

Our ref: TS/Care

30 October 2006

To: SQA Coordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Customer Account Managers

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the
delivery of National Qualifications in Care**

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Care

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Care.

Diet 2006

Results for all Care Courses were somewhat mixed, with those for Care Intermediate 1 being very good but Higher Care rather disappointing. Likewise with the project assessed Courses, the Mental Health Care results were poorer than in 2005 but once again, there was notable improvement in the results of candidates who undertook the revised version of *Care Issues for Society: Older People* (Intermediate 2).

The Principal Assessor reports for diet 2006 can now be found on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). These include:

- ◆ PA report Care Intermediate 1
- ◆ PA report Care Intermediate 2
- ◆ PA report Care Higher
- ◆ PA report Care Issues for Society Intermediate 2
- ◆ PA report Care Practice Higher
- ◆ PA report Health and Safety in Care Settings Intermediate 2
- ◆ PA report Mental Health Care Higher

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and stage 2 appeals were completed in September and October 2006. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, April 2004).

Both documents can be downloaded from SQA's website.

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ Wrong or incomplete evidence.
- ◆ Inconsistencies in marking.
- ◆ Leniency in applying marks and grades.

All of the above issues have been reported in previous update letters and PA reports, however, similar problems were replicated in 2006. In addition, examiners were disappointed with the quality of the presentation of evidence from some centres. This related to uncoordinated evidence such as several pieces of evidence for each candidate with no clear or direct link to the assessment instrument. Staff should also note that ½ marks are not acceptable.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the various Principal Assessor reports for Care.

The document *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* is currently undergoing revision with the revised version due to be posted on SQA's website in October. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper-based Courses and states:

'An integrated prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course plus supporting evidence, such as a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit would support an Appeal for a Grade C (and possibly a B), but not for a Grade A.

For an Appeal for a Grade A, the most convincing evidence would replicate the standard format, duration and security of SQA's question paper.'

Marking instructions

The finalised marking instructions for diet 2006 Course assessments are posted on the Care page of SQA's website. It is hoped that these will be of benefit to staff when preparing a prelim paper or when submitting evidence in the event of making appeals.

NQ Health and Social Care

Earlier this year SQA carried out two major consultations on the future developments of Care awards. In April, proposals for the development of a new National Certificate Group Award (NCGA) in Health and Social Care and, in June, proposals for the revision of the question paper-based Courses were distributed to all centres that have previously offered these Courses. The number responding to both consultations was very encouraging — as was the support for the proposals made. A Qualifications Development Team was formed in September comprising of colleagues from a variety of bodies with an interest in the developments. This Team will participate in and oversee the various developments, all of which are still on track for implementation in August 2007. Some minor amendments will also be made to the *Care Practice (Higher)* and *Health and Safety in Care Settings (Intermediate 2)* as these will be included within options for the Group Award.

It is intended that a seminar will be held in February to launch the revised Care question paper Courses and a further seminar later in spring to launch the new National Certificate Group Award in Health and Social Care. Details of these events will be disseminated to centres nearer the time.

Skills for Work

The consultation document distributed in June also gave information about the development of a new *Skills for Work* Higher in Health and Social Care which will be offered as an alternative option in Course column choices for S5/S6 school students. *Skills for Work* Courses have the following features:

- ◆ there is no external assessment — candidates complete four Units
- ◆ the award is ungraded
- ◆ there is an emphasis on employability skills and experiential learning
- ◆ Courses will be taught through local authority/college partnerships

To date developments for *Skills for Work* have been restricted to Intermediate 1 and 2 and while Health and Social Care was not included in the phase 1 and 2 developments, the development of a Higher *Skills for Work* Course in Health and Social Care has been approved for implementation in August 2007. This Course is intended to complement the Higher question paper Care Course and its development has influenced the revision of the Care Higher.

Development of the Course is well underway and draft versions of the Units will be considered by the Qualifications Development Team at its next meeting. Launch seminars for all phase 3 *Skills for Work* Courses will take place in the summer term.

Project-based National Courses

Care Practice (Higher)

This Course is undergoing some minor revisions and will be included in both the mandatory and optional sections of the proposed NCGA.

There are still a number of issues with the projects submitted by centres relating to the placement and the logbooks. Please read the Principal Assessor's report for fuller detail.

Health and Safety in Care Settings (Intermediate 2)

Some revisions will also be made to the component Units of this Course. An Arrangements document specific to this Course has been written and revised briefs for the projects will be devised. These changes will be introduced for implementation in August 2007.

Three colleges and the Principal Assessor are involved with SQA in piloting a programme which enables this project to be developed and assessed entirely by electronic means. This will improve the security and validity of each candidate's work and will enable both college staff and SQA markers to accurately monitor each individual's work within their group.

Ex6 Forms

Staff are asked to note that the EX6 forms are for use by SQA Markers only and that centre estimates should **not** be entered on these forms. Marker checklists for each PBNC are available from SQA's website and these should accompany the candidate evidence with the Internal Assessor's estimated marks.

Free-standing Units

There is a plethora of free-standing Units in the Care Portfolio — many of them 'old' and unused. There are also a number of duplicates where centres have continued to use old versions rather than the new versions intended to replace them. As part of the wider SQA Portfolio Review we intend to look at the content of these Units and consider carefully which should be retained and which should be phased out. This was included in the April consultation paper and in the main SQA recommendations were accepted. Action will be taken as appropriate over the next 3 – 5 years.

Assessment Panel

The Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in the assessment of Care Units and Courses. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers.

Being an SQA Marker

If you are interested in becoming a marker for any of the Care or Early Education and Childcare Courses, an application form can be downloaded from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). Alternatively, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years, preferably within the past three years — obviously this cannot be the case for the new PBNC *Play in Early Education and Childcare*, but experience in this area will be considered. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. I would like to point out that all Care Courses are centrally marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one

extended period in the same venue. We have had a number of examples recently where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the marking team.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502, or e-mail me at: **tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stannage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Tom Stannage
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care