

30 January 2004

SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY



To: SQA Co-ordinator
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Biology Panel Members
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**For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of
National Qualifications in Biology**

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

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Dear Colleague

This letter is intended to provide centres with an update on National Qualifications and should be passed to the member(s) of staff responsible for Biology.

1. Assessment of Outcome 3 and Investigations

The subject update letter issued in November 2003 included the following paragraph:

Centres should note that where candidates are sent to other centres for Outcome 3 practical work and for Advanced Higher Investigations it is the presenting centre that is responsible for assessment of candidates' work. Arrangements therefore need to be in place to ensure that the presenting centre's teacher/lecturer is present during practical work to meet all internal assessment requirements.

This is essential where the delivering centre is not an SQA approved centre such as a university or research institution.

In the case of consortium arrangements being in place with other SQA approved centres, the need for the presence of the presenting centre teacher is not absolutely essential. What does need to be in place however is a very clear agreement as to which centre is responsible for which aspect of the assessment.

The following are some examples and suggestions of procedures that should be in place:

- (i) Where candidates are sent to a delivering centre for all aspects of practical work and the delivering centre assesses all aspects of carrying out the practical work and assessment of the report, the presenting centre should discuss standards with the delivering centre to ensure that they agree with the approach. This is essential since in such situations where issues are identified at moderation, these are taken up with the presenting centre rather than the delivering centre.
- (ii) Where candidates are sent to a delivering centre for the practical work only and the presenting centre assesses the report (or lab note books for AH Investigation) procedures must be in place to ensure that all aspects of carrying out the practical work comply with the Unit specifications and conditions for assessment.

Chairman: Sir John Ward CBE
Chief Executive: Anton Colella BA(Hons), Dip Ed

For Outcome 3 this means:

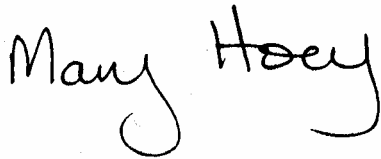
In relation to PC (a), the teacher/lecturer checks by observation that the candidate participates in the collection of the experimental information by playing an active part in planning the experiment, deciding how it will be managed, identifying and obtaining resources (some of which must be unfamiliar to the candidate), and carrying out the experiment.

Here it would be appropriate for some sort of written evidence/checklist to be signed by the delivering centre teacher to confirm that this is the case for each candidate.

For AH Investigation, centres are referred to the NAB for the Investigation Unit. Again written confirmation from the delivering centre should be available to indicate that all aspects of the internal assessment evidence requirements and conditions for assessment have been met.

I hope the contents of this letter are helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further clarification.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Hoey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Mary Hoey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Maths and Science Team