

21 November 2006

To: SQA Co-ordinators (Secondary Schools
and Colleges of Further Education)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Customer Account Managers

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of National Qualifications in Contemporary
Social Studies**

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Contemporary Social Studies

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Contemporary Social Studies.

SQA Website

The subject page is the main source of information for Standard Grade Contemporary Social Studies. It contains the current and past reports of the Principal Assessor, Arrangements document, previous subject updates and marking instructions for the current and previous years' diets. The website address is www.sqa.org.uk. On the homepage browser click "Contemporary Social Studies" from the drop-down menu and then click "GO".

Examination Diet 2006

The Principal Assessor, Examining Team and Markers are warmly thanked for continuing to deliver a successful diet. The full report of the Principal Assessor is available from our website on www.sqa.org.uk. Teachers are encouraged to read this report as it provides a wealth of information and advice to aid the successful delivery of CSS.

The Setting Team's efforts to close the performance gap between the elements of Knowledge and Understanding and Evaluating at Foundation level succeeded this year. The continuing move to recognition (multiple choice questions) from recall items at this level has clearly made the questions more accessible to candidates. The vast majority of them attempted the full paper. Overall there was a general improvement in awards, which has also been reflected in this year's National Ratings: -0.26 in comparison to -0.53 in 2005. The Setting and Vetting teams will continue in their efforts to make each of the papers as accessible as possible to all candidates.

Investigating Element

This element continues to have a depressing effect on the overall awards gained by candidates. In order to help guide teachers to mark candidate work more positively, revised guidance was issued to centres in late October. This guidance supersedes previous advice to centres and comes into immediate effect. The document is available from the CSS subject page by clicking on the 'Investigating Element' link.

A flyleaf for recording a candidate's internal assessment grade for the purposes of verification is normally only distributed to those centres selected for external verification. To further assist all centres in assessing this element, an updated copy of this flyleaf is now available from the CSS subject page of the website (under the 'Investigating Element' link).

Estimates and Appeals

We have recently updated the *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* document and this is now available on our website. A hard-copy is being issued to every centre. In particular, the document clarifies subject specific requirement as well as guidance on the general principles for generating Estimates and submitting Appeals.

When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, you should also refer to:

- Course Arrangements Documents, which include Course Grade Descriptions
- Course Assessment Specifications
- SQA Question Papers, including Specimen Question Papers
- SQA Marking Instructions
- Principal Assessor Reports, which include information on Grade Boundaries
- Exemplification materials
- any other relevant information (eg Course Reports, subject update letters).

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject page of our website www.sqa.org.uk.

If you have any issues arising with the delivery of CSS, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Veronica Curran
Qualifications Officer