

1 November 2010

To: SQA Co-coordinator (Secondary Schools
and Colleges of Further Education)
Directors of Education
SCIS

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
√	Note and pass on
	None – update/information only

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update – History

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for History.

SQA Website

This is the main source of information on National Qualifications in History. It contains the current and past External and Internal Assessment reports, Course Specifications/ Arrangements documents (including Access 3 Social Subjects) and Specimen Papers, previous National Qualifications Updates and marking instructions for recent diets. The address of the website is www.sqa.org.uk. On the homepage, enter “History” on the ‘Subject and Qualification Finder’. Thereafter select from a choice of levels within History.

Extended Essay/Response Stationery

Plans for the Extended Response and Extended Essay can only be downloaded from the SQA secure website. Flyleaves and notes for the submission of candidates’ Extended Response, Extended Essay and Dissertation are now available only via SQA coordinators.

Update on the 2010 diet

Principal Assessors and their examining teams are warmly thanked for their efforts in delivering a successful diet. The External Assessment Reports are on our website and are invaluable sources of advice and good practice. Further points to bear in mind for each level are:

Advanced Higher

The list of Dissertation titles is on the website. It is strongly recommended that candidates work from this list. Where centres wish confirmation of the validity of titles not on this list, such proposals must be submitted to the Scottish Qualifications Authority via the Dissertation mail-box (dissertation@sqa.org.uk) by 1 November each year. A revised list is in preparation for the 2012 diet.

Higher

The last examination under the old syllabus was held in 2010. The outgoing Principal Assessor, Mr Sandy Burgess, and his team are warmly thanked for their efforts over the years in delivering a successful qualification.

Intermediate

Centres should consult the External Assessment Reports (PA Reports) for both Intermediate 1 and 2 for advice on candidate responses based on sources and on the issue of copying.

Verification

The Internal Assessment Report is available from the subject page of the website. It gives clear and helpful advice on the verification process. When submitting evidence, centres should indicate clearly which NAB is being used. It is also helpful if centres/candidates date the evidence when it is produced. Centres should use the latest version of any NAB available at the time of assessment.

The new Higher

Arrangements

The Arrangements document is now on the SQA website (see above).

Sample Scripts

Following the series of launch meetings last November, finalised commentaries on the sample scripts used for both Paper 1 and Paper 2 have been posted on the Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk) Centres will find these invaluable in understanding national standards in the new Course.

Specimen Question Paper

The Course Assessment Pack contains the Course Assessment Specification (CAS) and the Specimen Question Paper (SQP). Live question papers will follow the format of the SQP. Particular points to bear in mind are:

- In Paper 2, the ‘How fully’ and ‘How far’ questions on the issues and sub-issues will follow the wordings in the Course Assessment Specification. For example, in the Wars of Independence a question on the first issue will always have the wording ‘How fully does Source A show/illustrate the succession problem in Scotland, 1286-1292?’
- Sources will be between 120 and 180 words long, with a maximum total for the five sources of 750 words. There will be two primary and three secondary sources, or vice versa.

NABs

Three versions of NABs for each Unit are on the secure section of the website. These can be downloaded via SQA coordinators.

Extended Essay

Titles for the Extended Essay should be based on the issues identified in the Course Arrangements. While questions used for prelims should also incorporate isolated factors identified in the expanded descriptors, candidates may use titles which are based on other possible factors. For example, Question 7 on p7 may be used as an Extended Essay title (it is on the issue of German unification) but not as a prelim question (“the mistakes of others” is not an isolated factor identified in the Arrangements). To aid centres, a critique of a selection of questions in the 2010 paper is contained in the Appendix to this newsletter.

Support for the new Higher

For each of the Paper 2 contexts, SQA has commissioned four “How far” items on sub-issues not yet exemplified in NABs or the SQP, plus two comparison items (as these are the most difficult items to devise). It is intended that these be available to centres by December.

The second stage is for an annotated candidate response to each of these items to be made available. The intention is that examples submitted by centres will be written up by the Principal Assessor and made available as they become available.

NABs for the old Higher

To cover the situation where a candidate has passed the Course assessment, but not one of the NABs, the currency of the NABs for the old Course has been extended by one year. These will now lapse in July 2011.

Advanced Higher: Discontinuation of Field of Study

Due to its very low uptake in recent diets, Field of Study 3 (**The Renaissance in Italy in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries**) be offered for the last time in the 2012 diet. For 2013 and after, the subsequent fields will be re-numbered.

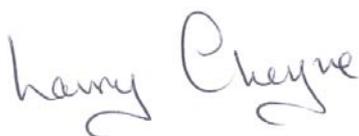
Appeals

The system of appeals using centre-generated evidence to modify the results of a national examination is peculiar to Scotland. Advice on this was included in the November Update letter in 2009. For the new Higher, centres are reminded that the sampling pattern in Paper 1 should be the same in both Units; i.e. if issues 2, 4 and 6 are sampled in the British Unit, these should also be sampled in the European and World Unit. This is most easily achieved by using NAB 1 (or NAB 2 or NAB 3) for both Units in a prelim. For Paper 2, any NAB can be used. Timings should be adjusted as recommended in *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals*, copies of which are held by SQA coordinators.

For Intermediate, the advice is to use three composited NABs. At Intermediate 2, the Short Essays from these NABs should be used; where a Short Essay is imported from another NAB, it runs the risk of overlapping with a question in the rest of the NAB, thus invalidating the instrument of assessment.

If you wish further clarification of any points in this letter, please contact either Duncan Cox (0845 213 5498; Duncan.Cox@sqa.org.uk) or myself at the above address.

Yours faithfully



Larry Cheyne
Qualifications Manager

Appendix

Using 2010 Higher Paper 1 for the new Higher

Items in the Prelim column may be used unamended in prelims/practice for the new Higher. Those in the Ext. Ess. column may be used as titles for Extended Essays. Those in the No column should not be used for the new Higher.

Page	Question	Prelim	Ext. Ess.	No	Comment
3	1	x	x		
	2	x	x		
	3			x	No longer in syllabus
	4			x	Must refer to Henry II and David I
	5			x	Must refer to Henry II and David I
	11			x	Need to delete 'Jacquerie'
	12			x	Should refer to decline of feudalism
4	6		x		Syllabus says 'political issues'
	7	x	x		
	8			x	Syllabus refers to Charles' success
	9	x	x		Wording similar to syllabus
	10	x	x		
5	15		x		Syllabus says 'taxation; corruption'
	16		x		Factor not identified
	17			x	No longer in syllabus
	18			x	Factor refers to Issues 3 and 4
6	1	x	x		
	2	x	x		
	3	x	x		
	4	x	x		
7	6	x	x		
	7		x		
	8			x	No longer in syllabus
	9	x	x		
	10	x	x		
	11	x	x		Wording similar to syllabus
	12			x	No longer in syllabus
	13	x	x		
8	14			x	No longer in syllabus
	15	x	x		
	16	x	x		
	17			x	Issue is now an assessment
	18	x	x		Wording similar to syllabus
	19		x		Factor not identified
	20	x	x		
	21	x	x		