

Our ref: MM/C&A

Date: 17 November 2003

To: SQA Co-ordinator  
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

cc: HMIE  
LEA Contacts  
SQA Customer Account Managers

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

Contact Name – Gareth Baynham at Glasgow  
Direct Line – 0141 242 2072  
E-Mail – gareth.baynham@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

### **National Courses – Drama**

I attach an update on issues arising during session 2002/3. Please pass this circular to the member of staff responsible for Drama.

- 1. NQ Review**
- 2. Changes to Higher Exam 2005**
- 3. Exemplification**
- 4. Distribution of Stimulus Material**
- 5. SQA Website**
- 6. Standard Grade**
- 7. Intermediate**
- 8. Intermediate 2**
- 9. Higher**
- 10. Amendments to Assessment**
- 11. New Appointment**

#### **1. NQ Review**

The NQ Review recommendations for Drama have all been successfully implemented. These were:

- the reduction in volume and duplication of internal and external assessment
- the rationalisation of external assessment at Higher (see below)
- replacing the written assignment at Intermediate 1 & 2 with a question paper

- an exemplification project for all levels (see below)
- an investigation into quality assurance

## 2. Changes to Higher Exam 2005

NQ Review required us to reduce the number of external assessment components at Higher. The removal of the folio as an external component is now being followed up by the merging of the two question papers. From 2005, the written examination will consist of only one question paper of two and a half hours' duration. This will reduce the overall volume of assessment as well as complexity for you and your candidates.

Candidates will be required to produce three responses as follows:

1 essay question on Prescribed Text	(notional timing 45 minutes)
1 essay question on Contemporary Scottish Theatre	(notional timing 45 minutes)
1 Dramatic Commentary	(notional timing 1 hour)

We are also simplifying the mark allocations as follows:

**Acting** will be reduced from 50 marks to 40 marks. Each piece will be marked out of 20.  
 5 marks for characterisation skills  
 5 marks for voice  
 5 marks for movement  
 5 marks for impact on audience.

Both **essays** will continue to attract 20 marks.

The **dramatic commentary** will be marked out of 20 as follows:  
 A set plan of 4 marks with opening positions, entrances, audience, key  
 Moves and interpretative notes for actors: 7 marks  
 Justification: 7 marks  
 Technical effects: 2 marks

As you can see, this is 100 marks in total, removing the requirement for complicated calculations and weighting, and altering the practical/written split to 40/60.

To ensure that Set Text and Contemporary Scottish Theatre continue to be assessed equally, the script extracts for the dramatic commentary will for the first time include one CST text, which may change from year to year. Each year, at about this time, you will be notified of the CST text which will feature the year after next. Candidates who have studied that play will either work on that or on their chosen prescribed text for the dramatic commentary. You should note, however, that the CST Unit does not prepare candidates to work with their text from the perspective of a director. If you are considering this option for your candidates, then some extra exam preparation will be necessary.

The CST text for the 2005 exam is *Men Should Weep* by Ena Lamont Stewart.

A specimen paper will be available by May 2004.

### 3. Exemplification

An exemplification pack has been produced for all NQ levels, for both internal and external assessments. It contains examples of candidates' work with examiners' commentaries, and marking instructions. You can find this at [www.sqa.org.uk/exemplification](http://www.sqa.org.uk/exemplification). You will need a password, so please speak to your SQA co-ordinator for details of how to access it. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Gareth Baynham.

### 4. Distribution of Stimulus Material

We are distributing the stimulus materials for Standard Grade, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2. All centres which entered candidates last year for any of these levels will receive the appropriate stimuli. If you are entering candidates for any levels which you did not last year, or you need more copies of any materials, then you will need to request these from our Contact Centre on 0141 242 2214, or by e-mailing [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk). The publication codes you will need to quote are:

**BBC037 10** - (for Intermediate 1)

**BBC037 11** - (for Intermediate 2)

**SGDR04** - (for Standard Grade)

### 5. Website

The SQA website contains an NQ Drama page, with copies of all Arrangements documents, specimen question papers, Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports, update letters, NQ Review information, and various links and other information. It is an invaluable resource for all teachers and lecturers of Drama, and we will be placing more and more essential information there over time. To access the Drama page, go to [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk), then click on the orange 'NQ' icon on the right of the screen. You can then select a subject from the drop-down menu on the left of the screen.

