

2 October 2006

To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary schools and FE colleges

cc: HMIE
LEA contacts
SQA Customer Account Managers

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications — Drama update 2006

Please pass this letter to the member of staff responsible for Drama.

This letter updates centres on issues which have arisen in Drama during 2005/2006 and highlights important information for this current session 2006/2007.

Higher Drama has been included in the SQA 2006/2007 Professional Development Programme and SQA looks forward to welcoming as many Drama teaching colleagues as possible to this workshop event, which is dedicated to understanding standards in Higher Drama. This will take place in Edinburgh on Saturday 11 November 2006. For full details of how to register for the event and what that day will include see section three of this letter.

1. **SQA's website — Drama**
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Please pass a copy of this letter to your Drama teaching staff. If you would like to discuss any of the contents of this letter please contact Muriel Walker (contact details above) or myself on 0131-561 6811, or e-mail: mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Mary McDonald
Qualifications Manager
National Qualifications
Performing Arts

1. SQA's website — Drama

An increasing number of Drama teaching colleagues are accessing SQA's website and finding the wealth of support, guidance and advice which exists for the delivery of National Qualifications Drama.

How to do this?

- ◆ www.sqa.org.uk
- ◆ select National Qualifications (NQ)
- ◆ select Drama (from 'select a subject')

This will bring you to the Drama homepage where you will see the following menu:

- ◆ Arrangements Documents and Specimen Question Papers
- ◆ Estimates, Absentees and External Assessment Appeals
- ◆ Marking Instructions
- ◆ Principal Assessor Reports
- ◆ Senior Moderator Reports
- ◆ Subject Review Updates and Reports
- ◆ Update Letters

From the first section, *Arrangements Documents and Specimen Question Papers*, you can access and download the updated Arrangements for all Drama Courses together with the specimen question papers and marking instructions for Higher, Intermediate 1 and 2 and Standard Grade Drama.

Advice in the *Estimates, Absentees and Appeals* section gives you full details of how to arrive at estimates for candidate attainment in an external examination, the procedure for submitting absentee candidate evidence and how to compile evidence for appeals. This section is being updated in the autumn of 2006 to help you prepare for the external assessment processes of the 2007 examination. See also section eight of this letter.

Marking Instructions for Drama question papers were published for the first time in 2004. See this section for marking instructions for all 2005 questions papers. The marking instructions for all 2006 Drama question papers are now available on SQA's website and this includes the new 2006 Standard Grade Foundation, General and Credit papers. We hope that staff in centres find this information useful.

Principal Assessor Reports and Senior Moderator Reports give invaluable insight and guidance, reporting on overall performance of candidates in any year and providing detail on how submissions can be improved. Look out for the detailed 2006 reports which will be published in October 2006.

Subject Review Updates and Reports and *Update Letters* are a main source of communication from SQA. The subject review updates and reports provide the background to the NQ Review in Drama which is now complete. The subject-specific update letters, like this one, provide a fund of up-to-date information and advice to centres and candidates. On publication, one copy of each update letter is sent to the SQA Co-ordinator of every centre presenting Drama and a copy is also published at that time on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

2. Timetable for Drama external assessment 2006/2007

See below for a summary of dates for external assessment this session.

<p>November 2006</p>	<p>The following to be sent to all centres presenting Drama:</p> <p>Standard Grade Stimulus paper Intermediate 1 Themes Intermediate 2 Extracts</p> <p>(If you have not presented any of these levels in previous years, you may need to request these materials for the 2007 examination — call: 0845 213 5521).</p>
<p>February 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p>	<p>Practical examination period starts 26 February for Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher Drama.</p> <p>Practical examination period ends 11 May for Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher Drama.</p>
<p>May 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>15 May 2007 (morning)</p> <p>2007 Drama Intermediate 1 and 2 question papers.</p> <p>2007 Drama Standard Grade Foundation, General and Credit question papers.</p> <p>1 June 2007 (afternoon)</p> <p>2007 Drama Higher question paper.</p> <p>2007 Drama Advanced Higher question paper.</p>

Candidate mark sheets were revised for the following in 2006: Practical examination (Advanced Higher and Intermediate 1 and 2) and Acting examination (Higher). You can access and download copies of these from the Drama homepage of SQA's website (see section one of this letter) Update Letters, December 2005. In particular, the Higher and Advanced Higher candidate mark sheets now contain detailed range statements. Thanks to all centres who have given us positive feedback about the effective use of these candidate mark sheets when preparing candidates for the external examination, eg in prelim-type situations.

