

25 August 2011

To: SQA Co-ordinators

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Dear Colleague

Please pass this email to the member of staff responsible for English in your school or college.

The following is an update on National Qualifications (NQ) in English and contains important information for this current session 2011/2012 on the following:

- 1. Review of Higher English Comparison Question**
- 2. Writing Folio - Important Information for 2011/12**
- 3. Support for Centres**
- 4. Advanced Higher English**

1. 'Comparison question' Higher English Close Reading

The final question in the Close Reading section of the Higher English question paper is being revised with immediate effect. From 2012 onwards this question will no longer require candidates to state a preference as to which passage was better, more stylish etc. It will follow the format of the recently replaced Specimen Question paper, which also has revised marking instructions. The change follows a trial of a revised comparison question for 2011 which indicated that this format was likely to allow more candidates to access the marks available. The Specimen Question Paper and more information about the revised approach to the comparison question can be found on the Higher English page of SQA's website.

2. Writing Folios

Centres should note that submitted work which exceeded the word count in 2011 was usually weakened as a result and that the relatively few examples of plagiarism referred and quantified by SQA at all levels had marks substantially reduced. Candidates for all levels in 2012 should be made aware of this when working on writing as importing unacknowledged text into their writing and

passing it off as their own work is quite specifically featured in 'Your Coursework' and centre guidance document on candidate malpractice:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CandidateMalpracticeGuidanceForCentres.pdf
Candidates should be aware that plagiarism can lead to cancellation of any award.

After the first successful diet of the recently revised English Course (C270) with the introduction of Writing Folios, a review of the process has taken place and the following changes will apply from session 2011-12.

- It was felt that Intermediate 1 candidates were too limited by a 600 word maximum, but that the other levels were correct as they stood. Intermediate 1 will now have a minimum of 300 words and a maximum of 800 words per folio piece.
- Intermediate 2 will have a minimum of 500 words and a maximum of 1000 (in exceptional circumstances 1300) words per folio piece. This will allow for late changes of level in bi level classes without distress.
- Higher will retain a minimum of 650 words and a maximum of 1300 words.

These maxima will be printed on the Flyleaf.

The exemplification which was issued last year is being removed from the secure site and replaced by marked examples and commentaries from the 2011 diet. Your SQA coordinator can access these for you and they should be used to calibrate your understanding of standards. Please note these materials are deemed 'secure' and are not for candidate use.

3. Support for Centres

◆ PDW Higher English Saturday 29 October

There will be one Professional Development workshop (PDW) this year for Higher English which will focus on Close Reading and Folio Writing. Information and booking forms have been sent out to all SQA Coordinators and can also be found on www.sqa.org.uk/pdws. Please note, there will be a delegate fee and places will be limited. The workshop will be held in Glasgow on Saturday 29 October 2011.

◆ Internal Assessment report and External Assessment reports

The Internal Assessment Report and External Assessment reports for all levels will be available soon on the English Pages of SQA's website and should help with the preparation of candidates for this year. The sections on Folio should be especially useful.

4. Advanced Higher English Update

Many of the National Assessment Bank (NAB) items for Advanced Higher have been revised and refreshed with a view to offering helpful advice to teachers and lecturers who are new to this level or returning after a gap.

We also plan to offer an Understanding Standards event for Advanced Higher in January 2012 and will issue details when dates and a venue are confirmed. New exemplification of Advanced Higher candidate work will be made available after the Understanding Standards event.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan R Wilson".

Alan R Wilson
Qualifications Manager
Humanities, Arts and Business