

28 November 2005

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges
EA Special Schools
Independent Secondary
Higher Education Institutions

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

Contact Name: Alan Wilson at Glasgow
Direct Line: 0141-242 2242
E-mail: alan.wilson@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update

The contents of this letter should be passed on to the member of staff responsible for Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig subjects.

Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig Update

We wish to bring the following matters to your attention.

1 Examination Diet 2005: PA reports

Principal Assessor reports were published on SQA's website in autumn 2005. These can be accessed at: www.sqa.org.uk, by selecting the appropriate subject from the NQ drop-down menu. These reports offer concise and useful information and advice to centres on the performance of candidates in 2005.

2 Examination Diet 2005: Release of component marks at Advanced Higher

Centres are reminded that component marks for each area of performance at Advanced Higher are available from 2005 onwards. This information will be available to centres at notification of awards in August 2006.

3 Examination Diet 2005: Publication of marking instructions

All marking instructions for this year's examinations were published on SQA's website in November 2005. These instructions have been finalised at Markers' meetings and will provide useful reference in preparing candidates. Instructions to Markers are also included in the materials.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage teachers and lecturers with experience to apply to become Markers at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, in both languages. Application forms can be obtained from our Customer Contact Centre (tel: 0845 279 1000). They can also be downloaded from our website at: www.sqa.org.uk. (Select 'NQ Markers' from the 'Choose a section' menu.)

4 Standard Grade and NQ Listening examinations

From 2006 Listening material for examinations at Standard Grade and National Courses will be supplied on CD format only. Centres should ensure that they have adequate provision of equipment for this purpose.

5 National Qualification (NQ) Review launches

SQA would like to express its gratitude to members of the Gaelic teaching profession and the teaching organisation CLAS for their valuable participation and feedback during the review process.

Writing of National Assessment Bank (NAB) material is underway and many thanks are also due to those who are involved in this important part of the review.

Members of the profession are still encouraged to become involved in writing NAB material, both to alleviate the workload of the existing writers and as a personal and professional development tool.

The formal launch events for the qualifications will take place at the Thistle Hotel (formerly known as the Mercury Hotel) in Inverness on the following dates:

Gaelic (Learners)	Thursday 24 November 2005
Gàidhlig	Friday 25 November 2005

In appreciation of the distances being covered by delegates, SQA has offered to pay accommodation costs for those attending on both days.

A full programme of presentations and workshops has been scheduled, with information packs containing the complete Course specifications, NAB material (Higher), Course assessment specifications and specimen question papers (Higher) to be distributed on each day.

There will also be a presentation from Bill Boyd of Learning Teaching Scotland, who will provide helpful information on support material being developed for the new qualifications.

Your attendance at one or both of the days is strongly encouraged as it will provide a timely opportunity to discuss the reviewed qualifications, not just with SQA, but with your colleagues in the Gaelic teaching profession.

6 NQ Review Access 3

These specifications have been revised in light of the changes made to the qualifications as part of the NQ Review and will be published on SQA's website as soon as possible.

7 Assessment of Writing from 2006/2007 (Appendix I)

One significant change in the Course assessment is the fact that Writing, at all levels, will now be assessed on the day of the examination, as part of the question paper. In other words, there will no longer be a requirement to produce written folios or reports.

The Course assessment specification and specimen question papers (which are being finalised at the moment and will be distributed as soon as possible) will illustrate how the changes to this part of the assessment will look.

In the meantime, please see Appendix (I) for more specific information on the Course assessment of Writing.

8 Guidelines on allocation of candidates to Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig Courses (Appendix II)

The allocation of candidates to the correct Courses for their level of ability in the language is of great importance to the Gaelic language.

Candidates who are fluent in Gaelic must be allocated to Gàidhlig Courses, as these have been tailored to their needs and are unique to Scotland. **The allocation of fluent candidates to Courses designed for learners of the language is not permitted.**

Please see attached Appendix (II) for further guidance on this matter.

9 Gaelic Orthographic Conventions 2005

Please note that the above SQA publication has been revised and copies are in the process of being distributed. The publication is also available free to download from SQA's website.

SQA would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the work of this project, vital to teachers and all users of the language.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this update letter in more detail please do not hesitate to contact either myself on **0141-242 2242**, or my colleague Marilyn Waters on **0141-242 2195**.

Yours faithfully,



Alan Wilson
Qualifications Manager