National Course modification summary: Computing Science

National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher: session 2021–22

National 4

Modifications for session 2021–22 remain the same as session 2020–21.

There is no requirement to complete the added value unit assessment.

Added value unit

The requirement to complete the added value unit is removed for session 2021–22. To achieve the overall course award for National 4 this session, candidates must pass all other contributing units in the National 4 course. You must submit a 'pass' result for the added value unit to ensure your candidates are certificated for the course award.

You are not required to gather evidence for the added value unit this session; however, it is important you give candidates opportunities to develop and demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding outlined in the National 4 added value unit specification, where possible. This will support your candidates as they progress to further learning and assessment at SCQF level 5.

National 5

Modifications for session 2021–22 remain the same as session 2020–21.

Optionality between database design and development (DDD), and web design and development (WDD) remains in both the assignment and the question paper.

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper	80	1 hour and 30 minutes
Assignment	40	6 hours

The question paper and assignment components are modified to give the option of either DDD or WDD. This gives flexibility in how you deliver the course and reduces the volume of content assessed.

This approach reduces assessment by approximately 25%, while ensuring at least one of the database or web areas of study is assessed in each component.

Question paper

The marks for the question paper have changed from 110 to 80 marks.

There is no change to the style of questions, however, we have structured the question paper by area of study.

♦ Section 1 is mandatory and is worth 55 marks covering software design and development (SDD) and computer systems (CS). Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
♦ Section 2 is optional and is worth 25 marks covering DDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
♦ Section 3 is optional and is worth 25 marks covering WDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.

Candidates can choose to answer section 2 or section 3.

The duration of the question paper has changed from 2 hours to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Assignment

The total number of marks for the assignment has changed from 50 to 40 marks.

♦ The SDD task is mandatory and remains with 25 marks allocated (15 marks for implementation).
♦ There is an option to complete either the DDD task or the WDD task. Each has 15 marks allocated, an increase of 2-3 marks from the current arrangements.

The time to complete the assignment has changed from 8 hours to 6 hours.

Higher

Modifications for session 2021–22 remain the same as session 2020–21.

Optionality between DDD and WDD remains in both the assignment and the question paper.

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper	80	2 hours
Assignment	40	6 hours

The question paper and assignment components are modified to give the option of either DDD or WDD. This gives flexibility in how you deliver the course, and reduces the volume of content assessed.

This approach reduces assessment by approximately 25%, while ensuring at least one of the database or web areas of study is assessed in each component.

Question paper

The marks for the question paper have changed from 110 to 80 marks.

There is no change to the style of questions, however, we have structured the question paper by area of study.

- Section 1 is mandatory and is worth 55 marks covering SDD and CS. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
- Section 2 is optional and is worth 25 marks covering DDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
- Section 3 is optional and is worth 25 marks covering WDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and larger context-based questions with multiple parts.

Candidates can choose to answer section 2 or section 3.

The duration of the question paper has changed from 2 hours and 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Assignment

The total number of marks for the assignment have changed from 50 to 40 marks.

- The SDD task is mandatory and remains with 25 marks allocated (15 marks for implementation).
- There is an option to complete either the DDD task or the WDD task. Each has 15 marks allocated, an increase of 2-3 marks from the current arrangements.

The time to complete the assignment has changed from 8 hours to 6 hours.

Advanced Higher

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper	55	2 hours
Project	80	No fixed duration

The modifications at Higher and disruption to learning in session 2020–21 are likely to have had a significant impact on how prepared Higher candidates are to progress to Advanced Higher. In particular, where DDD or WDD content has not been fully taught.

To address this, the modifications for Advanced Higher in 2021–22 are different to those in 2020–21. These modifications are intended to give you flexibility to deliver the course in a way that takes into account the experience your candidates had at Higher level in session 2020–21.

Question paper

The marks for the question paper have changed from 80 to 55 marks.

We have retained the modification that removed CS from the question paper and introduced an option of either DDD or WDD. This gives flexibility in how you deliver the course and reduces the volume of content assessed in the question paper. It reduces the depth of learning required in one of these areas and allows you to focus on the practical skills across the course to support all possible project combinations.

There is no change to the style of questions, however, we have structured the question paper by area of study.

♦ Section 1 is mandatory and worth 35 marks covering SDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and two larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
♦ Section 2 is optional and worth 20 marks covering DDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and one larger context-based questions with multiple parts.
♦ Section 3 is optional and worth 20 marks covering WDD. Questions will be a combination of short-response questions and one larger context-based questions with multiple parts. At Advanced Higher level, much of the WDD content requires an understanding of database-driven websites. Marks will focus on web content (for example PHP) and database aspects of the question will not be assessed, but will provide context.

Candidates can choose to answer section 2 or section 3.

The duration of the question paper has changed from 2 hours and 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Project

The project is fully re-instated as per the [coursework](#) assessment task.

The marks available have returned to 80 marks, as the evaluation stage (worth 5 marks) is re-instated.

The project is open book, and completed over an extended period of time, so all combinations should still be possible for candidates even if classroom teaching time on one area is reduced.

If you have any questions about these changes, please email [qualification.development@sqa.org.uk.](mailto:qualification.development@sqa.org.uk)