

Autumn 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator
BDMs
Local Education Authorities
Directors of Education
All centres
HMIE

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

Contact: Alistair Wylie at Glasgow
Direct line: 0845 213 5488
E-mail: alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Subject update — Business Education

The contents of this letter should be passed to the members of staff responsible for Business Education subjects.

General information and advice

Assessment Panel

The autumn meeting of the NQ Business Education Assessment Panel will take place on Wednesday 4 November 2009.

Standard Grade — Accounting & Finance, Administration, Business Management

Practical Abilities Projects 2010

Practical Abilities Projects have now been distributed to all centres as per the distribution model used for the 2009 projects. The number of projects allocated to centres was based on certificated numbers for diet 2009. Extra copies are available to download from SQA's secure website. Please contact your SQA Co-ordinator for access to these materials. Any problems or requests for a large number of copies will be handled by the Customer Contact Centre (tel: 0845 279 1000).

External Assessment reports 2009

External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports (previously known as Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports) will be made available on SQA's

website (www.sqa.org.uk) on each of the subject pages by the end of October 2009. All centres are reminded of the importance of these reports and the fact that particular issues which have been identified will apply in the current session.

Marking instructions for diet 2009

Marking instructions for all examinations are currently being uploaded to SQA's website. They are available to download from the subject pages for all subjects and levels.

Past papers for diet 2009

Past papers for all examinations are available to download from SQA's website free of charge. They are available to download from:
www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers

Internal Assessment — oral re-assessment

Centres are reminded that they should exercise caution when re-assessing internal assessments. The use of oral re-assessment is to be discouraged. Centres are reminded that should they be selected for verification, they will be required to justify their assessment decisions. The over-riding principle should, therefore, be that where there is doubt in the validity of the assessment decision, the candidate should be offered another opportunity to undertake a different NAB assessment.

Appeals

When generating estimates and compiling evidence for absentee consideration and appeals, you should refer to:

- ◆ SQA guidance on estimates and appeals
- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course Grade descriptions
- ◆ Course assessment specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ Principal Assessor reports, which include information on grade boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters)

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject pages of our website (www.sqa.org.uk).

All centres should also note that where SQA past papers are used to construct a prelim, questions must be carefully selected from a **minimum of three** papers, preferably adapted, and must be checked to ensure that they meet the current standard of the external examination paper.

A well-designed, commercially-produced question paper can, as long as it is checked to ensure that it meets the National Standard, provide valid and reliable

evidence for estimates of a candidate's expected performance in a Course assessment. It can also provide full or partial evidence to support an external assessment appeal. The use of these question papers is both convenient to centres and acceptable to SQA — provided that our guidance on validity, reliability and security is adhered to.

Commercial question paper producers make considerable effort to meet Course requirements with regard to validity and reliability. However, SQA does not prior-verify commercially-produced question papers, and there is **no guarantee** that these question papers meet all Course requirements. Centres are responsible for the validity and reliability of the assessment evidence submitted to support external assessment appeals, and therefore **must** evaluate these papers in the same way as centre-devised papers.

Only the current year's commercial papers can be considered in their entirety for external assessment appeals. Because these papers and associated marking instructions find their way into the public domain, which provides candidates with opportunities for access to them, past papers cannot be accepted in their entirety to support external assessment appeals.

Further subject specific information is contained in the following appendices:

Appendix 1 — Accounting & Finance

Appendix 2 — Administration

Appendix 3 — Business Management

Appendix 4 — Economics

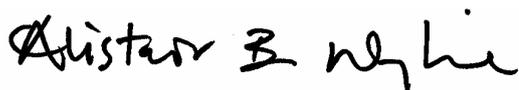
Should you require further information about the content of this letter or any other matter relating to Business Education subjects, please contact the staff listed below:

Alistair Wylie — Qualifications Manager, Business Education (first point of contact for Accounting and Economics)
0845 213 5488 or alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Gordon Moffat — Qualifications Officer, Business Management
0845 213 5487 or gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk

Julie McCorkindale — Qualifications Officer, Administration
0845 213 5486 or julie.scanlan@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully



Alistair Wylie
Qualifications Manager
Science & Technology

Appendix 1

Subject update — Accounting

Use of general reserve

In line with current modern accounting practice, we will no longer examine the use of a general reserve in an Accounting Course at any level. This has been the case since the introduction of the new revised Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, however, for further clarification this also now includes Standard Grade. Centres are reminded that it **will not** be examined in external assessment from diet 2008 onwards.

