

3 November 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools  
and colleges of further education)  
Directors of Education  
SCIS  
Customer Account Managers

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	Note — update/information only

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E-mail: [larry.cheyne@sqa.org.uk](mailto:larry.cheyne@sqa.org.uk)

Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications update — History**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for History.

### **SQA's website**

The subject page on SQA's website is the main source of information on National Qualifications in History. It contains the current and past External and Internal Assessment reports (formerly the reports of Principal Assessors and the Senior Verifier), Course Specifications/Arrangements documents (including Access 3 Social Subjects) and specimen papers, previous National Qualifications updates and marking instructions for the 2008 and recent diets. The address of the website is **[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**. On the homepage, select 'Services for Centres', then 'History' from the drop-down National Qualifications menu, and then select 'GO'.

### **Plans and Flyleafs**

Plans for the Extended Response and Extended Essay can only be downloaded from SQA's website. Flyleafs and notes for the submission of candidates' Extended Response, Extended Essay and Dissertation are now available only via SQA Co-ordinators.

## **Specimen question papers**

Revised specimen question papers for all NQ levels (ie Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher), along with their associated Course Assessment Specifications, are now on SQA's website. These define the parameters of the Course Assessments.

## **Course materials checklists**

These summary guides to the location and purpose of essential Course documentation have been updated. They are the first port of call for any subject queries.

## **Update on the 2008 diet**

Principal Assessors and their examining teams are warmly thanked for their efforts in delivering a successful diet. The full reports of the Principal Assessors (now termed External Assessment reports) are on SQA's website. These are invaluable sources of advice and good practice. Centre staff are urged most strongly to avail themselves of the information contained there.

Centres are reminded that all areas of the syllabus may be sampled. Sampling ensures that candidates cover the content adequately. Hence there are no areas that will be examined every year. Centres should bear this in mind when preparing candidates.

Further points to bear in mind for each level are:

### *Advanced Higher*

The revised Arrangements document and specimen question paper are now on SQA's website. There are small changes in some of the Fields' enhanced descriptors. The biggest changes are in the Renaissance, with minor changes in US Civil War, South Africa and Britain at War and Peace. Louis XIV has been removed from the Course. This means the title number of many of the fields will change. Germany for instance will become Field 7. Centres are asked to keep this in mind when completing paperwork for entries for the 2009 diet.

There is also a change in the requirements for completing the dissertation NAB where, by the additional completion of a review of working methods/reading, a full Core Skill is gained. This makes it imperative that dissertations are completed before any deadline date, to give teachers the chance to monitor and discuss progress.

The number of essays in Part 1 of the Course Assessment will drop from six to five in 2009. As before, essay questions can come from any part of the descriptor but the source questions will be drawn from the italicised areas.

Revised NABs for all Fields and for the dissertation are now available from SQA Co-ordinators. Older versions of NABs should be discarded.

A revised list of Dissertation titles (August 2008) is now on the website. It is strongly recommended that candidates work from this list. Where centres wish confirmation of the validity of titles not on this list, such proposals must be submitted to SQA via the Dissertation mail-box (**dissertation@sqa.org.uk**) by 1 November each year.

## *Higher*

### Paper 1

The marking of essays out of 20 marks each had little effect on the pattern of awards, largely due the number of candidates who misapprehended the wording of two items in the Later Modern (Scottish and British) section of the paper. To be specific, many answering on why the Liberals introduced social reforms answered on how effective these reforms were; similarly, many answering on the reasons for the extension of democracy answered on how democratic Britain had become. In both cases there was often very little in terms of evidence and virtually nothing in terms of argument and evaluation that could be credited.

The examining team are currently working on a means of bringing the marking of Paper 1 into line with the system used for the Extended Essay. In the meantime centres should assess their candidates on a holistic basis, as before.

### Extended Essay

Previous Principal Assessor reports have referred to the importance of suitable titles. Titles which are evaluative questions lead naturally to debate, discussion and conclusion(s), which are the characteristics that lead to high attainment. Centres should also ensure that titles are within the syllabus. Material which lies outwith the Course can not receive credit.

The Plan should be no more than 200 words long, and should be a clean, final copy. Plans which contain scored out but legible words in excess of the limit will be liable to penalty.

