

28 October 2009

To: SQA Coordinators
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

cc: HMle
LEA Contacts
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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications – Drama Update October 2009

Please pass this letter to the member of staff responsible for Drama.

This letter is an update on National Qualifications (NQ) Courses and Units in Drama and contains important information for this current session 2009/2010.

1. External Assessment Timetable for Drama 2009/2010
2. Internal Assessment / External Verification of Drama Units 2009/2010
3. External Assessment Reports 2009
4. Appeals 2009
5. New Developments in Drama and Technical Theatre – Update

Appendix: A Guide to NQ Units and a Guide to new Unit provision in Drama

Please pass a copy of this letter and the appendix to your Drama teaching staff. If you would like to discuss any of the contents of this letter, please contact Joanna Morris (contact details above) or myself on 0131 561 6811 or email mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk

Yours sincerely



Mary McDonald
Qualifications Manager, National Qualifications

Higher Drama

The National Theatre of Scotland are currently touring Rona Munro's translation of *The House of Bernarda Alba*. Centres must note that this translation cannot be used for a Higher Drama Prescribed Text, although it is entirely appropriate for a CST text.

Although it is technically possible, centres are advised not to study the same play for all three sections of the Question Paper as this may give rise to confusion on the part of candidates.

For the Higher Drama Acting exam, centres are advised not to use the same play for their CST text as they do for their prescribed text as this is contrary to the sense of breadth and scope which is the essence of the Higher Drama Course.

2. Internal Assessment / External Verification of Drama Units 2009/2010

Unit assessment takes place internally in centres. Candidate progress is monitored during the Unit, NAB tests are administered, reassessment opportunities are possible and then the assessment decision of Pass/Fail is made by the centre. Centres then retain candidate evidence (as stated in the Unit Specification). All Drama Units are subject to SQA External Verification, which is the process of verifying that centres' assessment decisions are in line with national standards.

Central Verification will take place in April 2010 and SQA's date for uplift of materials from centres is **25 March 2010**. This is the Verification model where centres submit to SQA a sample of 12 candidates' completed evidence. Centres selected for Central Verification are contacted well in advance and, very soon after the Verification event, all selected centres receive detailed written feedback which gives guidance and advice for the future.

In addition please note that all Drama Units are subject to external Verification, including Drama Units which are used on a free standing or stand alone basis. Please refer to the Unit Specification and the NAB or Assessment Support Pack for each individual Unit for details on Evidence Requirements and the evidence which needs to be retained by centres.

Setting a Unit completion date is the responsibility of each centre and this decision is made at the point of entering candidates for a Unit. If the candidate is entered for a full Drama Course, eg Intermediate 2 Drama, SQA's one requirement is that one of the three component Units of that Course must have a completion date of 31 March.

Stand alone or free standing Units can be very flexible in their completion dates according to the Unit delivery mode in any centre. For further information on this, please see the Appendix to this letter *A Guide to NQ Units*.

In deciding when Unit assessment should take place, consider both the Unit completion date and the contents of the NAB document or Assessment Support Pack for each particular Unit. The section in the NAB entitled *Assessment Conditions* gives advice on assessment timings and these will vary according to the nature of the delivery of the Unit and the Evidence Requirements stated in the Unit Specification. Where a NAB states that assessment should take place towards the end of a particular Unit, time that assessment event carefully so that: you ensure that the candidate(s) are ready for this; in the case of a candidate not reaching the necessary standard, you leave time for diagnosis, revision, consolidation and necessary remedial work so that reassessment opportunities can be given before the Unit completion date.

3. External Assessment Reports 2009

These reports were formerly known as Principal Assessor Reports. External Assessment Reports are published by SQA each year and the 2009 Reports will be available at the end of October 2009 on www.sqa.org.uk - select NQ, Drama and External Assessment Reports from the subject-specific links.

These reports give valuable insight and guidance, reporting on overall performance of candidates in each year and providing detail on how candidate submissions can be improved. External Assessment Reports are presented in the following sections:

- ◆ General comments
- ◆ Areas in which candidates performed well
- ◆ Areas which candidates found demanding
- ◆ Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates
- ◆ Statistical information on entries and grade boundaries

4. Appeals 2009

SQA's Appeals process enables centres to come back to SQA after results and certification and to produce robust evidence that a candidate or candidates performed better on another occasion. Depending upon the degree of validity and reliability of that evidence, the Appeal may be granted and the candidate's result upgraded.

For Standard Grade Drama the Appeal is made for the Knowledge and Understanding element, which is externally assessed by the Question Paper(s). For all NQ levels, it is the final Course award which is being appealed for upgrade (not **one** of the external components, eg Higher Acting), so Question Paper evidence is mandatory for all NQ Drama Appeals.