3. Higher Drama Professional Development Workshop

SQA's Professional Development Workshop (PDW) programme has been a great success since its inception, in terms of bringing teaching colleagues together to learn about SQA standards and how they are applied to specific subject areas and levels — in this case Higher Drama. This event is dedicated to the promotion of understanding standards in the external assessment components of the Higher Drama Course: the Acting examination and the question paper.

Date	Saturday 11 November 2006
Venue	Napier University, Craiglockart Campus, Edinburgh
Cost	£150.00
Time	All day event, attributable to CPD time
Who	Open to all teachers and lecturers who deliver Higher Drama, or who are considering introducing Higher Drama in their centres

The morning session will start with delegates viewing DVD footage of a wide range of Higher Drama candidates' Acting pieces — both from Prescribed Text and Contemporary Scottish Theatre sources. The rationale and mechanics of assessment for each of these will be disseminated and then delegates will have the opportunity to mark up a range of acting pieces.

The afternoon session will be devoted to the three areas of the Higher Drama question paper: the Prescribed Text essay, the Dramatic Commentary and the Contemporary Scottish Theatre essay. Again, candidate work will be available and detailed assessment rationale will be provided.

In addition, all delegates will receive a very detailed pack of all the areas of Higher Drama covered at the PDW event which they can then take back to their centres to share with staff and use for future reference.

To date, SQA have had a very encouraging response from Drama staff. However, please note that there are still places available. We would like to encourage as many teaching colleagues as possible to sign up for the first event of its type for Drama. For details on how to register for this, please make contact with any of the following:

- ◆ SQA Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000
- ◆ SQA Co-ordinator in your school or college, who has been sent copies of the registration form
- ◆ The Drama page of SQA's website (see section one of this letter) and follow the links to information on the Drama PDW

4. Standard Grade Drama

2006 was the first examination year of the revised question paper structure in Standard Grade Drama — a move from a composite F, G, C question paper for all to separate differentiated question papers at Foundation, General and Credit levels. We would like to thank all teaching colleagues who have provided SQA with constructive feedback both during the development period and since the publication of the specimen question papers and the 2006 papers.

See the 2006 Principal Assessor's report for valuable advice on areas in which candidates performed well, areas which candidates found demanding and advice on preparation of future candidates.

See also the subject update letter of December 2005 for details on the following:

- ◆ maximum marks for each question paper
- ◆ duration of each question paper
- ◆ cut off scores
- ◆ specimen question papers
- ◆ estimates and appeals: prelim papers
- ◆ candidate entries

5. Intermediate 1 and 2 Drama

In 2006 the Intermediate 1 and 2 question papers were revised and please note that the Arrangements documents for these levels have been updated to reflect these changes. You can access the revised editions of the Arrangements documents via SQA's website (see section 1 of this letter). Summary of changes (both levels) below:

- ◆ question paper has maximum mark of 50
- ◆ Practical examination has maximum mark of 25, scaled by SQA to 50
- ◆ total marks for the two external components above is 100
- ◆ question paper duration is 1 hour 30 minutes

The following important additional information was first published in the December 2005 update letter:

- ◆ For Intermediate 1 and 2 Drama, the recommendation is that in order for candidates' full potential attainment to be assessed by the Visiting Examiner, a maximum of **12** actors should appear in any one production.
- ◆ In Intermediate 2 Drama, the minimum performance time is **five** minutes.
- ◆ The candidate mark sheets for the Practical examination were amended to reflect the revised marks allocation. See Appendix 1 of the December 2006 update letter to download and print these.

Please note at all levels of NQ Drama — Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher — it is not permitted for centres to tape the Practical or Acting Examination. If you make a recording, the advice is to record the dress rehearsal for, eg prelims, appeals evidence as this is likely to be the occasion when candidates are best prepared for the Visiting examining event.

6. Higher Drama

Study of a Text in its Theatrical Context

Please remember that three of the former Higher prescribed texts were replaced for the current session 2006/2007 for use in the 2007 examination and after. There are no further changes planned at this time.

