

28 January 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools,  
special schools and further education colleges)  
Scottish Executive  
HMIE  
Directors of Education  
Mathematics Assessment Panel members  
Higher Education Institutions — Department of Education

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

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

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Dear Colleague

**National Qualifications update — Mathematics**

This letter provides an update on National Qualifications and should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Mathematics.

The following items are included:

- 1 Foundation Certificate in Personal Finance
- 2 Higher objective test items 2008/09
- 3 Revised National Assessment Bank items
- 4 Quality Network events 2009
- 5 External and Internal Assessment reports  
Appendix: Statistics on progression

## 1 Foundation Certificate in Personal Finance

In session 2007/08 SQA offered a qualification in personal finance to a limited number of centres on a pilot basis. This award was delivered in partnership with the *ifs* School of Finance, which provided learning and teaching materials and generated assessments.

Feedback from the pilot centres was universally positive, so the pilot was extended for session 2008/09 and access to the award was opened up to all schools and colleges. Details of this were communicated to centres electronically and by paper distribution in December 2008, including an information sheet on how to go about registering candidates for this award.

The high volume of interest generated by that communication has been very encouraging, but centres should note that this award is still within a pilot phase. As noted on the information sheet, all entries into the current version of the award **must** have results submitted to SQA by no later than **July 2009** in order to achieve certification for candidates.

SQA is committed to providing qualifications in personal finance, and a revised post-pilot version of the award will be available from session 2009/10. Details of this revised award will be distributed to all centres as soon as possible.

If you would like further information about the Foundation Certificate in Personal Finance or any aspect of the procedure for delivery, please contact the Qualifications Officer Greg Storey (tel: 0845 213 5511, or e-mail: [greg.storey@sqa.org.uk](mailto:greg.storey@sqa.org.uk)).

## 2 Higher objective test items 2008/09

The 144 objective test items available on SQA's secure website in session 2007/08 have now been moved to our main website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). These are now considered non-secure, public domain resources and can be used by teachers/lecturers or candidates as practice for the external assessment.

70 new objective test items have been uploaded to the secure site. **These are to remain secure.** The only use that should be made of these items is in the construction of prelim examinations. The objective test section of your prelim may be constructed entirely from these 70 new items, but these items must **not** be provided to candidates for any other purpose (practice tests, homework, etc).

If you wish to make use of any of the 144 non-secure questions in the construction of your prelims, these may be used in the same way as other public domain resources, ie as one of a minimum of three different sources of questions.

## 3 Revised National Assessment Bank items

SQA is currently in the process of revising Mathematics NABs at all levels. It is likely that these revised NABs will be effective from session 2009/10. Centres will be notified of their availability nearer the date of publication. In the meantime, please continue to make use of the current published NABs.

#### **4 Quality Network events 2009**

In 2009, SQA will be running Quality Network events to illustrate good practice identified through the verification of internal assessment in Mathematics. Further information on these events will be provided to centres as soon as the details are confirmed.

#### **5 External and Internal Assessment reports**

The Mathematics Course report which includes the External and Internal Assessment reports (formerly known as the Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports) are available on the NQ Mathematics page of SQA's website.

The report provides information on candidate performance in the 2008 examination diet, including grade boundaries, distribution of awards, which areas candidates have performed well in and which areas they have found demanding, as well as detailed advice to centres for the presentation of future candidates. The Internal Assessment report gives examples of good practice and advice on internal assessment and verification and also on preparation for external verification.

I hope you find the information in this letter helpful. Should you require any further information or wish to submit comments or suggestions regarding Mathematics qualifications please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Elaine Riley  
Qualifications Manager  
Science & Technology