There **must** be evidence for the Question Paper and this evidence must show the same breadth of coverage of the content of the Course as SQA's Question Papers. A prelim-type event is going to be an indicator of likely candidate performance in the external examination when pressure of time and retention of learning are significant factors. The evidence for the Question Paper must replicate the standard, conditions, duration, format and marks allocation of SQA's Question Papers.

- ◆ Question Paper evidence must be drawn from at least 3 different sources and sources of all Questions must be clearly indicated and detailed, eg 2007 Intermediate 2, Question 5.
- ◆ Question Paper evidence for Appeals cannot be one past paper which has been used in its entirety

For Appeals purposes evidence for practical performance, eg Higher Drama Acting is not mandatory but is desirable. Many centres collate evidence for the practical component by recording the prelim-type event. If this is not practicable for you, prelim Candidate Mark Sheets which have been marked up can be submitted to support an appeal. However, if there is no alternative evidence of this sort, the original mark awarded by the Visiting Examiner remains unchanged.

Standard Grade Drama Appeals: Additional Advice

- ◆ For Appeals evidence submit both Question Papers - either F/G or G/C - sat by your candidates in a prelim-type event, ensuring that both Question Papers have been marked
- ◆ Ensure that the prelim reflects the 50, 60 and 70 mark allocations of SQA's Exam Papers at F, G and C levels and that the section A and B mark allocations are also accurately reflected
- ◆ Ensure that the prelim paper is well balanced, samples across all areas of Knowledge and Understanding and does not put an over-emphasis on eg imaginative responses to the detriment of, eg vocabulary testing
- ◆ A prelim paper at Standard Grade Drama must reflect the vocabulary and content of the Body of Knowledge
- ◆ Use cut off scores which reflect those applied in recent years
- ◆ Use and show the 50, 60 and 70 mark allocations of the actual exam for each paper and do not round up scores to percentages.

5. New developments in Drama and Technical Theatre - Update

After a 2 year development period from 2007-2009, two new National Certificates (NCs) have been launched: the NC in Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6) and the NC in Technical Theatre (SCQF level 6). Due to the size of these group awards it is anticipated that, generally, they will be offered in Scotland's colleges. However, during the development period 28 new or revised Units were developed and these have been available since August 2009, for delivery in both schools and colleges. (Please see Appendix to this Update letter).

SQA has now started Phase 2 of the NQ Group Award development programme in Drama and Technical Theatre and we will write to you again in early 2010 about the progress of this. It is anticipated that new National Progression Awards (NPA) will be developed for use in 2010/2011 in the following areas:

- ◆ NPA in Acting and Theatre Performance
- ◆ NPA in Technical Theatre
- ◆ NPA in Professional Theatre Preparation
- ◆ NPA in Musical Theatre

National Progression Awards (NPA) are smaller awards than National Certificates and have a particular subject focus. It is anticipated that the proposed NPAs in Drama/Technical Theatre will comprise of 3 Units (120 hours) and it is hoped that there will be interest and uptake from both colleges and schools in delivering NPAs. Please note that this new proposed provision does not replace any existing qualifications but offers new, alternative pathways for learners.

Appendix

New or Revised Units in Drama and Technical Theatre

F5KY 12	Drama: Acting Skills
F5LF 12	Drama: Voice Skills
F5L1 12	Drama: Movement Skills
F5LB 12	Drama: Theatre Skills in Performance
F5LA 12	Theatre Performance
F5L9 12	Theatre Performers: Solo Singing Skills
F5L8 12	Theatre Performers: Group Singing Skills
F5L0 12	Acting Through Song
F5L4 12	Professional Theatre in Context
F691 12	Theatre History: An Introduction to Theory and Practice
F692 12	Acting Styles and Practitioners: An Introduction
F5LG 12	Writing Dramatic Text: An Introduction
D658 12	Preparation for Audition
F5LD 12	Theatrical Make-up
F5L5 12	Technical Theatre in Context
F693 12	Theatre Stage Lighting Operations
F694 12	Theatre Stage Sound Operations
F5L6 12	Technical Theatre Production Operations
F5LC 12	Theatre Stage Management Operations
F5L7 12	Technical Theatre Workshop Skills
F695 12	Theatre Stage Management in Practice
F696 12	Multimedia Production for Theatre
F5L2 12	Drama: Providing Theatre Wardrobe Services
F5LE 12	Theatrical Prop Making
F697 12	Theatrical Design
F58F 12	Creative Project
F698 12	Theatre Stage Set Construction
F699 12	Theatre Stage Model Set Construction
F5TG 12	Performing Arts Industry: An Introduction

The NQ Units listed on the previous page have been developed since 2007 as part of the NQ Group Award development programme. These new Group Awards (known as National Certificates) are larger qualification blocks and tend, because of their size, to be offered in Scotland's colleges. However, all the new or revised Units above and any other NQ Units are available to **all schools and colleges**.