Electronic set-up files

Electronic spreadsheet files are now available to download to support the Standard Grade Practical Abilities Projects. These are available to download from SQA's secure website.

VAT rates

In light of the fact that the UK Government will be changing the rate of VAT back to 17.5% on 1 January 2010, our question papers will continue to use the 17.5% rate.

Appendix 2

Subject update — Administration

Provision of electronic files to support examinations — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels

Electronic files were made available to support examinations at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for diet 2009. Files will also be made available for diet 2010 under the same arrangements: seven working days prior to the exam. Access details will be e-mailed to SQA Co-ordinators in early spring 2010.

Electronic files for the specimen question papers, prelim papers and papers from diets 2005-09 at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher are available to download from the NQ Administration subject page at:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14328.html>.

Important update

Centres are reminded that from diet 2009 onwards, electronic files will not be made available to support the use of Appleworks. Electronic files for diet 2010 examinations will be provided in the following formats:

PC users

- ◆ Microsoft Office 2003 (Word, Excel, Access)
- ◆ Word table files of the database tables will also be provided

Apple users

- ◆ Microsoft Office X for Mac (Word, Excel)
- ◆ Filemaker Pro (Version 7 file format)
- ◆ Excel spreadsheet files of the database table will also be provided

National Qualifications Group Award developments — National Certificate in Administration SCQF level 5

The National Certificate in Administration SCQF level 5 went live in August 2009. Arrangements documents can be found at **www.sqa.org.uk/nqga** by following the link for Administration.

Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) are available for new and mandatory Units, with the exception of *Event Organisation*. ASPs are available to download from our secure website. The following Units are also supported with additional material:

- ◆ Front of Office — two video clips and three audio clips
- ◆ Medical Reception and Records — one video clip

Developing centre devised Assessment Support Packs

If you are thinking of developing centre devised ASPs it is advised that ASPs are prior verified by SQA. This is not a mandatory requirement although prior verification is strongly recommended. Please contact **linda.mcadam@sqa.org.uk** for further information.

Standard Grade Administration — IMPORTANT UPDATE

Please note the following answers will not be accepted in Standard Grade Administration from diet 2010 onwards. This is detailed in the 2009 External Assessment report.

- ◆ Prevents double bookings for e-diary is no longer an acceptable advantage for an e-diary.
- ◆ AA and RAC Handbooks will not be accepted as a source of information on travel and accommodation in future since the traditional versions no longer exist.

Higher Administration — IMPORTANT UPDATE

‘Compare’ questions will only be appear in section A of the Higher Administration paper 1 examination from 2010, therefore all candidates will have to answer a compare question. In previous years compare questions have only appeared in section B of paper 1. This is detailed in the 2009 External Assessment report.

Understanding Standards event — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Administration

An Understanding Standards event will take place on 28 October 2009 at a venue in Stirling. Details of the event have been sent to your SQA Co-ordinator. This is a free event and is strictly limited to one delegate per centre.

Appeals — Intermediate 1 and 2

Centres are reminded of the importance of following the requirements of the Course assessment specification when either making up or buying in prelim papers. There were many instances this year of evidence being submitted to support appeals which did not meet the requirements as laid out in this document, eg questions with the wrong number of marks, the wrong number of sections, etc.

The Course assessment specification can be found on SQA’s website on the NQ Administration pages and forms part of the Course assessment pack.

Markers — Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

We are currently looking to recruit Markers for Administration Intermediate 1 and 2 in advance of the diet 2010 examinations and in anticipation of continuing growth in presentation numbers. If you have current experience of delivering Administration and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131 561 6825 or request by e-

mail on **markers@sqa.org.uk**, or contact Julie McCorkindale, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5486; e-mail: **julie.mccorkindale@sqa.org.uk**).

National Progression Award in Administration: Information Technology and Audio level 5 — G9CE 45

This qualification is available for delivery in centres from August 2009.

National Progression Award in Administration: Office Skills and Services level 5 — G9CF 45

This qualification is available for delivery in centres from August 2009.

Enquiries in relation to the above qualifications may be directed to Julie McCorkindale, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5486; e-mail **julie.mccorkindale@sqa.org.uk**).

