

Autumn 2010

To: SQA Co-ordinator
BDMs
Local Education Authorities
Directors of Education
All centres
HMIE

Action by Recipient	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Response required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Note and pass on
<input type="checkbox"/>	None — update/information only

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alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Subject Update — Business Education

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Business Education subjects.

General information and advice

Assessment Panel

The autumn meeting of the NQ Business Education Assessment Panel took place on Wednesday 3 November 2010. This was the final meeting of the assessment panel in its current format. SQA is currently consulting on the future work, purpose and membership of these panels.

Standard Grade — Accounting & Finance, Administration, Business Management Practical Abilities Projects 2011

Practical Abilities Projects have now been distributed to all centres as per the distribution model used in previous years. The number of projects allocated to centres was based on certificated numbers for Diet 2010. Extra copies are available to download from SQA's secure website; please contact your SQA Co-ordinator for access to the secure site. The Customer Contact Centre should be contacted with any queries on 0845 279 1000.

Internal and External Assessment Reports 2010

External Assessment and Internal Assessment Reports (previously known as Principal Assessor Reports and Senior Verifier Reports) will be available on the subject-specific pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) shortly. All centres are reminded of the importance of

these reports and the fact that particular issues which have been identified during Diet 2010 examinations will be relevant to the current session.

Marking Instructions for Diet 2010

Marking Instructions for all examinations are currently being uploaded to SQA's website. They are available to download from the subject-specific pages on SQA's website for all subjects and levels.

Past Papers for Diet 2010

Past papers for all examinations are available to download from SQA's website free of charge.

Internal Assessment — oral re-assessment

Centres are reminded that they should exercise caution when re-assessing internal assessments. The use of oral re-assessment is to be discouraged. Centres are reminded that if they are selected for verification, they will be required to justify their assessment decisions. The over-riding principle should, therefore, be that where there is doubt in the validity of the assessment decision, the candidate should be offered another opportunity to undertake a different NAB assessment.

Appeals

When generating estimates and compiling evidence for absentee consideration and appeals, you should refer to:

- ◆ SQA's Guidance on Estimates and Appeals
- ◆ Course Arrangements Documents, which include Course Grade Descriptions
- ◆ Course Assessment Specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA Marking Instructions
- ◆ External Assessment reports, which include information on grade boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters)

These materials, and more, are available on the subject-specific pages of SQA's website.

All centres should also note that if SQA past papers are used to construct a prelim, questions must be carefully selected from a **minimum of three** papers, preferably adapted and must be checked to ensure that they meet the current standard of the external examination paper.

A well-designed commercially-produced question paper can, as long as it is checked to ensure that it meets the National Standard, provide valid and reliable evidence for estimates of a candidate's expected performance in a Course assessment. It can also provide full or partial evidence to support an external assessment appeal. The use of these question papers is both convenient to centres and acceptable to SQA — provided that centres adhere to SQA's guidance on validity, reliability and security.

Commercial question paper producers make considerable effort to meet Course requirements with regard to validity and reliability. However, SQA does not prior-verify commercially-produced question papers, and there is **no guarantee** that these question papers meet all Course requirements. Centres are responsible for the validity and reliability of the assessment evidence submitted to support external assessment appeals, and therefore **must** evaluate these papers in the same way as centre-devised papers.

Only the current year's commercial papers can be considered in their entirety for external assessment appeals. Past papers cannot be accepted in their entirety to support external assessment appeals because they may find their way into the public domain. The security of these papers cannot be guaranteed.

