

Autumn 2012

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

Contact: Alistair Wylie
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Dear Colleague

Subject update — Business Education

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

Examination Diet 2012 Update

External Assessment Reports for Diet 2012 will be published on the SQA website by 31 October 2012. All centres are advised to read and action the content of these reports as appropriate.

Centres should also note that Internal Assessment Reports for 2011-12 have already been published on the SQA website. Again, their content should be read and actioned as appropriate.

It was pleasing to note continuing increases in presentations and achievement in several subjects/levels within the Business Education portfolio of qualifications this year. The highlights include:

- Strong performance in Higher Business Management.
- Continued increase in the number of candidates being presented for Higher Business Management.
- Increased performance in Advanced Higher Business Management.
- Strong performance in Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher Accounting.
- Strong performance in Intermediate 2 and Higher Economics.

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.

Centres are also reminded that Diet 2013 will be the final time that examination appeals will be considered in their current format. Further details on SQA's new appeals service will be communicated to all centres in due course.

Curriculum for Excellence Appointee Opportunities

Teachers are reminded that there are on-going recruitment opportunities to become an appointee to SQA and be involved in the delivery of the new CfE qualifications. Full details are available on the SQA Appointee Management website – www.sqa.org.uk/am

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
0845 213 5488 or alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Julie McCorkindale – Qualifications Officer
0845 213 5486 or julie.mccorkindale@sqa.org.uk

Brian Raghoobur – Qualifications Officer
0845 213 5487 or brian.raghoobur@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully



Alistair Wylie
Qualifications Manager
Humanities, Arts and Business

Appendix 1: Subject update — Accounting

VAT rates - reminder

In light of the fact that the UK Government increased the rate of VAT to 20% during January 2011, the new 20% rate of VAT was applied to question papers from Diet 2012 examinations onwards and should therefore be used in teaching and assessment during Session 2012–2013.

All NABs from Intermediate 1 – Advanced Higher are currently being revised to reflect this change and will be made available via SQA Secure for the start of 2013.

Updated NABs – Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher

All NABs are in the final stages of being updated and will soon be uploaded to SQA Secure. Changes have been made to reflect VAT at 20%, correct previously identified errors and anomalies and adjust the layout of questions and answer grids as appropriate.

Centres are encouraged to start using the updated NABs as soon as possible. From Session 2013-14 onwards, only the revised NABs should be used. For Session 2013-14, unless NABs have previously been completed in Session 2012-13, only the revised NABs will be accepted for the purposes of verification. Centres which present for verification in Session 2013-14 and do not use the revised NABs will be subject to an automatic “not accepted” decision.

Appendix 2: Subject update — Administration

E-files support for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Examinations 2013

Centres are reminded that e-files will be supplied for the above examinations for the forthcoming diet. An initial email will be sent to SQA Co-ordinators at all presenting centres during February 2013. This will be followed up by 2 additional emails in March and April prior to the start of Examination Diet 2013.

Centres using Filemaker should note that database files will no longer be supplied in this file format from Examination Diet 2013 onwards. Centres using Filemaker or older versions of Access should import the data from the Excel spreadsheet files supplied and then set up database relationships (Higher only) according to the information provided.

Developing centre devised Assessment Support Packs

If you are thinking of developing centre devised ASPs we advise that these 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.

National Certificate in Administration (G99P 45)

There has been a change to the framework of the above group award with immediate effect. D976 12 Desktop Publishing has been added to Group A of the optional section of the award.

The Word Processing ASP (F59L 11) dated 2009 has been removed from the secure website, the 2009 ASP will be acceptable for session 2012/2013, the 2010 ASP should be used after this session.

National Certificate in Administration (G99P 45) – TranSETT

A range of e-assessment and learning and teaching resources have been developed with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) via the TranSETT project. More information and where to find these resources is contained in the document which can be accessed using the following link - http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQATranSETTLeaflet.pdf

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.

Important Update for all presenting centres (repeated from Autumn 2011 letter):

Additional exemplification material for the Business Report exists on the subject page under “Arrangements documents” which is headed “Advanced Higher Business Management Report Exemplar Instructions”. This document has recently been amended to fit current practice, specifically bullet 2 of page 1. These instructions are not exhaustive and have been devised by a school (amended by SQA) for shared use to assist teachers and candidates.

Candidates should be made aware that the report must be based on a **single** strategy. Although this strategy may have several different parts, all of these must be connected to the basic strategy. The Explanation and Analysis section of the Marking Instructions for the Business Report clearly states that candidates are required to explain “what the business intends to do for a forthcoming specified time period”. The strategy therefore consists of what concrete steps the organisation plans to take to achieve its objectives. An objective should therefore not be described as a strategy. In 2011 a significant number of candidates failed to recognise the difference between objectives and strategy. As a result they presented reports which dealt with a number of unrelated courses of action, linking them to the achievement of one particular objective, rather than one overall strategy – for example stating that the strategy was “to increase profitability” and then giving various examples of how this might be done, such as adopting e-commerce, reducing costs and redesigning the product. These are all different strategies rather than strands of a single overarching strategy. Candidates need to make sure that they focus on a strategy that consists of definite and specific action that a firm intends to take to achieve its objectives. Centres should note that, in future, reports which confuse objectives with strategies are likely to score very low marks.

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. Business Reports cannot be marked without the accompanying NAB.

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).

Intermediate 1 NABs

Centres are asked to note that all NABs at Intermediate 1 level have now been revised. This is primarily to correct errors and inconsistencies and update the marking information. The use of previous versions of these NABs will be accepted for verification purposes for this session only. Thereafter, all centres are expected to make use of the updated NABs dated August 2012. Please note that all previous versions have been removed from SQA Secure.

The NABs affected are:

DV4G 10	Business Enterprise – NABs 001/2/3
DV4H 10	Business Decision Areas – NABs 001/2/3
DV4J 10	Business Information and ICT – NABs 001/2/3

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is now in force. Candidates at Intermediate 2, 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.

This information is a reminder and was first intimated in the Autumn 2011 subject update letter.

National Certificate in Business (G8WT 45) – TranSETT

A range of e-assessment and learning and teaching resources have been developed with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) via the TranSETT project. More information and where to find these resources is contained in the document which can be accessed using the following link - http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQATranSETTLeaflet.pdf

National Certificate in Business (G8WT 45) – Unit change

Centres should note that the Unit D0W0 11 Recording of Cash Data has been replaced with FN14 11 Recording Cash Transactions. The framework has been updated to reflect this change.

Appendix 4: Subject update — Economics

Advanced Higher Dissertation Topics

A list of suggested dissertation topics are available on the SQA website Economics subject page. Whilst the list is not meant to be exhaustive, it will act as a guide to centres and candidates. Centres should note that candidates are not obliged to pick a topic from the SQA list. Candidates are still free to choose their own topic in discussion with their class teacher.

Centres and candidates are also reminded that it is pivotal to the success, or otherwise, of the dissertation submitted that it contains sufficient *economic* content. Attention is drawn to the marking criteria which are published on the relevant subject page on the SQA website.