

Our ref: GF/MP/HE&HOSP

June 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Schools and FE colleges

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

Contact Name: Graeme Findlay at Glasgow
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Dear Colleague,

National Qualifications update — Construction

The contents of this update, which provides information and advice to centres in relation to National Qualifications in Construction Courses at all levels, should be passed to members of staff responsible for the subject.

Appointees

We are grateful to all appointees who undertook work for us during diet 2007. Appointees are crucial to the success of our work, bringing with them relevant subject-specific knowledge and teaching practice, which enables us to quality assure to National Standards. If you are interested in becoming involved in future diets, please complete an application form, which can be accessed using the following details:

Website **www.sqa.org.uk**
E-mail **appointments@sqa.org.uk**
Phone 0131-561 6825
Post Scottish Qualifications Authority,
 Appointments Team
 Ironmills Road,
 Dalkeith
 EH22 1LE

Assessment Panel

The next time the panel meet is in November 2007. If you have any questions for the panel, please get in touch with us by the end of October.

Current Courses

We plan to hold a Quality Network for the Architectural Technology and Building Construction Courses. Information will follow in due course.

Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

SQA's low uptake policy was endorsed by the National Qualifications Steering Group (NMSG) in October 2003. This policy states that 'existing National Courses will have a minimum life of five years. Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher which have failed to attract 100 candidates a year after five years and 50 candidates a year at Advanced Higher will be reviewed to determine whether they continue to be offered'. However, since the policy was agreed, the environment has changed significantly because of the publication of *A Curriculum for Excellence* and developments in our portfolio review. The full impact of these two development programmes is not yet clear, and may affect decisions about which Courses continue to be offered. Therefore, this year we have only considered whether Courses with zero or very low uptake will continue to be offered. As a result of these considerations, we have decided that, of the Courses in these categories:

- ◆ some will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2007. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the catalogue
- ◆ some will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2008. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the catalogue
- ◆ some will be retained in the NQ Catalogue, but will be reconsidered in line with the policy at a later date if they remain in the very low uptake category

Details of decisions are shown in the tables below. If the withdrawal of any of these Courses will cause your centre any difficulties, please contact Linda Murray, Project Manager, at linda.murray@sqa.org.uk, as soon as possible, outlining your concerns.

National Courses with zero or very low uptake to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2007 (last examination diet 2007)

Course	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Automotive Engineering (Higher)	0	0	0	0	0

National Courses with very low uptake to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2008 (last examination diet 2008)

Course	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fabrication and Welding (Intermediate 2)	4	5	7	4	6
Structural Engineering (Higher)	8	5	11	9	5

Note: The Units making up the above Courses will be retained in the NQ Catalogue.

National Qualifications for the future

As part of the Scottish Executive's *Curriculum for Excellence* programme, Ministers intend to undertake a formal consultation around summer this year on qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5 (Standard Grade at General and Credit level and Intermediate 1 and 2) and on how best to give greater formal recognition to learners' wider achievements. The Scottish Executive has set up the Assessment and Qualifications Task Group (AQTG) involving SQA, LTS and others to help develop the options for consultation. The outcome of this consultation will help to shape our National Qualifications for the future.

Ministers intend to retain Access, Higher and Advanced Higher as points of stability within the system. These qualifications will have to adapt over time to reflect *A Curriculum for Excellence* but this will be built into the normal procedures for updating and refreshing National Qualifications. The main focus of work is on addressing the use of Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications (SCQF 4 and 5) in providing a unified structure that reflects *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

We are currently leading a programme of pre-consultation engagement activity on the review of qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5.

For more information relating to our work on *National Qualifications for the Future* and our work in relation to the *Curriculum for Excellence* programme, you can contact Lena Gray, SQA's Business Manager for *A Curriculum for Excellence*, by e-mail at: lena.gray@sqa.org.uk

Skills for Work — Construction Crafts

Following the success of the pilot, the Construction Crafts Skills for Work Courses at Intermediate 1 and 2 levels will be made available for mainstream use, subject to SQA's normal approval processes, from 2007/08 onwards.

Phase 1 Skills for Work Course
◆ <i>Construction Crafts</i> at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
Phase 2 Skills for Work Course
◆ <i>Construction Crafts</i> at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)

The Construction Crafts Intermediate 1 Course has been reviewed, and where revisions have been made, these were highlighted in an Information Pack sent to all centres delivering National Qualifications, in December 2006. The Information Pack is also available on the Skills for Work pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork).

Course and Unit specifications and National Assessment Bank materials are now available on SQA's website. There is a dedicated Skills for Work page for the specifications and the appropriate version of the assessment materials are in the secure area, access being via your SQA Co-ordinator.

There will be a series of regional Quality Networks held in the coming months to support centres in the delivery of the qualifications, information will follow in due course.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our Development Manager Kevin McLaren, who was on secondment from Forth Valley College, for the excellent work he and the Design Team have carried out over the past two years on this development.

Support for centres

The publication of the updated guidance on Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals (EAAs) for the 2007 diet was supplemented by a series of seminars held in January/February 2007. All presentations and workshop materials developed for the events are now available on the events section of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk/events). We are looking at how, in the light of this updated

guidance on EAAs, we can improve feedback to centres on unsuccessful appeals. We are also developing an interactive electronic version of the guide.

Withdrawal of derived grades

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that we have withdrawn the statistically based derived grades procedure. The appeals process will operate as normal.

For further clarification on any matter covered in this update, please do not hesitate to contact either:

- ◆ Roz Walker (e-mail: rosslynn.walker@sqa.org.uk, telephone: 0845 213 5489)
- ◆ or myself using the contact details provided above

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all an enjoyable and well deserved break.

Yours faithfully,



Graeme Findlay
Qualifications Manager
NQ Construction