

Our ref: SB/HW

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To: SQA Co-ordinator

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications 2006 Objective tests

Following the implementation of electronic marking of objective tests in 2005, and after careful review of all feedback received, it has been concluded that this initiative was very successful. This is largely due to the assistance and organisation of centres, both in the submission of accurate and timely entry data and also in working with Chief Invigilators to ensure that the personalised objective tests were issued to and completed by the correct candidates. This level of success has meant that we will continue the use of electronic marking of objective tests in 2006 and the use of personalised answer sheets.

The Courses which include objective tests in 2006 are as follows:

- ◆ **Biology** — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher
- ◆ **Biotechnology*** — Intermediate 2 and Higher
- ◆ **Human Biology** — Higher
- ◆ **Chemistry** — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher
- ◆ **Physics** — Intermediate 2 and Higher

* some centres will be involved in our objective test online pilot — details to be sent separately

One area which has been identified for improvement is in the processing of objective test answer sheets. Process is slowed by the number of occasions candidates change their responses. To address this and to maximise the benefits of electronic marking in 2006, candidates will be required to complete the personalised objective answer sheets using a pencil. Where they wish to amend their response, candidates should erase their original answer and indicate the amended response, again using a pencil.

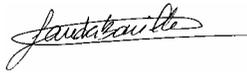
Each candidate should be instructed to bring an HB pencil and an eraser to complete the answer sheets for Section A (the objective test) in each of the above subjects. SQA will use a number of ways to publicise and remind candidates of this requirement — these are listed below. However, there may still be candidates who, on the day of the examination, forget to bring a pencil and eraser and we would strongly recommend that centres have a supply of HB pencils and erasers available which can be made available to candidates at the start of these examinations.

Other measures we will employ to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of this change are to:

- ◆ Instruct candidates in the *Your Exams* booklet 2006 to bring an HB pencil and eraser and to sit at the allocated seat.
- ◆ Supply posters to centres showing objective test answer sheets with HB pencils/erasers for display in classrooms to remind/reinforce the use of pencils.
- ◆ Update the detailed instructions to candidates on the completion of objective test answer sheets, contained in the rubric of each question paper.
- ◆ Issue reminders to centres to ensure that entry information is accurate prior to the production of personalised objective test answer sheets.
- ◆ Include detailed instructions in the *Handbook for Invigilators* on how to issue answer sheets/what to do if answer sheets are spoiled/issue HB pencils from the supply provided by the centre to candidates who have forgotten these. This will also be a feature in our Chief Invigilator briefing sessions due to take place in March 2006.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for working with us to ensure that the implementation of electronic marking of objective test answer sheets was a success in the 2005 examination diet and that this will continue in 2006.

Yours faithfully



Sandra Bonilla
Examination Support Officer
Assessment Logistics