

11 November 2005

To: SQA Co-ordinator (Secondary Schools,
Special Schools and Further Education Colleges)
Scottish Executive
HMIE
Directors of Education
Geology Assessment Panel members
Higher Education Institutions – Department of Education
Customer Account Managers

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of
National Qualifications in Geology**

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Geology

This letter is intended to provide centres with an update on National Qualifications and should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Geology.

1 Principal Assessor Reports for 2005

The Principal Assessor (PA) reports for all NQ Courses in Geology are available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

The Principal Assessor Reports include details of statistical information on entries; grade boundaries at C, B and A; and comments on candidate performance — including areas where candidates performed well in the external assessment, areas where candidates had difficulty with the external assessment and areas of common misunderstanding.

2 Marking Instructions

The marking instructions for the Geology (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher) 2005 examinations are available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

3 **Style of Examination Question Papers**

In Diet 2003 the Geology Intermediate 1 question paper was written without the use of a formal reference to figures, tables, graphs etc, and non-subject-specific language was simplified. This change was introduced to improve accessibility to the paper for candidates and was well-received.

In Diet 2005 the Geology Intermediate 2 question paper was written in a similar style, ie without the use of a formal reference to figures, tables, graphs etc, and non-subject-specific language was simplified.

In Diet 2006 the Geology Higher question paper will be written in a similar style.

Specimen question papers reflecting the new style are available on the NQ Geology subject-specific page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

4 **NABs in Geology**

The NABs D246 11, D248 11 and D249 12 were amended to reflect the changes made to the role of the fieldwork component in the external assessment of the National Courses in Geology at Higher and Intermediate 2 levels, and also to reflect the new style of writing in question papers, ie written without the use of a formal reference to figures, tables, graphs etc.

Intermediate 2

D8XK 11 <i>Minerals and Rocks</i>	previously D246 11 <i>Earth Materials — Rocks and Minerals</i>
D8XL 11 <i>History of the Earth</i>	previously D248 11 <i>History of the Earth</i>

Higher

D8XK 12 <i>Minerals and Rocks</i>	previously D249 12 <i>Minerals and Rocks</i>
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NABs D8XK 11 *Minerals and Rocks*, D8XL 11 *History of the Earth* and D8XK 12 *Minerals and Rocks* are available on the secure section of SQA's website.

5 **Simulated Fieldwork Study**

A simulated fieldwork study pack, designed to meet the needs of Geology Intermediate 2 candidates who are unable to carry out fieldwork in the normal way, has been written. The pack is available on the LTS website (www.ltscotland.org.uk).

The pack contains materials to meet the requirements of the fieldwork component for Geology Intermediate 2, but can be adapted for use at other levels. These materials can also be adapted for use to suit individual centre and candidate circumstances.

Additional guidance notes on the assessment process are provided for the teacher in Section 1, and there is a Student Guide in Section 2. The Appendix to the pack gives further guidance on the assessment of fieldwork at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels.

6 Exemplar Fieldwork Reports

Exemplification materials are being produced to illustrate the standards required for the Intermediate 2 and Higher Geology fieldwork reports. The exemplification materials will also highlight areas of good practice. These materials will be available on the secure section of SQA's website at the end of January 2006.

Fieldwork reports contribute to the Course assessment at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels. Information on the requirements for the fieldwork reports is contained in the Units:

D250 12	<i>Earth Physics, Structural Geology and Plate Tectonics</i> (Higher)
D247 11	<i>Earth Physics and Earth Movements</i> (Intermediate 2)

7 Appeals 2005

I would like to take the opportunity to direct you to the NQ Geology subject-specific page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) and the publication *Estimates, Absentees and External Assessment Appeals: guidance on evidence requirements* (April 2004). The publication provides guidance (both generic and subject-specific) for centres which are delivering National Courses.

I hope you find the information in this letter helpful.

Yours faithfully

Noël Donoghue

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