Also, SQA has now placed all NABs for National Qualifications on to the secure section of the website. Please speak to your SQA co-ordinator for details of how to access these.

### 6. Standard Grade

#### Appeals

While many centres submitted very high quality evidence for appeals purposes, we still received many appeals submissions containing invalid evidence. When preparing and marking prelims, generating estimates and preparing appeals, please read carefully our document '**Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Generating Evidence, Feb 2001**'. This will be available from your SQA co-ordinator, or can be downloaded from our website, under the 'General' section of our 'Publications' page.

Please also consider the following advice:

- i. Cut-off scores must be provided, must include a '7', and must relate to the cut-offs applied by SQA. These can be found in the Principal Assessor's report on our website
- ii. Work produced in S3 is not current/recent enough to be valid
- iii. Evaluations are not evidence of knowledge and understanding
- iv. Evidence for knowledge and understanding must be completed under invigilated conditions, so work completed outside of controlled conditions cannot be considered
- v. Evidence must be marked, with the marks appearing on the actual evidence, and not on a separate sheet

## 7. Intermediate

### Appeals

The following issues arose during the appeals process this year:

- i. No centres submitted suitable evidence for the practical component of the external assessment. Any such evidence should be drawn from the 'Production' unit, and must be produced under comparable conditions to the external assessment. Evidence may consist of acting mark sheets, observational checklists etc, but the most convincing evidence will always be a video recording.
- ii. In some cases, prelim papers were full reproductions of past question papers. When producing prelims, every effort must be made to vary questions, by judicious sampling and/or re-working of questions.
- iii. In some cases, marking schemes were insufficiently detailed.
- iv. In many cases, cut-off scores were set too low. Please refer to the published cut-off scores, which can be found in the Principal Assessor's report on SQA's website.
- v. Some centres submitted all NAB evidence for their candidates. Although NAB evidence can sometimes lend weight to an appeal, it tends to be at its most useful where, for example, it has been produced after the prelim. For detailed advice on use of NABS in appeals, please refer to the document '**Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Generating Evidence**'.

### Written Examination

It is permissible to use the SQA themes and extracts in your prelim examination.

Acting

i. Where Intermediate 1 & 2 candidates are being presented together in the practical examination, Int. 1 acting candidates will only be assessed on the presentation of their *devised* script. Devised sections may be interposed with the Int. 2 published script, creating a single presentation.

ii. Where only one candidate is being presented at Intermediate level, and they wish to act, they cannot be assessed on a monologue. Their acting must involve interaction with other characters. If this presents serious problems, please contact SQA for advice.

**8. Intermediate 2**Written examination

When working on the extract in preparation for the exam, there is no requirement to look at the whole play from which the extract has been taken. Candidates who refer to the rest of the play in the exam will not be awarded any extra marks for doing so.

Theatre Production Skills

The chosen extract does not need to be presented to an audience.

Production

The following list of plays has been produced after consultation with teachers and examiners. These plays are used successfully in the Intermediate 2 Production Unit and it is hoped that this will provide a useful source of ideas for teachers and lecturers. Please note that this list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive and centres can and do use other plays successfully. The list draws on a wide range of experience of candidate performance both in internal unit work and the external examination.

*Confusions* – Alan Ayckbourn  
*Ernie's Incredible Illucinations* - Alan Ayckbourn  
*Mother Figure* - Alan Ayckbourn  
*Waiting for Godot* – Samuel Beckett  
*Cuttin' a Rug* – John Byrne  
*Daisy Pulls it Off* – Denise Deegan  
*A Taste of Honey* – Shelagh Delaney  
*The Life of Stuff* – Simon Donald  
*Asleep under the Dark Earth* – Sian Evans  
*Gregory's Girl* – Bill Forsyth  
*Shakers* – John Godber  
*Teechers* – John Godber  
*Steel Magnolias* – Robert Harling  
*Men Should Weep* – Ena Lamont Stewart  
*Abigail's Party* – Mike Leigh

*One Good Beating* – Linda McLean  
*Bold Girls* – Rona Munro  
*Iron* – Rona Munro  
*The Dumb Waiter* – Harold Pinter  
*Sparkleshark* – Philip Ridley  
*The Steamie* – Tony Roper  
*Blood Brothers* – Willy Russell  
*Adrian Mole* – Sue Townsend  
*Billy Liar* – Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall  
*Be My Baby* – Amanda Whittington  
*Blooded* – Isobel Wright

## 9. Higher

### 2004 Examination

When preparing prelim examinations, please note that the answer booklet for Paper 1, Dramatic Commentary has now been marked up to assist candidates. Each page opposing a dramatic extract is now split into three columns, headed 'Moves and interpretative notes for actors', 'Justification' and 'Technical effects'. Please look at the exemplars in the NAB for an idea of format.

