instructed centres that the assessment of particular assessment standards was no longer required and that we would update our documentation to reflect these changes. These changes affected the Analysis and Evaluation and Creation and Production units from National 3-Higher. We also committed to review

assessment standards for the Literacy units with a view to achieving closer alignment with English units.

As a result of our review, the following documents have now been updated to reflect removed and revised assessment standards:

English

National 3

- Producing Language Unit Specification (H2WV 73)
- Understanding Language Unit Specification (H2WT 73)

National 4

- Creation and Production Unit Specification (H23T 74)
- Analysis and Evaluation Unit Specification (H23H 74)

SCQF level 5 freestanding units

- Creation and Production Unit Specification (H23T 75)
- Analysis and Evaluation Unit Specification (H23H 75)

Higher

- Creation and Production Unit Specification (H23T 76)
- Analysis and Evaluation Unit Specification (H23H 76)

All associated unit assessment support packages are in the process of being revised to reflect the removed and revised assessment standards, and will be republished on our secure website in due course.

Literacy

National 3

- Literacy Unit Specification (H23W 73)

National 4

- Literacy Unit Specification (H23W 74)

SCQF level 5 freestanding units

- Literacy Unit Specification (H23W 75)
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All associated unit assessment support packages are in the process of being revised to reflect the removed and revised assessment standards, and will be republished on our secure website in due course.

Supportive resources

National 5 CPD webinars

To help teachers and lecturers prepare for the changes to assessment in the National 5 English course, we ran a series of subject-specific continuing professional development (CPD) webinars that focused on the requirements of the new course assessment.

These webinars provided a detailed overview of the new National 5 English Performance–spoken language component.

Recordings of these webinars are available to view online via our website and can be accessed from the **CPD webinar/audio and support** tab on the [National 5 English web page](#).

Q&A document on the changes to assessment

We have published a Q&A document that provides answers to the questions asked during the National 5 English Performance–spoken language webinar, as well as questions we have received from teachers and lecturers. You can access the Q&A document from the [National 5 English web page](#).

Understanding Standards materials

We have published Understanding Standards materials which exemplify assessment of the new performance–spoken language component. Understanding Standards materials are intended to provide teachers, lecturers and assessors with a clear understanding of why specific pieces of candidate evidence have or have not met the national standard.

The new National 5 English Understanding Standards materials include videos of candidates' individual presentations and group discussions and are accompanied by example checklists and commentaries on assessment decisions.

These can be found on the [Understanding Standards website](#). Login details, which have been shared with SQA Co-ordinators, are required to view these materials.

Further information and guidance

Literacy measure on Insight

An A–D award in National 5 English will continue to contribute to the Literacy measure on Insight. Achievement of the Literacy Unit at SCQF level 5 will also contribute to the Literacy

measure on Insight. However, please note that if a student achieves both the National Course in English (A–D) and the SCQF level 5 Literacy Unit they will only be recognised once on the Insight measure for Literacy.

Submission of Advanced Higher English dissertation and portfolio

From academic session 2017–18 onwards, candidates must use an SQA template to produce physical copies of both their Advanced Higher English dissertation and portfolio for submission to SQA for marking.

Advanced Higher English dissertations and portfolios will now be electronically marked, and e-marking requires each candidate's work to be scanned. To ensure complete accuracy in the scanning process, a pre-approved template must be used. This is the same template that is already used for the submissions of portfolios at levels National 5 and Higher.

A copy of the template along with detailed instructions for use can be downloaded from the Advanced Higher subject page.

Scottish set text refresh

In January 2017, we published the refreshed Scottish set text list for use in session 2018–19 onwards. Publication of the refreshed list followed a period of consultation with teachers, lecturers and other relevant bodies. A copy of the refreshed list can be downloaded from the [English subject page](#).

The list is reviewed and refreshed every three years to ensure it remains relevant and to allow new texts to be introduced. Teachers and lecturers will still have freedom to select texts for the critical essay section, meaning a range of literature will be studied at National 5 and Higher English.

For this year, centres should continue to prepare candidates using the original set text list. The refreshed list will become live in academic session 2018–19. This means that the first question paper containing content from the new list will be in **May 2019**.

New assessment support pack for Communication and Literature Units

We have created and published a new assessment support pack for the NQ units Communication (NC) (FA1W 12) and Literature 1 (FA58 12) at SCQF level 6. The combination of these two units is accepted by many academic institutions as an alternative to a pass at Higher English (grade C) for access to HN or degree level programmes.

The new assessment support pack contains instruments of assessment, guidance and other useful information relating to internal assessment of these units. The pack is available now and can be downloaded from the NQ Group Award section of our secure website. Please approach the SQA contact in your centre for access to our secure website.

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Contact us

Please contact our Customer Support Team:

Tel: 0303 333 0330

Fax: 0345 213 5000

E-mail: mycentre@sqa.org.uk
