

ESOL Information Day Report

'All you need to know about SQA activity in English for Speakers of Other Languages'

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has developed a National Qualifications (NQ) framework for English for Speakers Of Other Languages (ESOL). From August 2006 this framework will also include Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses in ESOL.

Uptake for ESOL Units in the framework and interest in the new Courses has been very encouraging and SQA has been working closely with centres interested and currently delivering ESOL NQ Units. However, SQA is keen to ensure that all those with an interest in ESOL from the wider education community are given as much information as possible.

On 8 March 2006 SQA held an information-giving event on all aspects of SQA activity in ESOL for the wider education community. This included schools, colleges and community groups who are interested in, or are currently offering, ESOL Units. The event gave an update on developments across the following areas of SQA ESOL activity:

- 1) ESOL and Citizenship
- 2) National Qualifications (NQ) ESOL and future developments
- 3) Higher National and Vocational Qualification developments
- 4) SQA's website demonstration

1) ESOL and Citizenship

Jean Wilson, co-chair of NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults) and chair of the Scottish Advisory Board for Naturalisation and Integration (ABNI), outlined SQA's plans for ESOL and Citizenship.

Integration/Citizenship programmes play a pivotal role in promoting social cohesion and mutual respect for diversities, improving individual employment prospects and ultimately benefiting the economy in each of the UK's four nations.

From 1 November 2005, adults between 18 and 65 applying for naturalisation will need to prove knowledge of life in the UK as well as their English language ability. There are different possible routes that a person applying for naturalisation can take. One route is to take the online test, based on the *Life in the UK* handbook. The other route is to gain an ESOL qualification from SQA, from a Course using the Citizenship for ESOL materials, which offers a more educationally enriching experience for learners wishing to improve their English. This would provide evidence of English language attainment and knowledge of life in the UK that would be acceptable to the Home Office.

SQA has been awarded a £50k grant from the Home Office to adapt UK-devised Civil Life/Citizenship materials to meet the requirements of those wishing to gain

naturalisation and reside in Scotland. The programme is now underway and is being overseen by the Scottish Executive, SQA and Scottish and UK ABNI. The new materials include three new sections in the *Citizenship for ESOL Materials* pack for Scotland — Education, Parliament and the Legal System. They have also been adapted to the Scottish assessment context and are being piloted in five locations: Anniesland College, Langside College, Inverness WEA, Dundee College and Stevenson College.

At present the ESOL and Citizenship Course comprises two Units at Access 3 level, however this is being reviewed to ensure parity with England and Wales and is in the process of change, and is expected to become one Unit at Intermediate 1 or below.

The ESOL and Citizenship materials pack can be downloaded or ordered from www.esolcitizenship.org.uk. A free Dissemination Conference will take place on 27 June 2006 at the Scottish Further Education Unit in Stirling to showcase the work of the pilot projects. Additional materials will be available, as will a demonstration on how materials can be utilised with beginner learners, and also how they can be contextualised to meet the needs of different geographical locations in Scotland.

2) NQ ESOL Framework

Ann Morgan-Thomas, SQA NQ ESOL Development Officer, gave an overview of the NQ ESOL framework including the launch of the new NQ ESOL Courses. Ann has recently joined SQA from her role as Head of Community Based ESOL at Stevenson College, Edinburgh.

The new NQ ESOL framework is based on five principles:

- ◆ Inclusion: supporting full participation by new arrivals and existing settled communities in Scottish life
- ◆ Diversity: recognising the cultures of learners and their contribution to society and the economy
- ◆ Quality: ensuring best practice in teaching, learning and assessment
- ◆ Achievement: promoting academic and vocational attainment and personal and social achievement
- ◆ Progression: supporting routes into further learning, employment and community life

The NQ ESOL framework contains 13 Units and provides accreditation for all levels, from beginner ESOL learners to those at Higher level.

What does the NQ ESOL framework offer?

- ◆ Like all SQA qualifications, the ESOL NQ framework is linked to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This will provide meaningful evidence of competence to stakeholders, especially to employers, Colleges, and Higher Education institutions.

- ◆ ESOL learners and teachers in the college sector have often been isolated from mainstream college activity. The new NQ framework places ESOL firmly within mainstream provision.
- ◆ Like all SQA assessment, the Units are outcome-based. ESOL learners can now become familiar with standard assessment processes, encountered initially in the environment of ESOL provision. This will give students the opportunity to progress to further study in Further and Higher Education. FE colleges are already developing pathways that enable students who have achieved SQA ESOL Units to progress to study National Certificates and Higher National Qualifications.
- ◆ Achievement of an SQA NQ ESOL Unit or Course provides accreditation which is recognisable to employers who are already familiar with SQA qualification levels.
- ◆ Learners receive accreditation in an educationally enriching manner to meet the ‘knowledge of language and life in the UK’ requirement for Citizenship.
- ◆ SQA NQ ESOL qualifications support and assess the four key skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Topics and tasks are relevant to learners and reflect the skills and knowledge needed by learners to help them live, work and study in Scotland.

