

To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary Schools and Further Education Colleges

Cc: SCIS
Directors of Education

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

Contact Name: Jonathan Gillies at Glasgow
Direct Line: 0345 213 5482
E-mail: jonathan.gillies@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Biology, Biotechnology, and Human Biology

The contents of this update provide information and advice to centres in relation to current National Qualifications in Biology, Biotechnology, and Human Biology. A separate update on the new National Courses at National 3, 4 and 5 will be communicated to centres shortly. This update should be passed to the members of staff responsible for these subjects.

This update contains information about:

1. Staff changes
2. Appointments
3. External and Internal Assessment Reports
4. Revised Higher and Advanced Higher Qualifications
5. National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs)

1 Staff Changes

I have recently taken over from Margot McKerrell as Qualifications Manager for Biology, Biotechnology, and Human Biology. Lynn Wallwork, Qualifications Co-ordinator, is also in my team.

2 Appointments

SQA continues to rely on the support of teachers/lecturers to undertake a range of work. We are currently in the process of recruiting for a number of vacancies which we are looking to fill between now and February 2014. Vacancies include new and replacement appointments for the following roles:

- Advanced Higher Principal Assessors
- Advanced Higher Item Writers and Item Checkers
- Higher Question Paper Reviewers and Question Paper Validators
- National 5 Senior Team Leaders
- National 5 Team Leaders
- National 5 Markers

Please click on the following link to access the advertisements on our website:
<http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeappointeevacancies>

If you are interested in applying, please complete the relevant form(s) on our website and e-mail them to am@sqa.org.uk or markers@sqa.org.uk by the stated deadline.

Please note that all applicants must meet the essential criteria detailed in the role profile - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58393.4164.html>

Existing Markers are reminded that they can indicate a willingness to change the level of qualification that they currently mark. If you have not already done so, Markers should contact Appointee Management (markers@sqa.org.uk) to indicate what level of qualification they would like to mark in the future.

3 External and Internal Assessment Reports

Centres are reminded that SQA annually publishes a range of guidance on both the external assessment performance and the evidence generated for internal assessment.

External Assessment Reports can be downloaded from the subject-specific webpages of the SQA website. Individual reports provide information on the performance of candidates, which should be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. Reports contain detailed information on areas where candidates performed well, areas which candidates found demanding, and advice to centres for the preparation of future candidates and statistical information, such as the grade boundaries applied for each grade in that particular examination.

Internal Assessment Reports can also be downloaded from the subject-specific webpages of the SQA website. These reports are compiled based on verification activity. Reports contain general comments, information on areas of good practice and areas for improvement.

4 Revised Higher and Advanced Higher Qualifications

The revised Higher and Advanced Higher courses will dual run with the current Higher and Advanced Higher courses in session 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. The final exam for the revised Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be summer 2015, same as for the current Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

SQA requests that any centre considering adopting the revised Higher Biology, Higher Human Biology or Advanced Higher Biology courses in session 2013/2014 informs Lynn Wallwork, Qualifications Co-ordinator, as soon as possible (lynn.wallwork@sqa.org.uk). This is to ensure that adopting centres are included in the support network.

5 National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs)

We are now recruiting practitioners to join our National Qualification Support Teams (NQSTs).

NQSTs are consultation groups that will provide feedback to SQA on internal and external assessment for National Qualifications including the new Courses developed to meet the needs of Curriculum for Excellence.

These groups will communicate primarily using dedicated and secure online discussion forums. This will allow SQA Qualifications Development staff to engage with practitioners on an immediate basis as issues arise.

Each NQST will also hold an annual meeting which will require members to be released from their centres. This release is not subject to compensation, although necessary travel expenses will be reimbursed. The first meetings will be held in autumn 2014. If you are interested in applying to become a member of an NQST, please seek permission from your head of centre or employer then complete and submit the online Expression of Interest form. The closing date for applications is Thursday 31st October 2013.

For more information and to apply to join one of these teams, visit www.sqa.org.uk/ngst

I hope you find the contents of this update letter helpful. Should you require any further information regarding the content of this letter or any other matter relating to these qualifications, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Jonathan Gillies
jonathan.gillies@sqa.org.uk

Qualifications Manager
0345 213 5482

Lynn Wallwork
lynn.wallwork@sqa.org.uk

Qualifications Coordinator
0345 213 5484

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Gillies
Qualifications Manager
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics