

## **Briefing Document**

### **8 October 2003**

#### **Introduction of the grade D for National Qualifications**

In May of this year we carried out a consultation on National Course Compensatory Awards. The results we received provided us with a clear indication that we should replace compensatory awards and introduce a grade D for National Courses. The consultation focused on the whole spectrum of users and stakeholders including the following: universities, colleges, schools, Maths departments, individual maths teachers, national and representative organisations like US, ASC, EIS, SSTA, SPTC, SCIS etc.

Respondents to the consultation thought that a grade D at the level of entry would more accurately reflect what a candidate has achieved in the Course assessment. It would allow the certification of a narrow failure to achieve a grade C award to be treated consistently across all subject and levels — this is not the case at present. The grade D Course award would be based on the standards of Course actually taken. It would be a real award based on achievement, not a compensatory award.

The results of the consultation along with recommendations were presented to the National Qualifications Steering Group (NQSG).

As a result of the consultation, Peter Peacock MSP, Minister for Education and Young People has approved that from August 2004 we will award grade D for National Courses.

After consultation SQA has, in dialogue with the Scottish Executive, replaced the compensatory award for National Courses. In its place, there will now be a grade D at each level for each Course. This will reflect candidates' levels of attainment more accurately. The grade D will be awarded where all Units for a Course have been achieved, and where the candidate has gained a band 7 in the external assessment.

The grade D will recognise achievement against the majority of the grade descriptions for the level of the Course. It will be reported on the SQC as a grade in its own right, and will indicate that the candidate has:

- ◆ undertaken that level of Course and external assessment
- ◆ achieved all the National Units for the Course at that level
- ◆ gained a band 7 in the external assessment

Details of the way the grade D will be recognised in the SCQF and by UCAS have still to be finalised.

Please note:

- ◆ There will be no re-certification of candidates who received compensatory awards in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. These candidates will retain their award at grade A at the level below that of entry.
- ◆ SQA is in discussions with UCAS re the points a grade D will attract.
- ◆ SQA is in discussions with SCQF partners re the placing of grade D in the framework.