

December 2011

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of National Qualifications in Psychology**

Action by Recipient
Response required
✓ Note and pass on
Note — update/information only

Contact: Mary Hainey at Glasgow
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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Psychology

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member(s) of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Psychology at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels.

External Marking 2011

The majority of centres had prepared candidates well for the external assessment. However, centres are reminded that two topics are studied for Section A for the Unit Psychology: Understanding the Individual, and two topics are studied for Section C for the Unit Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context. At Higher level both questions in Section C require essay type responses.

The External Assessment Report for Intermediate 1 Psychology is available on the Psychology page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) :

The following reports will be posted on the Psychology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) in January 2012:

- ◆ External Assessment report for Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ External Assessment report for Higher Psychology
- ◆ Internal Assessment report for Psychology

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for Psychology for diet 2011. These reports contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Psychology.

Marking instruction

The 2011 question papers and finalised marking instructions are now available on the Psychology page of SQA's website. These can be useful documents for teachers and lecturers when constructing prelims and when preparing candidates for external assessment.

Appeals

Stage 1 and Stage 2 Appeals were completed during September and October. There was a slight decrease in the number of candidates presented for Appeal. Centres are reminded that although candidates are required only to be assessed on one topic to achieve a unit pass for the units *Psychology: Understanding the Individual* and *Psychology: the Individual in the Social Context*, appeals evidence must show the same breadth of coverage of course content as SQA's question paper. This would require evidence of two topics from the aforementioned units. Guidance to centres has been revised in the document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* for 2011.

Some of the most common issues related to Appeals evidence included;

- ◆ evidence submitted does not reflect centre estimate
- ◆ validity of the evidence to replicate the standard, format and duration of SQA's question paper
- ◆ centres using too few sources and lifting sections en bloc from past papers. For example in Section A and Section C two topics are answered in each section. Both topics should not be lifted from the same source. Sources for Section B should not be taken in their entirety.

Centres should note that the above problems generally disadvantage candidates.

Events

Centre Support Event

SQA are planning a centre support event for teachers and lecturers of Higher Psychology. This event is aimed at centres new to delivering Psychology and is free of charge. The aim of this event is to clarify the structure of the Higher Course, exam preparation and application of marking schemes as well as offering a networking opportunity for teachers and lecturers. Two dates have been arranged, Saturday 14 January 2012 in Edinburgh and Saturday 21 January 2012 in Glasgow. For more information or to register for your chosen venue please contact sqaevents@sqa.org.uk or telephone 0845 213 5580.

On-line PDW

SQA has developed an on-line Professional Development Workshop course, using the SQA Academy site, for Higher Psychology, Research Investigation. These on-line training courses are aimed at understanding the national standard of the Research Investigation report, and will support teachers/lecturers delivering the Higher Psychology course. If you wish to express an interest in signing up to this course, details can be found on the SQA website, (www.sqa.org.uk/pdws).

Association of Teachers of Psychology Scotland (ATPS)

The annual conference of the ATPS will be held on 4 February 2012 in Victoria Halls, Dunblane. The aim of this event is to provide opportunities for pre-university Psychology teachers and lecturers to meet and discuss issues of common interest in relation to Psychology teaching and the Psychology curriculum. Contact **www.atps.org.uk** for further information.

Higher Research Investigation

Eight Research Investigation briefs are now listed for session 2011/2012. Candidates **must** base their investigation on one of these briefs. This list covers topics in the Units *Psychology: Understanding the Individual* and *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context* and can be found on the NQ Higher Psychology page of SQA's website, along with the Revised Higher Research Investigation Guidelines and Marker Checklist. This checklist provides centres and candidates with an overview of how SQAs appointed Markers mark the Reports.

Centres are reminded that all Higher Research Investigations must be submitted to SQA for external marking. Research Investigations will be uplifted from your centre on **Tuesday 24 April 2012**.

There was a significant increase in the number of Research Investigation submissions in 2011 where breaches in ethical issues had been raised by Markers. It is important to remind centres of the guidelines issued by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Association for the Teaching of Psychology in Scotland (ATPS) regarding the use of under-age children as participants in research and the safety of candidates when carrying out research with the general public. The guidelines laid down by these bodies are summarised in the document *Research Investigation Guidelines (revised August 2010)* issued by SQA and available on the NQ Higher Psychology page of SQA's website and the *Research Investigation Ethics Guidance*.

Being an SQA Marker

Each year the number of candidate entries for Psychology Courses has been increasing and SQA are in need of additional Markers. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Psychology, information and application forms are available on our Appointee Management section of the SQA website. To become a Marker, our criteria states that you must be teaching Psychology courses for three years or in your third year of teaching.

We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. Psychology will continue to be centrally marked. This entails Markers marking scripts over one or possibly two separate weekend periods in the same venue.

In a number of subject areas we have had recent examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the Marking Team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands

of course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502, or e-mail mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Hainey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care