What is planned for the future?

- ◆ From August 2006 the NQ ESOL framework will also include NQ Courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages at Higher and Intermediate 2 levels. The Courses will include three Units from the NQ framework plus an additional graded external assessment in June. Launch events will be held in late May and these will be the main vehicle for the dissemination of information and resources.
- ◆ Learning and teaching support materials will be developed including e-support materials for ESOL and Citizenship
- ◆ Monthly Unit certification will be available for ESOL and Citizenship.
- ◆ Flexible Course certification with the intended introduction of an additional examination diet over and above the annual summer diet is planned.
- ◆ It is intended that the assessment of some of the Units will, in time, be made available online.
- ◆ Development of alternative assessment materials for ESOL is also being considered, incorporating the Active Citizenship approach.

3) Higher National and Vocational Qualification developments

Carol Hunter, SQA Qualifications Manager, gave an update on SQA ESOL activity in the Higher National and Vocational Qualifications sectors.

HN Unit *Workplace Communication in English*

This Unit is included as an optional Unit in all HN Group Award frameworks. It is aimed at candidates for whom English is an additional language. It certifies skills in oral and written communication in English both for academic and vocational purposes. The Unit is levelled at SCQF level 6 and embeds the core skill of Communication at Intermediate 2. The Unit specification and accompanying assessment exemplar are available on SQA's website.

Basic Communication in English as a Foreign Language Units and English as a Foreign Language for Vocational Purposes Units

The current HN Units *Basic Communication in English as a Foreign Language 1-3* and *English as a Foreign Language for Vocational Purposes* — Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced are currently being revised and will be re-published in May 2006. Revised Units will be re-structured and levelled as follows:

Basic Communication in ESOL: Listening and Speaking, 1 credit, SCQF level 5, SVQ level 2 (Intermediate 2)

Basic Communication in ESOL: Reading and Writing, 1 credit, SCQF level 5, SVQ level 2 (Intermediate 2)

ESOL for Vocational Purposes: Elementary, 3 credits, SCQF level 6, SVQ level 3 (Higher C pass)

ESOL for Vocational Purposes: Intermediate, 3 credits, SCQF level 6, SVQ level 3+ (Higher A pass)

ESOL for Vocational Purposes: Advanced, 3 credits, SCQF level 7, SVQ level 3++ (Advanced Higher C pass)

Assessment exemplars will be produced to accompany these Units.

Professional Development Award in *ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy* G7PY 16

In March 2005 the SQA validated a Professional Development Award in *ESOL Literacies: Teaching Adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy*. The award was developed in conjunction with the Glasgow ESOL Forum and Learning Connections Communities Scotland.

The award is intended as a Continuing Professional Development award for qualified teachers of ESOL. Its principal aim is to provide competences in teaching literacies to adult ESOL literacies learners.

Future developments for consideration

SQA is currently conducting research into the demand and viability of providing Continuing Professional Development accreditation for teaching staff, classroom assistants, centre managers, Co-ordinators and volunteers within the Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and Community sectors. Research areas include the following:

- ◆ bi-lingualism
- ◆ language acquisition process
- ◆ cognitive development
- ◆ lesson planning
- ◆ learning and teaching approaches
- ◆ assessment
- ◆ adapting teaching materials

HN Communication Units

SQA is about to review its HN Communication Servicing Units. One of the primary aims of this review is to ensure that the Units do not create unnecessary barriers to access for candidates for whom English is an additional language.

4) SQA's website demonstration

Eunice McAllister, Business Development Manager responsible for ESOL, gave a demonstration on how to access and navigate the NQ and HN ESOL sections of SQA's website. The following points were highlighted:

- ◆ Start up and development visits for schools, colleges and community organisations
- ◆ Support materials:
 - Unit descriptors (downloadable from SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk)
 - National Assessment Bank assessment materials (available to SQA Co-ordinators)
 - Audio material on CD (available from SQA Customer Contact Centre)
 - National Assessment Bank support materials (available to SQA Co-ordinators)
 - Examples of Candidate Work: *Speaking: Access 2–Higher*
 - Examples of Candidate Work: *Writing: Access 2–Higher*

If you would like more details on any aspect of the information given at the event, please contact:

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