Candidates should not use bibliographies when writing up the Essay, nor should they include them in their submission along with their Plan, as this constitutes part of the Plan and may be liable to penalty.

## *Intermediate*

Similar advice pertains to the Extended Response, particularly that on the choice of titles. The best titles enable an evaluative conclusion to be made, eg 'How effectively did the Liberal social reforms tackle the problem of poverty?'

## *Standard Grade*

The Napoleonic Wars option (Context 2A) has been discontinued and will not appear in the 2009 examination or thereafter. International Conflict and Cooperation contexts will be renumbered accordingly, ie 2B will become 2A and 2C will become 2B. It is permissible for centre staff to liaise with Invigilators to instruct candidates as to which contexts should be answered, thus preventing erroneous or multiple contexts being answered. At Credit or General candidates should note the correct options on the front page of the question paper; at Foundation candidates should tick the correct boxes on page 3.

## **Verification (formerly Moderation)**

The Internal Assessment report (formerly the report of the Senior Verifier) is available from the NQ History subject page of SQA's website. It gives clear and helpful advice on the verification process. When submitting evidence, centres should indicate clearly which NAB is being used. It is also helpful if centres/candidates date the evidence when it is produced.

Centres should use the latest version of any NAB available at the time of assessment. For revised or new qualifications, centres should use complete fresh NABs for re-assessments, rather than allowing candidates to amend a previous effort. Hence, fresh assessments should be used at Access 3, Higher and Advanced Higher (with the exception of the dissertation NAB, which reflects an iterative process). At Intermediate, best practice is to use a fresh NAB, but revisits will be accepted until such time as these Courses are reviewed.

## **Markers**

SQA is again grateful to those who marked in the 2008 diet. It is generally recognised that marking for SQA is the best in-service there is, and it is a major factor in promoting improved performance in individual centres.

Invitations to mark for the 2009 diet are currently being issued. While reserves exist at all levels, it is impossible to predict acceptance rates by Markers. Those wishing to become Markers should complete an application form, which is available to download from our website or from Evelyn Dorans in our Appointments section on 0131-561 6709 (or [evelyn.dorans@sqa.org.uk](mailto:evelyn.dorans@sqa.org.uk)).

## **The National Assessment Bank**

New NABs are issued in electronic form only and can be downloaded only by SQA Co-ordinators. Further details are available from:

Customer Contact Centre  
Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building  
58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow, G2 8DQ

Tel: 0845 279 1000, or Fax: 0845 213 5000  
E-mail: [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

## **Review of Higher**

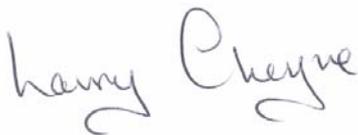
The Qualifications Development Team working on the revision of Higher to accommodate a source-based Paper 2/Unit on Scottish History met seven times from January to March 2008. A draft version of the new Arrangements is currently going through the various quality checks done by SQA. Full details will be published when these are complete, but in essence the content details are those intimated in the update letter of June 2008.

Preparations for the new Course are running to schedule. NABs for Paper 1 topics have been vetted and preparation of a specimen question paper is under way. Paper 2 NABs will be commissioned shortly. LTSotland has commissioned materials for all five Scottish topics. The new Course will be formally launched in November 2009, with teaching beginning in summer 2010 for first certification in 2011.

In order to facilitate a drop-down for candidates studying the Impact of the Great War on Scotland in Paper 2, the Intermediate 2 Course will be amended so that 'Cradle to Grave' and 'Campaigning for Change' are no longer mutually exclusive. The latter has sufficient content overlap with the new Higher topic to act as a safety net until fuller revisions take place as part of the wider review of qualifications in the light of the Curriculum for Excellence development. Courses at Intermediate 1 and Access 3 will be amended in line. These changes will be in place for the 2010 diet, to enable centres which use Intermediate 2 as a preparation for Higher to continue to do so.

If you wish further clarification of any points in this letter, please contact either Duncan Cox (tel: 0845 213 5498, e-mail: [duncan.cox@sqa.org.uk](mailto:duncan.cox@sqa.org.uk)) or myself at the above address.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Cheyne".

Larry Cheyne  
Qualifications Manager