

Spring 2011

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
Direct line: 0845 213 5488
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

SQA is currently reviewing the use and composition of Assessment Panels. During this review period, there will be no further meetings of the Business Education Assessment Panel. More information will be available in due course.

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. Further information regarding the use of oral re-assessment is available in the Internal Assessment Reports for each subject which are published on SQA's website.

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

Gordon Moffat — Qualifications Officer
0845 213 5487 or gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alistair Wylie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'A'.

Alistair Wylie
Qualifications Manager
Humanities, Arts and Business

Appendix 1: Subject update — Accounting

VAT rates

In light of the fact that the UK Government increased the rate of VAT to 20% during 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 have now been e-mailed to SQA Co-ordinators.

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)
- ◆ 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.

Important update: Administration Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher — changes to NABs and Arrangements 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 are now available on SQA's website. Centres are encouraged to make use of the updated versions although the current versions will remain valid throughout Session 2010–11.

All centres **must** use the replacement NABs for Session 2011–12 onwards. Old versions of NABs will be removed from SQA's Secure website during July 2011.

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 us.

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.

Advanced Higher Administration

Diet 2011 is the last presentation available for Advanced Higher Administration. The Units will remain on our catalogue, however, the External Assessment will no longer be available, meaning that a Course award is not attainable.

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.

Additional exemplification material for the Business Report has been added to the subject page under 'Arrangements documents' which is headed 'Advanced Higher Business Management Report Exemplar Instructions'. These instructions are not exhaustive and have been devised by a school for shared use to assist teachers and candidates.

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).

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 (GA4D 44 and GA4R 45)

These qualifications have been recently validated and have been available for delivery in centres since February 2011.

The NPAs in Business and Marketing have been designed to provide learners with the basic theoretical knowledge of the marketing-based principles of business. The NPAs will aid learners with seeking employment in this area or for progression to further academic qualifications.

Further details are contained in the Arrangements documents which can be found on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46205.html> and <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46206.html>.

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.

Important update: Business Management, Intermediate 2 and Higher — changes to NABs for Session 2010–2011

New NABs are available for use and can be found on SQA's Secure website.

Centres are encouraged to make use of the updated versions although the current versions will remain valid throughout Session 2010–11.

All centres **must** use the replacement NABs for Session 2011–12 onwards. Old versions of NABs will be removed from SQA's Secure website during July 2011.

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.