

15 January 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools,
special schools and further education colleges)
Scottish Executive
HMIE
Directors of Education
Biology 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 Managing Environmental Resources**

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

Contact: Elaine Riley at Glasgow
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E-mail: elaine.riley@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications update — Managing Environmental Resources

This letter is intended to provide centres with an update on National Qualifications and should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Managing Environmental Resources (MER).

1 Principal Assessor reports for 2007

The Principal Assessor (PA) reports for all NQ Courses in MER 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 Question papers and marking instructions

Question papers and marking instructions for the MER (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher) 2007 examinations are available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

3 Appeals

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of advice which centres will find helpful to refer to when preparing and collating evidence for Appeals purposes.

I would direct you to the NQ MER subject-specific page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) and the publication *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals 2008* (BA0992, July 2007). This publication provides guidance for subject specialists in centres which are delivering National Courses.

4 MER promotional event

SQA intends to host a promotional event for National Courses in MER in 2008. The details (date, venue, etc) for this event have yet to be confirmed, but will be made known to centres as soon as possible.

The event will be aimed at all teachers and lecturers who have an interest in MER, whether they are currently involved in delivery of Courses in this subject area or not. The purpose of the event will be to showcase SQA's Courses in MER, illustrate good practice and offer guidance on ways in which MER can be delivered within your centre.

If you are interested in attending this event or sending a representative from your centre, please e-mail elaine.riley@sqa.org.uk with your name, centre name and your position within the centre. Similarly, if you have any questions about this event please feel free to contact me.

5 National Assessment Bank items

The NAB items currently available for all levels of MER will shortly be reviewed. The intention is to refresh the NABs and update the environmental issues contained therein, and also to improve consistency of assessment across levels. This is likely to result in amendments to all MER NABs. New versions of the NABs will be uploaded to our secure site and e-mail notification will be given to all SQA Co-ordinators when these become available.

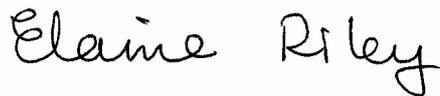
6 Relationship between Access 3 and Intermediate 1

Centres are reminded that unlike a number of other National Courses offered by SQA, candidates who pass all Unit assessments in Intermediate 1 MER and then fail the external assessment (ie are awarded a band 8 or 9 result) are **not** automatically entitled to an award for the Access 3 Cluster.

This is because Access 3 and Intermediate 1 MER provision does not exist in a hierarchy. In other words, there is not sufficient similarity between the content and structure of Units across these levels to establish that attainment at the upper level necessarily demonstrates competence at the lower level. Centres are therefore advised to consider carefully which level is most appropriate for individual candidates undertaking qualifications in MER.

I hope the contents of this letter are helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further clarification.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elaine Riley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light grey shadow effect behind the text.

Elaine Riley
Qualifications Manager
Performing Arts, Languages, Mathematics and Science Team