

2 June 2004

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update

The contents of this letter should be passed on to the member of staff responsible for Modern Languages.

Modern Languages Update

We wish to bring the following matters to your attention.

1 Revised Standard Grade — Visiting Moderation

In response to workload concerns raised by teachers over the last few years, this event will take place during November/December 2004 for the 2004-5 diet of examinations. Whilst we appreciate that some centres may have candidates undertaking work experience and/or 'prelim' examinations at this time, it is anticipated that Visiting Moderation will, as usual, span a period of three to four weeks. As in previous years, centres will be able to negotiate a convenient time for the visit of their Moderator.

2 Advanced Higher

Folio of Writing

It was pleasing to note that, this year, the majority of candidates submitted a bibliography and wrote within the word limits laid down by SQA.

We would wish to stress, however, that the contents of the Folio should be the candidates' own work. If sources are referred to in any candidates' essays or reports, these should be clearly acknowledged. Unfortunately, this year, some candidates have relied excessively on the sources they have consulted and this has resulted, on occasion, in markers assessing essays or reports composed entirely of sections lifted word for word from internet pages or critical commentaries. Where this has arisen, centres will be contacted by the Special Assessment Arrangements team at SQA. Clear evidence of malpractice on the part of candidates could result in the cancellation of their award.

We would also wish to point out that the text(s) which candidates study for the Extended Reading/Viewing option must be read **in the target language** and any quotations which candidates may wish to include in their essays from such text(s) must also be **in the target language**.

In this respect, we have duly amended page 25 of the Arrangements document for Modern Languages at Advanced Higher (amendments in bold) and enclose the replacement page as an appendix to this letter. This page will also be updated on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk) in due course. From 2005 onwards, therefore, an approach to the study of a text or texts which does not clearly demonstrate that the candidate has read the text(s) in the target language will result in the candidate being awarded a mark of 0 for failure to meet the requirements of the external assessment.

Speaking Tests 2004

Visiting Examiners were pleased that the vast majority of candidates engaged in a discussion and did not attempt to deliver a presentation. However, there were still a fairly high number of centres in which conditions for this test were not favourable to the candidates due to background noise, interruptions and faulty recording equipment. We would recommend that centres do everything possible to ensure that the best possible conditions are in place for their candidates in 2005.

Paper II Listening and Discursive Writing — allocation of marks

In order to increase the weighting of Discursive Writing in the foreign language in the external examination and also to circumvent the potentially negative consequences of scaling marks in the Listening section, it has been decided, in consultation with Principal Assessors of Advanced Higher and the Modern Languages Assessment Panel, to adjust the allocation of marks for this paper from the 2006 examination onwards as follows:

Listening	30 marks	(15%)
Discursive Writing	40 marks	(20%)

The format of Paper II will remain unchanged.

NB The allocation of marks in the 2005 examination will be the same as in 2004.

3 Intermediate 2 Extended Reading/Viewing

As indicated in the Subject Update letter of November 2003, this Unit will be available for candidates from August 2004. The Unit specification will be included in the CD ROM *National Qualifications Session 2004-5* which will be issued to centres this month. The NAB material for this Unit has been posted on the secure section of SQA's website.

4 Marking Instructions

Marking Instructions for National Qualifications at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher in Spanish and Italian from the 2004 diet will be posted on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) in due course.

5 Summary of Assessment Arrangements

At the suggestion of the Modern Languages Assessment Panel, a 'Candidates' Summary Guide to Assessment' is being prepared. This will be issued in A4 format later this year. Whilst teachers and lecturers responsible for the delivery of National Qualifications may also find this guide of practical help, it in no way detracts from the need, on their part, to have a clear understanding of the full detail of the appropriate Arrangements documents and National Assessment Bank materials.

6 New Qualifications Manager

In early July, Jim McDonald, Principal Teacher of Modern Languages at Auchmuty High School, Glenrothes, will join the Maths, Science and Language Team as Qualifications Manager with responsibility for National Qualifications in French, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Jim will replace Phil Allan who will be returning to his post as Principal Teacher of Modern Languages at St Bride's High School, East Kilbride, on completion of his secondment to SQA.

Yours faithfully



Phil Allan
Qualifications Manager



Alan Wilson
Qualifications Manager

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