

29 June 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary schools and FE colleges
Education authorities
Customer Account Managers

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications update — Geography

This briefing note is intended to offer practical advice and support on a number of issues and should be distributed to those staff responsible for Geography.

It contains information on the following:

1. Use of half marks at Higher level
 - a. Marking of question paper
 - b. NABs
 - c. Specimen question paper
 - d. Understanding Standards
2. Guidance note on Higher Geography
3. Higher Geography Arrangements from 2008/09
 - a. Minor changes to *Physical Environments* Unit
 - b. Change to paper 2 from 2008/09
4. Advanced Higher — feedback on candidate performance in external assessment
5. Advanced Higher NABs
6. Guidance on Absentee Candidates, Estimates and Appeals

1. Use of half marks at Higher level

a. Marking of question paper

Centres are reminded that from August 2007 the use of half marks in the marking of Higher Geography will be discontinued. This information was first communicated to centres in the update letter issued in December 2006. The advice provided in that letter is repeated below.

From diet 2008:

- ◆ all questions in the external assessment will be worth twice the number of marks currently awarded, eg what was formerly a six mark question will in future be marked out of 12
- ◆ paper 1 will be out of 100 and paper 2 will also be marked out of 100

There will be no other change to the marking instructions, ie where Markers previously ticked part of an answer to show the candidate had made a valid point and awarded ½ a mark, they should continue to tick these responses in exactly the same way but should award one (1) whole mark for every tick. Candidates will have to write no more or less in their answers than is currently required.

b. NABs

The existing NABs available on SQA's secure website (www.sqa.org.uk/sqasecure) are being updated to reflect the removal of half marks. This means that all NABs for the *Physical Environments* (DF3C 12), *Human Environments* (DF43 12) and *Environmental Interactions* (DF44 12) Units will be out of 50. Cut off scores for these NABs will be 25 for each. These revised NABs will be able to be downloaded from this site in August 2007. At Intermediate 2 level the use of half marks is also being discontinued and those marking instructions which make use of half marks within them will be revised accordingly. SQA Co-ordinators will be given details of the NABs affected and these will also be revised by August 2007.

c. Specimen question paper

A new specimen question paper to reflect the use of whole single marks will be placed on the Geography page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). This will be based on the question paper used at the 2007 diet and will show how the removal of half marks will affect questions and the associated marking instructions.

d. Understanding Standards

The exemplification materials on the interactive Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk) will also be amended. The revised materials on this site will use actual scripts from the 2007 diet. This site gives users the chance to mark these scripts, compare their marking with the national standard and provides a commentary from the Examining Team on the application of the marking guidelines. This updated site will be available during the autumn of 2007.

Centres should note, therefore, that in constructing prelim exams for the 2008 diet all questions candidates are asked to complete should, if selected from past papers, have the marks allocation doubled and the marking instructions amended to reflect this.

2. Guidance note on Higher Geography

The Appendix to this update letter provides guidance to centres on a number of cross cutting themes which are likely to be present in the teaching of Geography at all levels. This paper refers specifically to Higher level but much of its content is of value for other levels as well. The main focus of the note is to show how selected cross cutting themes can be delivered within the existing Higher Geography Arrangements. The cross cutting themes addressed are:

- ◆ Globalisation

- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Citizenship
- ◆ Sustainable development

3. Higher Geography Arrangements from 2008/09

The cross cutting themes referred to in the Appendix to this letter illustrate how the existing Arrangements at Higher level can accommodate teaching of these themes. SQA has been considering further how these themes could be given a greater focus within Geography teaching and, after consultation with the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers and the Geography Assessment Panel, it has been decided to implement the following changes.

a. Minor changes to *Geography: Physical Environments (DF3C 12) Unit*

- i. Within the Atmosphere section (page 32) the third bullet point in part 1 — ‘Global scale’ in the Atmosphere section will be extended by adding a further line as follows:

‘ — possible consequences of global warming’

- ii. Within the Hydrosphere section (page 33) a third bullet point will be added in part 1 — ‘Hydrological cycle’. This will read as follows:

‘human inputs to, and impacts on, the hydrological cycle’

b. Change to paper 2

The division of this paper into two parts, Section A and Section B, will be removed. Candidates will be free to answer any two questions in this paper. This means that centres no longer have to ensure that candidates can answer one question on ‘physical environmental interactions’ and one question on ‘human environmental interactions’. It is expected that this will allow centres to integrate more closely some of the themes which can be addressed within the different interactions. There will continue to be one separate question on each of the six environmental interactions in paper 2.

To allow centres to adjust to these changes they will not be introduced until **session 2008/09**.

4. Advanced Higher — feedback on candidate performance in external assessment

For this year’s diet SQA is aiming to provide centres with more detailed feedback on the performance of their candidates in the Geographical Folio component of the Course assessment at Advanced Higher level. This is the second year of a pilot exercise being conducted by SQA into expanding the use of electronic marks capture from Markers. It is hoped that this will streamline marking procedures and further improve the quality assurance procedures associated with marking. An outcome of this will be that centres will receive an electronic copy of the marks received by each candidate for the eight separate marking criteria used for the folio, four for the Geographical Study and four for the Geographical Issue. This information should be provided to centres by the end of August 2007.

