

20 October 2004

To: SQA Co-coordinator
Secondary Schools
FE Colleges

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None— update/information only

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Access 3 Social Subjects Cluster

The contents of this letter should be passed to the members of staff responsible for Access 3 Social Subjects.

Entries

Entries for the Cluster continue to rise, with 479 candidates from 49 Centres entered in session 2003/2004. Access 3 Social Subjects is becoming increasingly popular and initial steps have been taken by SQA to manage the rise in popularity more actively.

Steering Group

A Steering Group has been formed to address the evolving issues surrounding the Cluster and to try and identify ways to support Centres currently delivering, and hoping to deliver, Access 3 Social Subjects. The members comprise of teachers who have experience in delivering the qualification. The Steering Group had its first meeting in August 2004 and will meet again in February 2005. Centre staff who are currently delivering Access 3 Social Subjects and are interested in participating in this Group should contact Veronica Curran as indicated above.

Moderation

A Moderation Group has now been set up to specifically carry out the moderation of the Access 3 Units. Six teachers, each with relevant experience in delivering the Units, have been appointed as Moderators for session 2005. The team will consist of two Moderators from each of the discrete Social Subjects, ie History, Geography and Modern Studies. Centres delivering Access 3 Units, with a completion date of 31 March 2005, will be randomly selected for moderation. It is hoped that as a result of this process exemplification of 'good practice' can be identified and disseminated to Centres.

National Assessment Bank Items (NABs)

There are NABs for the three Units within the Cluster:

- ◆ D526 09—Deciding
- ◆ D527 09—Contrasting
- ◆ D528 09—Organising and Presenting Information

These are available to download from the secure section of our website. Your SQA Co-ordinator will have details of how to access this site.

It has been suggested by some Centres that the current format of the NABs is not very user-friendly. It is our intention to have these assessment materials scrutinised and updated as and when priorities and timelines allow. Centre comments regarding possible improvements are welcome, but it should be remembered that these NABs must be generic, as indicated in the Arrangements.

Certification of Clusters

Clusters can be certificated at various times throughout the year. Up to the end of April 2005, evaluations of Clusters are carried out every week, for candidates with completion dates up to the end of April 2005.

If Centres want to be sure of August certification, the completion date that should be quoted on their entries should be May, June or July 2005. Otherwise, if all their Unit results are received by the end of April, they will receive their Cluster certificates early.

The weekly Cluster evaluations stop at the end of April, so candidates with completion dates of May, June or July, and those who complete their Units during these three months, will receive their certificate in August.

Our “age and stage” regulations allow for candidates in S3 to be entered for Clusters.

Teaching Materials

Learning and teaching materials are the remit of LT Scotland. Centres wishing further advice and support should access the LTS website: www.ltscotland.org.uk/nq/search.asp

I hope you find the information contained in this update helpful. If you would like to discuss any of the issues covered, please contact me at the above location.

Yours faithfully



Veronica Curran
Qualifications Officer