Further subject-specific information is contained in the following appendices:

Appendix 1 — Accounting and Finance

Appendix 2 — Administration

Appendix 3 — Business Management

Appendix 4 — Economics

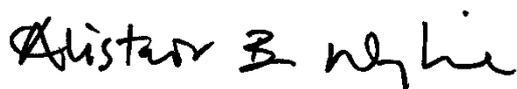
Should you require further information about the content of this letter or any other matter relating to Business Education subjects, please contact the staff listed below:

Alistair Wylie — Qualifications Manager, Business Education
0845 213 5488 or alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Gordon Moffat — Qualifications Officer, Accounting and Business Management
0845 213 5487 or gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk

Julie McCorkindale — Qualifications Officer, Administration and Economics
0845 213 5486 or julie.mccorkindale@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully



Alistair Wylie
Qualifications Manager
Humanities, Arts and Business

Appendix 1: Subject Update — Accounting

Electronic Set-up Files

Electronic spreadsheet files are now available to support the Standard Grade Practical Abilities Projects. These are available to download from SQA's secure website.

VAT Rates

In light of the fact that the UK Government will be increasing the rate of VAT to 20% on 1 January 2011, our question papers will continue to use the 17.5% rate for the 2011 examination diet. Candidates who calculate VAT at 20% in the 2011 examinations will not be penalised assuming their calculations are correct.

The new 20% rate of VAT will be applied to question papers from Diet 2012 examinations onwards and should therefore be used in teaching and assessment during Session 2011–2012.

Appendix 2: Subject Update — Administration

Provision of electronic files to support examinations (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for Diet 2011 examinations)

Electronic files were made available to support examinations at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for Diet 2010. Files will also be made available for Diet 2011 under the same arrangements; ie seven working days prior to the exam. Access details will be e-mailed to SQA Co-ordinators in early spring 2011.

Electronic files for the Specimen Question Papers, prelim papers and papers from Diet 2005–10 at Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher levels are available to download from the Administration subject page.

Important update:

Centres are reminded that electronic files are not available to support the use of Appleworks. Electronic files for Diet 2011 examinations will be provided in the following formats:

PC users:

- ◆ Microsoft Office 2003 (Word, Excel, Access)
- ◆ Word table files of the database tables will also be provided

Apple users:

- ◆ Microsoft Office X for Mac (Word, Excel)
- ◆ Filemaker Pro (Version 7 file format)
- ◆ Excel spreadsheet files of the database tables will also be provided

National Qualifications Group Award developments

The following National Progression Awards (NPAs) have been developed and are available now for centre delivery:

- ◆ Administration: Information Technology and Audio
- ◆ Administration: Office Skills and Services
- ◆ Administration: Medical (Administrative Secretary)

The following NPA will be available for centre delivery from January 2011 onwards:

- ◆ Administration: Medical Receptionist

Further details are available on the NQGA section of SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk/nqga.

Developing centre devised Assessment Support Packs

If you are thinking of developing centre devised ASPs we advise that ASPs are prior verified by SQA. This is not a mandatory requirement although prior verification is strongly recommended. Please contact Linda McAdam (linda.mcadam@sqa.org.uk) for further information.

Appeals — Intermediate 1 and 2

Centres are reminded of the importance of following the requirements of the Course Assessment Specification when either making up or buying in prelim papers. There were many instances this year of evidence being submitted to support appeals which did not meet the requirements as laid out in this document, eg questions with the wrong number of marks, and the wrong number of sections.

The Course Assessment Specification can be found on SQA's website in the NQ Administration pages and forms part of the Course Assessment Pack.

Please note that at Intermediate 1 level, Task 3 **must** be handwritten. A handwriting font is **not acceptable** and will result in rejection of the prelim evidence. This is clearly stated in the Course Assessment Specification.

Important update: Administration Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher — changes to NABs and Arrangement Documents for Session 2010–11

As you will be aware, last session we carried out work to harmonise practice across Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels with particular regard to mark allocations and the use of command words. We have now taken the opportunity to extend this harmonisation to the Arrangements Documents and NABs for these levels.

Please note that there is **no change** to the content of Courses at any level. Changes to the Arrangements Documents are limited to clarification of specific areas and re-wording of some sections to give better clarity.

