

September 2010

To: Head of centres

Cc : SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and Colleges
Education Authorities
HMIE

Contact: Angela Baird
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Dear Colleague

This letter is intended to offer advice and support for staff responsible for Geography. It contains information about the following:

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| 1. Understanding Standards | 6. Internal and External Assessment Reports |
| 2. AH Geography Support Event | 7. Appeals |
| 3. Working with SQA | 8. Future Qualifications |
| 4. Arrangements and NABs | |
| 5. Access 3 Geography Toolkits | |

1. Understanding Standards

Centres are reminded about the Understanding Standards website which can be accessed directly at www.understandingstandards.org.uk or through SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). This is an excellent resource for any candidate or teacher who wishes to understand more fully the standards required at each level. We have recently produced an item to support the new question in Advanced Higher Geography; this will be uploaded to the website soon.

2. AH Geography Support Event

SQA is planning to hold a Understanding Standards event for Advanced Higher level on **Tuesday 9th November 2010**. This event will cover internal and external assessment and will be held in the SQA office in Glasgow. Further information and formal invitations to the event have been sent to all centres.

3. Working with SQA

Would you like to get more involved with SQA? Currently SQA is recruiting markers and verifiers for a range of subjects including geography and travel and tourism. If you or someone from your centre, is interested then please visit the Appointee Management section of the SQA website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/23566.html>) where you will find information about these roles, the selection criteria and the application process. If you are interested in joining the Assessment Panel for either geography or travel and tourism then please contact me using the email address above.

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4. Arrangements and NABs

Centres are reminded to use the current arrangements documents which are available on the SQA website. The current NABs can be downloaded from the SQA secure site (<http://secure.sqa.org.uk/secure/1624.html>). Centres should be aware that NABs are confidential and must be kept securely within centres. Centres experiencing difficulty obtaining the maps for particular NABs are advised to use a map of a similar geographical area and adapt the question accordingly.

The following NABs were updated during 2009/2010 session:

DF3C10/NAB002	Physical Environments	Int 1
DF3C10/NAB003	Physical Environments	Int 1
DF4411/NAB001	Environmental Interactions	Int 2
DF4312/NAB002	Human Environments	H
DF4312/NAB003	Human Environments	H
DF3C12/NAB001	Physical Environments	H
DF3C12/NAB002	Physical Environments	H
DF3C12/NAB003	Physical Environments	H

5. Access 3 Geography Toolkits

Toolkits are available on the SQA Secure site for centres to use to produce NABs for Access 3.

6. Internal and External Assessment Reports

The 2010 reports are currently being processed and will be available on the SQA website very soon (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2474.html>). These reports offer useful advice on candidate performance to those involved in the delivery of Geography.

7. Appeals

Centres are reminded that, Assessment Appeals must be made for a whole award ie it is not possible to appeal for one component e.g the folio component of Advanced Higher Geography. However, it is permissible to appeal for any candidate whose overall award falls below the centre's estimate. Please see the extract below from section 4.3 of "Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals" in relation to components which are assessed externally and for which the evidence is produced over a period of time:

"Generating alternative evidence for components assessed in this way is likely to be impractical and is therefore not mandatory for Appeals. In these cases, the original evidence (*Folio, Project*) is reviewed. However, you should submit any additional material that is likely to strengthen the evidence already submitted. "

There have been an increasing number of parents contacting SQA in relation to appeals. Centres are reminded that as consideration of appeals cases are based on alternative evidence from centres, appeals can therefore only be submitted by centres. Centres are further reminded that appeals cannot be submitted for candidates who have achieved the centre estimate. In the instance of unsuccessful appeals, centres are supplied with feedback which identifies the reasons for the appeal being unsuccessful; SQA cannot provide centres or parents with any additional feedback. Centres who wish to receive more detailed information on their candidates examination performance can request a Performance Report by contacting the customer support centre (mycentre@sqa.org.uk). There is a cost for this service.

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8. Future Qualifications

Would you like to get involved in the development of future qualifications? Subject Working Groups (SWGs) to help us develop the next generation of National Qualifications will be established from summer 2010 to carry out discrete pieces of work, for example, developing the rationale and course summary, unit specification or unit support pack for a particular subject area. If you are interested in helping us with this work, please visit <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34644.html> and submit the 'Registration of Interest' form.

For information on the next generation of qualifications please visit <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34714.html>.

I trust that this information is of use to you. Should you wish any further advice about the content of this letter please contact me as indicated above.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Baird'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'B'.

Angela Baird
Qualifications Manager
People and Services