5. Advanced Higher NABs

SQA will shortly be adding a further NAB for the Advanced Higher *Geography Issues* Unit to the secure area of our website. As with previous NABs this new one will contain six separate instruments of assessment. SQA Co-ordinators will be contacted when these become available.

6. Guidance on Absentee Candidates, Estimates and Appeals

As a consequence of representations made to SQA by centres, some amendments have been made to the Geography pages in the folder which was issued to centres in December 2006. These amendments provide further clarification for all social subjects about evidence which may be submitted for absentee candidates or appeals. The revised version will shortly be available for downloading from the homepage of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

I hope that the notes above are of help to you. If you have any queries about these or any other related issues please contact me or Greg Storey, the Qualifications Officer in this area, at the details given above.

Yours faithfully



Keith H Wright
Qualifications Manager Social Subjects

June 2007

APPENDIX

GUIDANCE NOTE ON CROSS CUTTING THEMES IN GEOGRAPHY

Introduction

The following guidance note provides advice about how selected cross cutting themes covered within the existing Arrangements documents can be included in the learning and teaching experiences of candidates. It is hoped that this may be useful to centres both as a planning tool and as a note which might be helpful if carrying out audits of Course content in connection with some or all of these cross cutting themes.

This advice refers to Higher level but can also be used at other levels of Geography as well.

Guidance note

The increasingly sophisticated and changing national and global environment is one in which the many complex relationships lend themselves to being studied from a geographical perspective. The existing Arrangements at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher have been designed in such a way that learning and teaching experiences can be devised to ensure that this is reflected within the skills and knowledge identified.

This note identifies the four specific themes of

- ◆ Globalisation
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Citizenship
- ◆ Sustainable development

and highlights how these can be addressed within the existing Arrangements. It also illustrates how the mandatory topics might be used to enable these themes to be covered at different points in the learning and teaching programme.

The information which follows is for guidance only, and is not mandatory.

Globalisation of industry

While globalisation affects many aspects of life a natural topic in which to embed this theme is, although relevant in others, the **Industry** topic in the *Human Environments* Unit.

Whilst Industrial Systems are traditionally taught through case studies of heavy industry in industrial concentrations within the EU it may also be appropriate to focus on more up-to-date manufacturing industries such as bio-medics and other research and development industries. Traditional location factors are still relevant under the historical changes section.

There is scope within the Industrial Change section of the Arrangements to focus on more recent reasons for change, eg labour costs and global communications systems. These might be associated with the growth in service industries, the increasing evidence of a consumer oriented society, the globalisation of communication networks, and the growth and influence of trans-national corporations. The emergence of industrial concentrations in other parts of the world can be shown to have an impact on more traditional ones within the EU. At a more

local level employment opportunities in remote UK communities might be studied. More attention might also be paid to the political influences on location. Reference to growth of call centres and financial services in the UK might be useful and valid.

The implications of globalisation of industry might also provide a context to refer to the carbon footprint of industry in relation to the increasing interdependence of production and distribution facilities.

There is scope for globalisation to be tackled within the **Urban Change and its Management** by references to recent industrial expansion. The relocation of manufacturing industry from EMDCs to ELDCs can degrade and/or improve urban environments in other parts of the world. Depending on the case study city chosen, the growth of Asian call centres could, for example, also be relevant in the context of urban change.

Globalisation of industry may also be covered through the **Development and Health** topic when discussing the reasons for differences in development within newly industrialising countries and other ELDCs. Globalisation may also be a factor affecting the different rates of regional development within ELDCs depending on the case study chosen. Cities within India and China, for example, are changing rapidly due to the globalisation of industry.

Climate change

The starting point for discussing climate change may lie within the **Atmosphere** topic which specifies the human and physical causes of climate change. From August 2008 the specification for the *Physical Environments* Unit at Higher level will additionally state that candidates should cover the 'possible consequences' of global warming as well as the 'the physical and human causes'. Climate change could perhaps also be more successfully addressed within the contexts for other topics.

Additional causes of climate change could be noted within the **Rural** topic (Rural Change) with reference to south and east Asia where increases in rice production and cattle farming is leading to greater methane production. Reference might also be made to the likelihood of increased irrigation in areas of extensive wheat production as rainfall patterns change. The expansion of the extensive cultivation of 'biofuel' crops may place disproportionate demands on water resources in relation to the benefits accrued from the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Depending on case study cities chosen, **Urban** developments may be affected by rising river levels such as prestige waterfront developments in many EMDCs. Within the **Population** topic, the role of climate change might be considered as a contributory factor in explaining migration, eg movement south in sub-Saharan Africa.