The **new texts** are:

Twelfth Night
The Importance of Being Earnest
A Taste of Honey

These replace:

Merchant of Venice
Juno and the Paycock
Look Back in Anger

Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS) have published and distributed support notes for *Twelfth Night* and *A Taste of Honey*. Support notes for *The Importance of Being Earnest* will be available later in the year. For queries about this and any other LTS Drama teaching support materials, contact: 01382 443600.

Dramatic Commentary and Contemporary Scottish Theatre

Please note that since the 2005 examination the script extracts for the Dramatic Commentary now include one Contemporary Scottish Theatre (CST) text and each year, at this time, we notify you which CST will feature in the forthcoming examination years. Candidates who have studied that play will either work on that or on their prescribed text for the Dramatic Commentary. However, please note 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, some extra exam preparation will be necessary.

The Contemporary Scottish Theatre text for the 2007 and 2008 examinations is *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* by Muriel Spark.

Please remember that candidates should use full length plays for Higher Contemporary Scottish Theatre.

7. Advanced Higher Drama

See the 2006 Principal Assessor's report for comprehensive guidance and detailed review of candidate response for both Advanced Higher and Higher Drama.

A supplementary list of plays for study in Unit D201 13 *Drama: Special Study* was published in August 2005 for use in the 2006 examination and after. A copy of this supplementary list is available on SQA's website (see *Update Letters*). This list was produced to further broaden scope for candidates and centres and supplements the original list rather than replaces it. Centres may continue to use texts from the original list or select from the new supplementary list.

Advanced Higher Practical examination: Acting candidates

Please note that each candidate should be involved in an acting contribution which is sufficiently long to show progress of character and may involve more than one extract from the play, eg Eliza as cockney; Eliza as lady. The guidance is 7-10 minutes per candidate and the recommendation is that in order to show progress and development of character that each candidate's acting time should be towards that maximum of 10 minutes. The inclusion of more than one scene is also often helpful to show progression.

8. Estimates and appeals

As you prepare your candidates for external assessment during the session, please refer to the following advice when compiling estimates of candidate attainment and evidence for appeals purposes. See questions and answers below.

How to arrive at an overall estimate for a candidate?

The overall estimate should reflect both Course components, eg at Higher the Acting exam and the question paper and take into account any difference in weightings of these components, eg Acting exam 40%, question paper 60%.

What do we need to compile an estimate?

Take evidence of attainment for the question paper in a prelim type event which replicates the standard, conditions, duration, format and demands of an SQA question paper. Combine this with evidence of attainment in the Practical/Acting component which could come from a single assessment event which replicates the conditions, format and demands of the Practical/Acting exam, eg the dress rehearsal.

What must we have for appeals evidence?

You must have evidence for the question paper and this evidence must show the same breadth of coverage of the content of the Course as SQA's question papers. A prelim type event is going to be an indicator of likely candidate performance in the external examination when pressure of time and retention of learning are significant factors. This evidence for the question paper should again replicate the standard, conditions, duration, format and security of SQA's question papers.

How do we produce evidence of Practical/Acting for appeals purposes?

Evidence for the Practical/Acting component is not mandatory, but is desirable. Many centres are now collating evidence for this component by video taping the prelim type event or dress rehearsal. If this is not practicable for you, marking schedules or observation checklists can be submitted to support an appeal. However, if there is no alternative evidence of this sort, the original mark awarded by the Visiting Examiner remains unchanged.

Should NABs be included in appeals evidence?

In Drama, NAB items and other types of assessment may contribute to supporting an appeal, but they are insufficient in themselves as they don't replicate the conditions or content of an SQA external question paper.

Drama appeals evidence checklist for all levels including Standard Grade:

- ✓ question paper evidence
- ✓ marking instructions
- ✓ list of sources prelim-type paper is drawn from: at least three different sources
- ✓ Practical/Acting evidence (NQ levels only)
- ✓ marking schedule/observation checklist (NQ levels only)

9. Drama Markers recruitment

Our grateful thanks to all Drama colleagues who carried out marking duties for SQA in 2006. There are vacancies for Markers at all levels of Drama for the 2007 examination, and particularly at Standard Grade. We invite and would welcome teachers and lecturers with three years' experience of Drama Course delivery to apply for what is potentially an excellent professional development experience. To apply please contact Yvonne McGill on 0131-271 6740, or e-mail: yvonne.mcgill@sqa.org.uk.