

National Course modification summary: Environmental Science



Freestanding units at SCQF levels 5 and 6; and National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher: session 2021–22

Freestanding units at SCQF levels 5 and 6

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

The requirement to complete outcome 1 in all units is removed.

For freestanding units that were formerly part of the National 5 and Higher courses, the normally mandatory completion of outcome 1 involves carrying out and reporting on a practical experiment. However, current restrictions make it difficult for centres to carry out practical work safely and in line with the guidelines issued by SSERC. Nonetheless, teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop their candidates' practical skills, which are a feature of these units.

National 3

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

The requirement to complete outcome 1 in all units is removed.

The development of practical and fieldwork skills in environmental science is a fundamental part of the course. For the unit assessment, outcome 1 requires candidates to undertake a practical experiment and write a report. However, current restrictions make it difficult for centres to carry out practical work safely and in line with the guidelines issued by SSERC. Nonetheless, teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop candidates' practical and fieldwork skills, which are a feature of the National 3 course.

National 4

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

The requirement to complete outcome 1 in all units is removed.

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

The development of practical and fieldwork skills in environmental science is a fundamental part of the course. For the unit assessment, outcome 1 requires candidates to undertake a practical experiment and write a report. However, current restrictions make it difficult for centres to carry out practical work safely and in line with the guidelines issued by SSERC. Nonetheless, teachers and lecturers should still endeavour to develop candidates' practical and fieldwork skills, which are a feature of the National 4 course.

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.

Although the added value unit allows a range of approaches, including literature research rather than practical work or fieldwork, National 4 added value unit evidence seen at verification in environmental science often includes practical work or fieldwork. This may be because many centres have multi-level classes, and using the same approach for National 5 and National 4 candidates allows a similar experience and easier classroom management. In addition, some centres decide later in the academic session whether a candidate is struggling with National 5 and should therefore be presented for National 4 instead.

The removal of the assignment at National 5 this session may create problems for centres with multi-level classes trying to undertake either experimental work, fieldwork, or literature research with their National 4 candidates. Restricted access to IT facilities in session 2021–22 could impede candidates' ability to undertake literature research.

National 5

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

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper	100	2 hours 30 minutes

Question paper

There are no changes to the question paper. The format and duration of the question paper remain unchanged. Additionally, maintaining the current format and balance of the papers means that candidates can be familiar with the style and format of the papers through practising past papers and the specimen paper.

Assignment

The assignment is removed for session 2021–22.

The development of practical and fieldwork skills in environmental science is a fundamental part of the course. However, current restrictions make it difficult for centres to carry out practical work and fieldwork safely and in line with the guidelines issued by SSERC. Nonetheless, it is important that teachers and lecturers continue to develop candidates' practical and fieldwork skills, which are a feature of the National 5 course.

Higher

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

Component	Marks	Duration
Question paper 1	20	45 minutes
Question paper 2	100	2 hours 30 minutes

Question paper

There are no changes to the question papers. The format and duration of the question papers remain unchanged. Additionally, maintaining the current format and balance of the papers means that candidates can be familiar with the style and format of the papers through practising past papers and the specimen paper.

Assignment

The assignment is removed for session 2021–22.

The development of practical and fieldwork skills in environmental science is a fundamental part of the course. However, current restrictions make it difficult for centres to carry out practical work and fieldwork safely and in line with the guidelines issued by SSERC. Nonetheless, it is important that teachers and lecturers continue to develop candidates' practical and fieldwork skills, which are a feature of the Higher course.

If you have any questions about these changes, please email qualification.development@sqa.org.uk