NB The number after the Unit code denotes the NQ level the Unit is offered at: 11 is Intermediate 2, 12 is Higher, 13 is Advanced Higher.

Approaches to Unit Delivery

There are a number of the new Drama and Technical Theatre Units which may be of particular interest for delivery in the school setting for a variety of reasons: providing opportunities for candidates to gain additional knowledge and skills and to specialise in particular areas; providing opportunities to formalise experiences and situations which may already be in place -

- ◆ involvement in drama groups, schools shows and productions
- ◆ preparation for external auditions
- ◆ planning, organising and participating in drama activities both in school/college or in the wider community

The intention of the new NQ Drama Units is that they should be accessible to all and many of these have been written in a context-free style, offering a wide range of opportunities for personalisation and choice.

NB If a candidate is entered for a full Course award, eg Higher Drama, they must be entered for the three mandatory component Units of that Course:

D196 12 *Investigative Drama*
D197 12 *Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context*
D198 12 *Contemporary Scottish Theatre*

However NQ Units other than those listed above may be used as alternative provision and pathways as appropriate to individual candidates' needs and interests.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is currently inviting schools and colleges to think creatively about the programmes and courses of study which they offer, including opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning and cross-cutting initiatives. The contents and delivery modes of NQ Units both respond to and endorse the four capacities of CfE:

- ◆ successful learners
- ◆ effective contributors
- ◆ confident individuals
- ◆ responsible citizens

See the following pages for a summary of the contents of some of these Units.

D658 12 Preparation for Audition

This new Unit is a 40 hour Unit offered at SCQF level 12 (Higher) and is designed to prepare candidates for the audition process.

NB Unit D658 11 *Preparation for Audition* is still available as a 0.5 credit 20 hour Unit at Intermediate 2 level.

In the Higher Unit the candidate will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding and a broad overview of the type of work available within the performing arts sector. However, the majority of time in this Unit is devoted to:

- ◆ preparing for an audition
- ◆ rehearsing for and performing an audition
- ◆ the candidate evaluating their own performance at an audition

This Unit has been designed to be accessed by a wide range of candidates: it is suitable for the actor, musical theatre performer, dancer or musician.

An Assessment Support Pack for this Unit will be available spring 2010.

F5LG 12 Writing Dramatic Text: An Introduction

This new Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the process of writing dramatic text and has possibilities for cross curricular working with English.

In the Unit, candidates will explore two contrasting dramatic texts and analyse their related literary components. They will then write a piece of original dramatic text applying an understanding of literary components: plot, exposition, dramatic action, characters, relationships, conflict, environment, controlling ideas, sub-text, structure, pace, rhythm and style of language.

The third Outcome of this Unit is for the candidate to review and evaluate their own piece of dramatic text.

F58F 12 Creative Project

This Unit has been written in a generic and context-free way to provide the widest possible range of ideas and creative possibilities for a creative project. The purpose of the Unit is to allow candidates to plan, implement and evaluate a creative project and they are required to produce a project in response to a given brief.

The project should be completed by an individual candidate. However, the production of the evidence may involve working collaboratively with others.

The Creative Project Unit gives candidates the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills and to develop key skills such as planning, communication, problem solving and time management.

A comprehensive Assessment Support Pack is available for this Unit.

F5LA 12 Theatre Performance

This Unit allows candidates to apply theatre skills to a performance and gives a wide range of options in the choice of types of production, in terms of size and nature including; text based, devised, musical theatre, touring theatre, community theatre, street theatre and site specific.

This is an 80 hour Unit, designed to give candidates the necessary time and scope to take part in a production.

There are four Outcomes:

1. Carry out and apply research relevant to a selected production
2. Demonstrate a professional rehearsal process
3. Demonstrate effective performance skills in the final production
4. Evaluate the rehearsal process to final performance

An Assessment Support Pack for this Unit will be available in spring 2010.

F5TG 12 Performing Arts Industry: An Introduction

This is a project/personal research type 40 hour Unit which aims to provide candidates with an overview of the performing arts industry, which includes the range of organisations, companies and venues which contribute to both the commercial and public sectors.

Candidates will have the opportunity to select from a range of organisations, companies and venues, to investigate and research these and present these research findings.

In addition, there is a range of new technical theatre-related Units which have a number of creative possibilities for delivery, both in the context of participating in a production or working across a range of different subject area departments, eg Art and Design, CDT, Home Economics and Media Studies:

- F5LD 2 Theatrical Make-up
- F697 12 Theatrical Design
- F5LE 12 Theatrical Prop Making
- F5L2 12 Drama: Providing Theatre Wardrobe Services
- F696 12 Multimedia Production for Theatre
- F699 12 Theatre Stage Model Set Construction