The consequences of climate change could be addressed through environmental interaction topics as well. For example, in the **Rural Land Resources** topic, change in temperatures will impact on the rural land use and economic activity such as in the Cairngorms. The regional case studies for **Rural Land Degradation** indicate that climatic variability and its associated problems should be studied, thus allowing reference to its social, economic and environmental impact. Within **River Basin Management**, flood control schemes may be more likely to be required in areas where rainfall increases and the distribution of such schemes may change. The need for water resource management will increase in areas of rainfall decrease. In teaching **Urban Change and its Management**, climate change may be a factor in the location of new urban developments and may impact on quality of the

environment. In **Development and Health**, it is likely to affect the distribution of water related diseases and impact on the effectiveness of some strategies for controlling disease.

Citizenship

Aspects of citizenship can be found in all issue based topics in Geography. Citizenship deals with issues including participating in discussions of issues of public concern, understanding how choices have an impact on the need and rights of others locally and globally and the environment, and being able to discuss the values which underpin decision making.

On a global level, it is concerned with Scotland's links with other parts of the world, differences in opportunities between our own and other communities, how our actions can affect others and our ability to discuss world events and issues of concern.

This underpins almost all interactions and human environment topics in the Higher Geography Course thus enabling this theme to be covered on many occasions in the teaching and learning environment.

Some examples could include:

- ◆ relocation of industry
- ◆ environmental problems and conflict in rural land resource topics
- ◆ impact of government policies affecting rural areas
- ◆ how human actions modify ecosystems — both locally and globally
- ◆ the impact of water control projects on the human and physical environment
- ◆ inequalities within large urban concentrations
- ◆ inequalities within the EU and policies to address these inequalities
- ◆ reasons for differences in living standards between and within countries

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is about improving our wellbeing without jeopardising anyone else's opportunity to do the same locally, globally or in the future. It is highly unlikely that the Course can be delivered without reference to all six principles of sustainable development (see www.ltscotland.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment/about/index.asp).

These six principles are summarised below with relevant notes indicating some ways in which they might be included within a Higher Geography Course.

- ◆ **Interdependence** — understanding connections between all aspects of our lives and between people on a local and global scale — how what happens in one place can influence another — a theme which underpins almost all topics. Arrangements from August 2008 require candidates to additionally look at the 'human inputs to and impact on' the hydrological cycle as part of the *Human Environments* Unit. In the **Hydrosphere** topic this may include references to the impact of urban developments or rural drainage schemes, and through **River Basin Management** candidates will study the impact of water management schemes on both local and adjacent areas. Further opportunities to refer to this theme are found in **Atmosphere** — climate change, **Population** — migration, **Industry, European Regional Inequalities** — impact of government policy, and **Urban** — changes in urban areas.

- ◆ **Diversity** — appreciating the value of diversity in people’s lives — cultural, social, economic and ecological. Diverse societies are taught through the **Rural, Population, Urban Change and its Management, Development and Health** topics, and economic diversity can be looked at through **Development and Health** and **European Regional Inequalities**. Diverse landscapes and ecologies are inevitably covered in **Rural, Industry, Rural Land Resources** and **Rural Land Degradation**
- ◆ **Carrying Capacity** — understanding that there are limits to the world’s resources and appreciating that there are consequences of unmanaged and unsustainable growth. The implications of **Population** change, conflict arising from competing demands on the landscape (**Rural Land Resources**), the modifications of ecosystems in **Rural Land Degradation** can each provide a focus for the discussion of this principle.
- ◆ **Rights and Responsibilities** — promotes the consideration of the rights and needs of others and the recognition that what we do has implications for others. An example could be a study of the implications of **Industrial** change, or within the interactions topics, the impact of EU policy on **European Regional Inequalities** and ELDC exports. **Urban** change also impacts on the sustainability of different environments. Many of the issues covered in **Rural Land Resources** and **River Basin Management** will involve individuals and communities and the impact of land use management decisions on them and on others.
- ◆ **Equality and Justice** — the underlying causes of inequality and the need to ensure that development benefits people in an equitable way. **European Regional Inequalities** studies inequality at a regional level and **Development and Health** at both a regional and global scale.
- ◆ **Uncertainty and Precaution** — our actions may have unforeseen consequences and the need to encourage a cautious approach to development. This theme will permeate **all environmental interactions** as candidates gain an awareness of the impact people have on the planet.

THE RELEVANCE OF THIS GUIDANCE NOTE TO QUESTION PAPERS

This guidance note does not change the mandatory section of the Course Arrangements for Geography. This mandatory content is contained within the appendices to each of the Units which comprise the Course. This guidance should be treated as an additional note on the content, contexts, learning and teaching sections of the Course and Unit specifications. These sections of the specifications are provided as support notes.

Examination questions from 2009 may take account of some of the points referred to in this guidance note. They will continue to assess the mandatory content and may utilise resources which reflect some of the broader ideas outlined above. Candidates will not be expected to have any specific knowledge of additional content to that noted in the appendices of the Unit specifications but, as is currently the case, they will be rewarded for demonstrating relevant knowledge which lies beyond the mandatory content or utilises case study examples which go beyond the more traditionally favoured options. Case study examples will continue to require to be drawn from the prescribed real contexts.

Centres are, however, reminded that there will be minor changes to the Appendix of the *Physical Environments* Unit. These take effect from August 2008 and these can be legitimately assessed in examinations from 2009.