

January 2014

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS

For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of National Qualifications in Sociology

Action by Recipient
Response required
✓ Note and pass on
Note — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Sociology

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member(s) of staff responsible for the delivery of National Qualifications in Sociology at Intermediate 2, Higher and/or National 5 levels.

External Assessment of Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology 2013

Candidate numbers at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels of presentation remained consistent with previous years. Results also remained stable with a spread of marks across the range zero to full marks. No issues were raised from candidates, teachers or lecturers or markers regarding the question paper. It was evident that candidates were well prepared for the demands of the question paper and grades were generally in line with previous years.

A full synopsis of performance is captured in the External Assessment Reports for Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology now available on the Sociology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk):

- ◆ External Assessment report for Intermediate 2 Sociology
- ◆ External Assessment report for Higher Sociology
- ◆ Internal Assessment (verification) report for Sociology

Centres are advised to access these reports which contain essential feedback on performance and advice to centres on preparation of candidates.

Marking instruction

The 2013 question papers and final marking instructions for Intermediate 2 and Higher are now available on the Sociology pages of SQA's website. These can be useful documents for teachers and lecturers if or when constructing prelims and when preparing candidates for external assessment of Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology.

Appeals

Stage 1 and Stage 2 Appeals were completed during September and October. There was a slight decrease in the number of candidates presented for appeal in 2013.

Curriculum for Excellence

National 5 Sociology was implemented in August 2013 and a number of centres are now delivering the new Course. There will now be two components to Course Assessment: Question Paper and Assignment. Centres are advised to read the mandatory and support documentation available on the CfE pages of the SQA website as all detailed information and support is given. These documents replace the current Arrangements Documents.

The SQA website contains Unit and Course Specifications, Course Assessment Specifications (including mandatory information on Course content), Specimen Question Paper and Marking Instructions and further advice and guidance on approaches to delivery via Course Support Notes.

The SQA secure site contains Unit Assessment Support packs, Course Assessment templates, Course Assignment tasks and guidance for candidates. The Course Assessment templates are not mandatory for session 2013/14. However, centres are encouraged to use them if candidates have not already started the coursework task. **Please note that all delivering centres are, however, required to ensure that the flyleaf and marking grid (front and back pages) of the templates are printed off and submitted along with each candidate's work as these are needed as part of the marking process.**

Developments are in their final stages for the new Higher Sociology Course which will be implemented in August 2014. Draft documentation on Course and Unit specifications are now available to view on the CfE Sociology website. Centres are reminded, however, these documents are subject to change before implementation in August 2014. CfE updates to centres will advise of timelines for the publication of final versions of these documents.

The first round of verification of internally assessed Units for National 5 level will take place in February 2014 and SQA will publish any key messages upon completion of this work.

Centre Support Event for National 5 Sociology

College Development Network and SQA Academy are hosting a collaborative centre networking event for teachers/lecturers who are delivering or intend to deliver National 5 Sociology. The aim of the event is to explore the differences and similarities between the current Intermediate 2 Course and the new National 5 Course. Guest speaker will be Professor Greg Philo, University of Glasgow and Glasgow Media Group who will discuss recent research findings. More details of the event can be accessed through College Development Network or the events registration link below. Closing date for registration is Monday 3 February 2014 when access begins to a one hour online activity through SQA Academy.

<http://events.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/events/show/4803>

Appointee Opportunities

Opportunities are still available in Sociology for Item Writers, Item Checkers, Question Paper Reviewers, and Question Paper Validators for National 5 and Higher levels. Application forms and information on each role are available on the Appointee Management section of the SQA website.

Being an SQA Marker

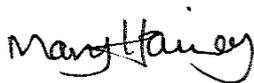
We welcome applications from teachers/lecturers to mark Question Papers for Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology as well as Question Papers and Assignment components of the National 5 Course.

If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Sociology, information and application forms are available on our Appointee Management section of the SQA website. To become a Marker, our criteria states that you must be teaching Sociology courses for three years or in your third year of teaching.

In a number of subject areas we have had recent examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the Marking Team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands of course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail.

Yours faithfully,



Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care