### Advice from examiners

There is a wide range of invaluable advice in the Principal Assessors' reports on SQA's website. The Higher examining team have asked for the following to be highlighted here:

#### *Paper 1, Dramatic Commentary*

Candidates will still have 40 minutes for their Dramatic Commentary in next year's Question Paper. While responses are improving in general, please note the following advice:

- it isn't necessary to write against every line of the script – this wastes time
- candidates should number the script extract in accord with their dramatic commentary

#### *Acting*

There are very encouraging improvements in candidates' acting performance. Please note the following procedural advice:

- please try to ensure that your candidates perform a range of acting pieces
- although it is recommended that candidates perform for 5 minutes, this doesn't mean that, for example, 3 candidates must perform for 15 minutes. 10 minutes would be sufficient.
- candidates should not perform monologues
- candidates should complete the back of the acting mark sheet themselves.

Contemporary Scottish Theatre

There has been some confusion over the choice of appropriate plays for Contemporary Scottish Theatre, the definition of which can be found in the Arrangements document. If a play isn't written by a Scottish playwright, it is advisable to contact SQA to verify whether or not it fits the definition. If a non-Scottish play has been commissioned by a Scottish theatre company, then the version being used must be substantially reworked to give it a distinctly Scottish approach.

Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context

i. The new NAB for 'Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context' (July 2003) replaces the previous edition (June 1998). You should destroy any copies of the old version. Please note that the dramatic commentary and the performance are the mandatory assessments, and the contextualisation exercise is only mandatory for those candidates who are not undertaking the Question Paper. For all candidates who are completing the Unit as part of the Higher Course, the contextualisation is optional. You should note, however, that in choosing to offer your candidates this exercise you will be further helping them to prepare for the external examination.

Centres should be careful when preparing appeals evidence for the dramatic commentary next year. For 2004 only, there will be a discrepancy between the time available for this exercise in the Unit assessment and the external examination. A high scoring NAB will still lend some weight to an appeal, but a dramatic commentary completed in one hour will not lend as much weight as one completed in 40 minutes.

ii. A list of acceptable translations for the relevant set texts at Higher has been produced. These are as follows:

*Antigone* - Robert Fagles

*Ghosts* - Peter Watts

*The House of Bernarda Alba* - Michael Dewell and Carmen Zapata

*Mother Courage and her Children* - John Willett

The Fagles translation of *Antigone* is only currently available within the Penguin volume Three Theban Plays.

iii. Four of the prescribed texts are being replaced in session 2005/6. Each year, at about this time, centres will be notified of any plays which will change in the session after next. The changes from 2005/6 are as follows:

*Merchant of Venice* ? *Twelfth Night*

*Juno and the Paycock* ? *The Importance of Being Earnest*

*Look Back in Anger* ? *A Taste of Honey*

*Lovers* ? *Dancing at Lughnasa*

## 10. Amendments to Assessment

### 1. Standard Grade

Following extensive review and consultation with staff in centres there has been strong support to split the Question Paper into a Foundation / General paper and a General / Credit paper. We propose to implement this for the examination which will take place in 2007. Please note : there will be no change to the Creating and Presenting elements and the stimuli will remain common to both papers.

### 2. Intermediate 1 and 2

Following a review of external assessment at Intermediate 1 and 2, we plan to amend the course Arrangements to allow for wider sampling of knowledge, understanding and skills which are taught in the component units of the course. This will have an impact on the nature of the Question Paper starting with the 2006 examination.

### 3. Higher

Following consultation we plan to rationalise some aspects of the Higher Drama Unit 3 'Contemporary Scottish Theatre' which will impact on the examination of 2006.

**Full details of all three developments will be issued to all centres in due course.**

## 11. New Appointment

Mary McDonald has been appointed as Qualifications Manager in Creative and Aesthetic Subjects, and will be working with Gareth Baynham in Drama. She can be contacted by e-mail at [mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk), or by phone on 0131 271 6774.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Brownlie-Marshall  
Business Manager – Creative and Aesthetic Subjects