

7 October 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinator
LEA
Directors of Education
Customer Accounts Managers
All centres

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of
National Qualifications in Computing and Information Systems**

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

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Dear Colleague

Computing and Information Systems — Update

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Computing and Information Systems. This letter is intended to provide centres with information on developments in National Qualifications in Computing and Information Systems.

Prelims, Estimates and Appeals

We have recently updated the *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* document for 2008. A hard-copy is being issued to every centre. The update contains additional advice on split prelims in the generic section on prelims and some advice on Standard Grade. When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, you should also refer to:

- ◆ 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).

Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports

These reports will be available from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) from 31 October 2007. The Principal Assessor reports highlight issues relating to candidate performance in external assessment and the Senior Verifier reports highlight issues relating to the moderation of internal assessment. Both reports contain very useful information and I would recommend that you download these reports and read them thoroughly.

Standard Grade Computing Studies

Coursework Tasks and Projects

The Tasks and Projects are unchanged from 2007 and are currently available.

The date for submission of internally-assessed grades for Standard Grade will be around end of March 2008. Exact dates will be published through the Operational Help Centre on our website and via SQA Co-ordinators.

Intermediate 1 Computing Studies and Intermediate 2 / Higher Computing

Coursework Tasks

Tasks for candidates who will be sitting their examination in 2008 will be available from 31 October 2007. These are the only tasks that can be used for the 2008 examination.

It should be noted that the Coursework Task forms part of the Course Assessment along with the question paper. Candidates must, therefore, attempt the correct level of task in relation to the question paper which they will later sit. The mark for a Higher Coursework Task cannot be combined with the mark for an Intermediate 2 question paper to get a Course award. Candidates will also perform better if they are set a task which is suitable to their abilities.

I would draw your attention to the Senior Verifier report which highlights a number of issues which arose during the moderation of the Computing Coursework Tasks.

The date for submission of Coursework marks will be around end of April 2008. Exact dates will be published through the Operational Help Centre on our website and via SQA Co-ordinators.

Advanced Higher Computing

Coursework Project

A Project pack containing guidance on suitable Project titles and guidance on marking is available from the secure area of SQA's website. Further guidance on suitable Project titles was provided in an update letter last year. A copy of this guidance is provided in Appendix 1.

The date for submission of Coursework Project marks will be around end of April 2008. Exact dates will be published through the Operational Help Centre on our website and via SQA Co-ordinators.

Intermediate 2 and Higher Information Systems

Coursework Tasks

As with the Computing/Computing Studies Courses, new Coursework Tasks will be issued every year. Tasks for candidates who will be sitting their examination in 2008 will be available from 31 October 2007. These are the only tasks that can be used for the 2008 examination.

The tasks will be distributed with archived database and other files which should also be downloaded from the secure area of SQA's website.

The Higher task includes special instructions on the order in which data files and other materials should be issued to candidates. Please read carefully. It is important that certain materials are only issued after candidates have completed and submitted certain parts of the task.

The date for submission of Coursework marks will be around end of April 2008. Exact dates will be published through the Operational Help Centre on our website and SQA Co-ordinators.

Advanced Higher Information Systems — Updated Project marking guidance

An updated Coursework Project Pack will be available from 31 October 2007.

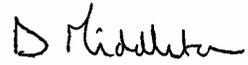
The marking grid has been updated to incorporate changes to mark allocations following feedback from verification. Centres should ensure that they have the updated version. A copy of the updated grid is provided in Appendix 2.

Detailed marking instructions will also be included in the Project pack to give further guidance to teachers.

The date for submission of Coursework Project marks will be around end of April 2008. Exact dates will be published through the Operational Help Centre on our website and via SQA Co-ordinators.

I hope that you have found the information in this letter helpful. If you require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Derek Middleton
Qualifications Manager
Computing and Technical Education

Appendix 1

Additional Coursework Project topics for Advanced Higher Computing

The Course Assessment pack and the Coursework Project pack already list suitable topics for projects. Further guidance on suitable topics is given below.

Under the new Advanced Higher Computing Arrangements, a suitable Coursework Project

- ◆ must build on some KU from the SD core unit
- ◆ must use a complex algorithm
- ◆ must be achievable in 40 hours

The following supplementary list of Project topics exemplifies some tasks which meet the required criteria:

1. A lottery program — selects seven random numbers, sorts them into order, and displays them graphically.
2. A multiple choice test, which records each user's score and saves them to a file.
3. Any simple game, which generates a player's score, allows this to be saved to a file, and then displays a sorted high score table.
4. A 'who wants to be a millionaire' game — uses Qs and As stored in data files, and a 2D array to store the amounts won after each question.
5. A simple exemplification of ELIZA, using data files to store vocabulary.
6. The candidate scores problem (old Higher HSDU material, task 11).

All of these tasks use file handling or sorting (AH SD concepts) and a non-trivial top level algorithm, and should be achievable within 40 hours by a competent candidate.

Appendix 2

Updated marking grid for Advanced Higher Information Systems Project valid from 2007/2008

Name		Date	
Project Title			
Criteria		Marks	
Comment			
Specification & Plan (10)	Specification — initial proposal	1	
	Specification — functional requirements	4	
	Specification — restrictions on development	2	
	Project Plan	3	
System Design Documentation (15)	Data Modelling — Normalisation	4	
	Data Modelling — Data Dictionary	3	
	Data Flow Modelling	3	
	Entity Modelling — Entity Event Matrix	2	
	Entity Modelling — ER Diagram	3	
Implemented Product (15)	Match to Data Dictionary and ER Diagram	2	
	Interface Development	6	
	Complete Working Solution	7	
Process Skills (10)	Management of Project	6	
	Researching Information	4	
User Documentation (10)	User Guide	6	
	Clarity and Presentation	4	
Evaluation Report (20)	Comparison to specification	4	
	User interface	4	
	Maintainability	2	
	Testing	8	
	Time management	2	
Overall Total		80	