Appendix 3

Subject update — Business Management

Advanced Higher Business Management

Additional information on the production of the Business Report is now available to download from the Business Management subject area of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). This document is entitled: *Advanced Higher Business Management Report Guide*.

Please note that Business Reports must **not** be marked by centres prior to submission to SQA. The Business Report is treated as part of the Course award and, as such, is subject to external marking by SQA.

Centres are also reminded that a copy of the associated NAB, as completed by the candidate and marked by the teacher, MUST be submitted with the report.

New exemplification material to support the Business Report, and based on actual candidate performance in diet 2008, is available to download from the NQ Business Management area of SQA's website. Centres delivering this qualification are advised to make use of this valuable resource.

Centres are asked to make sure that they are using the most up-to-date copy of the Advanced Higher Business Report Guide which is available to download from the subject page or by entering the following direct link:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/NQBusManAdvHReportGuide.pdf

Advanced Higher Business Management marking advice

Exemplification material relating to the national standard in marking of the examination paper will be published on SQA's website later this year. This material will be based on actual candidate performance during diet 2009. The aim of this material is to increase awareness in the application of the marking instructions for this paper.

Analysis of the marking standards applied in alternative assessment evidence presented during appeals this year suggests that many centres are being too lenient in the application of the marking instruction issued by SQA. This often leads to over-estimate of candidate performance and a great disparity between 'prelim' and actual examination performance. This is something that will be monitored during the next examination diet.

As a general rule, centres are asked to note that the Advanced Higher examination should not be marked to the same standard as the Higher examination, ie much more is expected of candidates. This includes the development of answers and awarding of development points (something not covered at Higher level).

Markers — Advanced Higher Business Management examination

We are currently looking to recruit Markers to mark the Advanced Higher Business Management report and examination. The report will be centrally marked in early May.

If you have current experience of delivering Advanced Higher Business Management and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131 561 6825 or request by e-mail on **markers@sqa.org.uk**, or contact Gordon Moffat, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5487; e-mail: **gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk**) for further information.

Higher Business Management — development points and marking

With reference to the marking of Higher Business Management and the provision of marking instructions for external examinations as provided by SQA, all centres are asked to note that development points should not be awarded in the marking of assessments designed to replicate the external assessment. The marking instructions provided are very comprehensive and cover all the points that the Principal Assessor, Examining Team and Marking Team would reasonably expect to find when marking candidate scripts. The awarding of development points introduces an unnecessary degree of subjectivity to the marking and should be avoided. Fuller expansion and development will however continue to be expected at Advanced Higher level.

Where SQA past papers are used to construct a prelim for Higher Business Management, the questions should be selected to ensure they meet the current standard of the external paper. Particular attention should be given to use of the appropriate command words as detailed on SQA's website and exemplified on the Understanding Standards website (**www.understandingstandards.org.uk**). In section one, the wording of the case study and the 10 mark question one do not require to be changed but the remaining questions (totaling 40 marks) must be selected from a minimum of three different papers or original source. Similarly, section two questions should not be lifted en bloc. Each question in section two should be made up from different papers or original source.

Markers — Higher

We are currently looking to recruit additional Markers for Higher Business Management in advance of the diet 2010 examination and in anticipation of continuing growth in presentation numbers.

If you have a minimum of three years experience of delivering Higher Business Management and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131 561 6825 or request by e-mail on **markers@sqa.org.uk**, or contact Gordon Moffat, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5487, e-mail: **gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk**) for further information.

National Certificate in Business level 4 — G973 44

This qualification is available for delivery in centres from August 2009. Further details are contained in the Arrangements document.

National Certificate in Business level 5 — G8WT 45

This qualification has been available for delivery in centres since August 2008.

Enquiries in relation to the above qualifications may be directed to Gordon Moffat, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5487; e-mail: **gordon.moffat@sqa.org.uk**).

Appendix 4

Subject update — Economics

Guidance document — Dissertation

A new guidance document has been devised to support the Course Arrangements for Advanced Higher Economics. This document is now available to download from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

Intermediate 1 Economics

As a result of the implementation of the low uptake policy, the Intermediate 1 Economics Course will be removed on completion of the 2010 examination diet. The Units will remain live, however, it will no longer be possible to sit the external examination, and therefore gain the full Course award, after this date.