

27 October 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

cc: HMIE
LEA Contacts
SQA Customer Support Managers

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications – Drama Update October 2008

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

This letter is an update on National Qualifications Courses and Units in Drama and contains important information for this current session 2008/2009.

- 1. External Assessment Timetable for Drama 2008/2009**
- 2. Internal Assessment of Drama Units**
- 3. Curriculum for Excellence / Qualifications for the Future Update**
- 4. Future Developments in Drama**

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 Joanna Morris (contact details above) or myself on 0131 561 6811 or email mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk

Yours faithfully

Mary McDonald
Qualifications Manager

2. Internal Assessment of Drama Units External Verification

Unit assessment takes place internally within centres. Candidate progress is monitored during the Unit, NAB tests are administered, reassessment opportunities are possible and then the assessment decision of Pass/Fail is made by the centre. Centres then retain candidate evidence as **all** Drama Units are subject to external SQA Verification, the purpose of which is to verify that centres' assessment decisions are in line with national standards.

Central Verification takes place in April 2009, and schools /colleges who are selected for verification are given advance notice of this in February 2009. This is the model where centres send to SQA a sample of 12 candidates' completed evidence for the particular Unit selected by SQA. Very soon after the verification event, all centres selected receive detailed written feedback which provides guidance and advice for the future.

The Drama Units which are subject to external verification can change from year to year in order to provide as much quality assurance support to centres as possible.

Who sets a Unit completion date?

Setting a Unit completion date is the responsibility of each centre and this decision is made at the point of entering candidates for a Unit. If a candidate is entered for a full Drama Course SQA's one stipulation is one of the three Course component Units must have a completion date of 31 March. See below for a full list of Course component Units and useful Course and Unit codes:

Intermediate 1 Drama (C037 10)

D193 10	Drama Skills (Int 1)
D194 10	Theatre Production Skills (Int 1)
D195 10	Production (Int 1)

Intermediate 2 Drama (C037 11)

D193 11	Drama Skills (Int 2)
D194 11	Theatre Production Skills (Int 2)
D195 11	Production (Int 2)

Higher Drama (C037 12)

D196 12	Investigative Drama (Higher)
D197 12	Study of Text in Its Theatrical Context (Higher)
D198 12	Contemporary Scottish Theatre (Higher)

Advanced Higher Drama (C037 13)

D199 13	Devised Drama (AH)
D200 13	Twentieth Century Theatre – Theories of Performance (AH)
D201 13	Drama: Special Study (AH)

When should Unit assessment take place?

Again, this is a centre decision but first consider the Unit completion date you have set, consulting carefully the NAB document for each particular Unit. See the section in the NAB entitled *Assessment conditions* and be aware that advice on assessment timings will vary according to the nature of the delivery and the evidence requirements for each Unit. However, where a NAB states that assessment should take place towards the end of a particular Unit, time that assessment event carefully so that 1) you ensure that the candidates are ready for this and 2) in the case of a candidate not attaining the necessary standard, you leave time for diagnosis, revision, consolidation and necessary remedial work so that reassessment opportunities can be given before the Unit completion date.

NAB instruments of assessment can be used flexibly in this way. However, please remember that National Assessment Bank materials are designed to be used for internal Unit assessment and reassessment purposes and they should not be used as class tests. Please note also that although NABs may lend weight to any Appeal, they are not sufficient in themselves as they don't reflect the conditions, format or content of external examination Question Papers. For prelim-type events, use Question Papers which reflect the duration, format, conditions and sampled content of the SQA Specimen Question Paper or past SQA Question Papers. Please remember that, for Appeals purposes, a prelim type paper must be drawn from at least **three** different sources. This is line with all other subjects.

3. Curriculum for Excellence / Qualifications for the Future Update

The Scottish Government is currently finalising its consultation on the next generation of National Qualifications for Scotland as part of its Curriculum for Excellence programme. The consultation period ends on 31st October 2008. Thereafter, responses will be analysed by Ipsos Mori and a report will be made to the Government. It is anticipated that the Government's formal response will be published in the spring of 2009. SQA is currently establishing a new *Curriculum for Excellence* Qualifications Development Team to lead the development of new and revised qualifications emerging from the consultation.

Action research projects:

Following the success of last year's projects and their showcase at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2008, SQA is delighted to announce that six new projects have recently been commissioned. The six projects involve participant led exploration of assessment, attainment and achievement through existing SQA qualifications with a view to informing innovation and change within Curriculum for Excellence. Projects include developments in online assessment; Core Skills; vocational approaches to modern languages; personal development.

For further details on any of this work please contact John Allan, SQA Policy and New Products team. Email: john.allan@sqa.org.uk

4. Future Developments in Drama

Background

Since September 2006, SQA has been working on the development of new Group Awards provision in Drama and these Group Awards will be available from August 2009 onwards. There will be two new Group Awards available: –
Drama: Performance and *Drama: Technical Theatre*. Both of these National Certificate awards are at SCQF Level 6 (Higher level).

These Group Awards are made up of National Qualifications Units and each award has a mandatory and an optional section which is made up of a wide variety of Drama and Drama-related Units to provide choice, flexibility and opportunities for specialism.

To gain the Group Award qualification 12 Unit credits are required. While it is anticipated that Further Education Colleges will be the main deliverers of the Group Award the many new Units which are currently being developed will be available for schools to use on a free standing basis and this may, in turn, offer new articulated pathways in Drama to school students. Please remember that if a student is entered for a full Course award, they must also be entered for the component Units of that Course – see the table of page 3 of this letter for details of these. These new Units will be available as additional and/or alternative provision.

New Units

See below for titles of some of these new Units:

Drama: Acting Skills (SCQF Level 6)
Drama: Theatre Skills in Performance (SCQF Level 6)
Theatre Performance (SCQF Level 6)
Professional Theatre in Context (SCQF Level 6)
Writing Dramatic Text: An Introduction (SCQF Level 6)
Technical Theatre in Context (SCQF Level 6)
Technical Theatre Workshop Skills (SCQF Level 6)
Multimedia Production for Theatre (SCQF Level 6)
Theatrical Design (SCQF Level 6)
Performing Arts Industry: An Introduction (SCQF Level 6)

More Information

Please access www.sqa.org.uk. National Qualifications, Drama, NQGA link for full details of the new Units and development schedules.

We will write to you again in the spring of 2009 with full details of what will be available and when.