All NABs and associated e-files have been updated to reflect assessment and marking practice in external assessment and also to address anomalies in previous versions. The updated Arrangements Documents and NABs will be available from SQA's website by the end of 2010. Centres are encouraged to make use of the updated versions although the current versions will remain valid throughout Session 2010–11. We understand that some centres may have already bulk copied NABs for use throughout the year. Centres which are selected for external verification during Session 2010–11 should note that it is acceptable to use either the current NABs or the updated NABs or any combination thereof.

All centres **must** use the replacement NABs for Session 2011–12 onwards. At this point in time, the previous versions will be removed.

We hope that you will find the changes to these documents and assessments useful. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Julie McCorkindale.

Printouts in practical examinations

Centres are asked to ensure that in relation to practical examinations held during the examination diet, all candidates are reminded of the need to include their full name on every printout.

Markers and Examiners are not able to award marks to printouts which cannot be matched to the correct candidates.

Appendix 3: Subject Update — Business Management

Advanced Higher Business Management

Centres are reminded that there is a wealth of information and exemplification available on the subject page for Advanced Higher Business Management. This information should be used by teachers and candidates.

Despite our best efforts to address them through clarification, exemplification and training the main problems remain:

- ◆ Poor candidate performance in the Business Report as a result of not following clear instructions provided on the website and through exemplification.
- ◆ Candidates choosing large and complicated businesses on which to base their Business Report.
- ◆ Candidates failing to identify a future strategy for the business as required in the specification for the Business Report.
- ◆ Candidates failing to develop their answers in response to questions in the question paper — often providing stock answers from Higher.
- ◆ Candidates failing to address the command words specific to Advanced Higher.
- ◆ Candidates demonstrating a general lack of depth of knowledge.

Please note that Business Reports must **not** be marked by centres prior to submission to SQA. The Business Report is treated as part of the Course award and, as such, is subject to external marking by SQA.

Centres are also reminded that a copy of the associated NAB as completed by the candidate and marked by the teacher MUST be submitted with the report.

Centres are again asked to make sure that they are using the most up-to-date copy of the *Advanced Higher Business Report Guide* which is available to download from the subject page (www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/NQBusManAdvHReportGuide.pdf).

National Progression Awards in Business with Information Technology levels 5 and 6 (G9X0 45 and G9WW 46)

These qualifications have been recently validated and have been available for delivery in centres since 1 August 2010.

The NPAs in Business with Information Technology at SCQF levels 5 and 6 aim to provide candidates with the fundamental knowledge in the business and information technology sector and assist with progression onto further academic qualifications. These NPAs have been created to help candidates achieve a Group Award if the NC in Business has not been achieved. The NPA will be supported by Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) which mainly cover new and mandatory Units in the framework.

Further details are contained in the arrangements documents which can be found on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/43014.html and www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/43016.html.

National Progression Awards in Business and Marketing levels 4 and 5

We are in the process of developing NPAs in Business and Marketing at levels 4 and 5 for school leavers and adult returners. These new qualifications will be ready for implementation in January 2011. These NPAs have been created to help candidates achieve a Group Award if the NC in Business has not been achieved.

The level 4 NPA comprises 3 mandatory credits with no options available.

The level 5 NPA comprises 10 credits with 5 credits to be completed to achieve the NPA. This NPA comprises mandatory and optional Units.

The NPAs will be supported by Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) which mainly cover new and mandatory Units in the framework.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is now in force. Candidates at Higher and Advanced Higher level will be expected to have an awareness of the main provisions and coverage of the Act. It should be expected that knowledge of this new piece of legislation will be examined in due course.

Appendix 4: Subject Update — Economics

Guidance Document — Dissertation

A new Guidance Document has been devised to support the Course Arrangements for Advanced Higher Economics. This document is now available to download from SQA's website.

Intermediate 1 Economics

As a result of the implementation of the low uptake policy, the Intermediate 1 Economics Course has now been removed from our catalogue. The Units will remain live, however it will no longer be possible to sit the external examination, and therefore gain the full Course award.