

Equality Review Summary



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| Qualification | Biology |
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| Level | Higher |
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REVIEW OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS EQUALITY REVIEW

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| Date of review | 8/11/2018 |
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Coursework and/ or Question Paper revisions

The assignment will be a report of experimental work and research undertaken by the candidate. Revising the assignment task will provide clear progression from the new National 5 assignment.

The question paper will be extended by 20 marks. It will be split into two separate question papers, with a break in between. The objective test and extended response sections will now become separate question papers. The total exam time will be 3 hours. Extending the question paper will allow more skills, knowledge and understanding to be sampled following the removal of units from the course.

Equality & inclusion issues

In addition to the above changes to the course assessment and in line with National 5, the opportunity will be taken to review, clarify and re-order the course content. This means that some sections of the current course content will be removed, nothing will be added. No changes have been made to the aims or rationale of the course. Only the Course assessment has changed as outlined above. This means that the original equality review carried out and attached remains valid and fit for purpose. It should be noted however, that the Units, which were a feature of the original ERF, have now been removed.

Disability

Revision of Coursework

There are no other implications than those that had been previously recorded for practical work on the original ERF. However, including practical/experimental/field work in an externally assessed assignment, undertaken under more controlled conditions than existed in Unit assessments, could adversely impact some disabled candidates, for example, those with physical or visual difficulties.

Extension of existing question paper

Some disabled candidates who require extra time may find increased focus on externally assessed exams more challenging and they may experience fatigue over the longer examination time. For example, candidates with physical disabilities may have difficulties in maintaining stamina or those unable to concentrate for extended periods may have difficulties in maintaining focus and have difficulties in demonstrating their attainment. Other disabled candidates such as those with mental health difficulties or emotional behavioural difficulties may find the longer examination experience overly stressful leading to increased anxiety that could negatively impact their ability to demonstrate their attainment.

Religion and belief

Some candidates because of religion and belief may experience a higher level of fatigue and be adversely affected in an extended question paper because they are fasting.

Actions that will mitigate any adverse impact outlined above

Disability

Revision of Coursework

The development of practical skills is among the stated aims of these Courses and progression to more advanced qualifications could be compromised if practical abilities were not developed. Practical skills were previously assessed in the Units. The provision of appropriate assessment arrangements such as the use of a practical assistant, and other supportive practices will mitigate the adverse impact for many candidates. SQA will also continue to ensure that individual requests for reasonable adjustments are considered where appropriate. However, while it may not be possible to exempt disabled learners from the assessment of practical activities in the Assignment, it may be possible to consider exemption from some aspects of the practical activities.

Extension of existing question paper

While it is not possible to exempt disabled learners from the external QP at Higher where this is an integral assessment component, the provision of appropriate assessment arrangements and other supportive practices will mitigate the adverse impact for many disabled candidates. For example, by the careful consideration of the amount of extra time being requested and by further consideration being given as to whether there are any other more appropriate assessment arrangements such as using ICT and/or assistive technologies or the inclusion of rest breaks. SQA recognises that reasonable adjustments or assessment arrangements may be incapable of mitigating all of these potential negative impacts entirely. Nevertheless, the decision to extend the existing question has been taken to ensure that the standards, quality and credibility of the National Qualifications are maintained.

Religion and Belief

It is not possible for SQA to take all possible religious festivals and periods of observance into account when constructing the exam timetable. SQA will take into account, through its exceptional circumstances process, any negative impact such as a candidate taking unwell caused by fasting during an examination.

ORIGINAL NATIONAL QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT EQUALITY REVIEW

Date of review | 29 June 2012

Summary of Conclusion and recommendation

The adverse impact of the potential barriers identified for disabled learners can be mitigated by the provision of appropriate assessment arrangements. However, it should be noted that it may not be possible to exempt a disabled learner from components of assessment where this would compromise the integrity of the qualification.

The adverse impact of the potential barriers identified for learners on grounds of Religion and/or Belief can be mitigated by the expectation that teachers/lecturers delivering the content and skills of the Higher courses in Biology would do so in a sensitive and respectful manner with emphasis on the scientific processes. It is also expected that questions in the externally set question paper would be sensitively worded.