

23 May 2007

To: Head of Centre

Cc: Directors of Education, SCIS, Scottish Executive
Key Stakeholders, Teaching Associations and
SQA Co-ordinators (all centres)

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

Contact Name: Lesley Joyce at Glasgow
Direct Line: 0845 213 5378
E-mail: lesley.joyce@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Update on National Course and Unit developments

The purpose of this letter is to update you on current and planned developments in National Courses and related areas. It contains information about:

- 1. National Courses and Units**
 - ◆ Skills for Work Courses
 - ◆ National Courses at Access 2 and Access 3
 - ◆ Developments in Access 1 and 2
 - ◆ New and Revised Courses and Units for 2007/08
 - ◆ New and Revised Courses and Units for 2008/09
 - ◆ Withdrawal of derived grades

- 2. Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses**

- 3. Support for centres**

- 4. Related developments**
 - ◆ National Qualification Group Awards
 - ◆ National Qualifications for the future

1 National Courses and Units

Skills for Work Courses

Following the success of the pilot, the five phase 1 and five phase 2 pilot Skills for Work Courses will be made available for mainstream use, subject to SQA's normal approval processes, from 2007/08 onwards.

Phase 1 Skills for Work Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Construction Crafts</i> at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)◆ <i>Early Education and Childcare</i> at Intermediate 1 and 2 (SCQF levels 4 and 5)◆ <i>Financial Services</i> at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)◆ <i>Sport and Recreation</i> at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
Phase 2 Skills for Work Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Construction Crafts</i> at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)◆ <i>Hairdressing</i> at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)◆ <i>Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering</i> at Access 3 (SCQF level 3)◆ <i>Rural Skills</i> at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)◆ <i>Sport and Recreation</i> at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)

The five phase 1 Courses have been reviewed, and where revisions have been made, these were highlighted in an *Information Pack* sent to all centres delivering National Qualifications, in December 2006. *The Information Pack* is also available on the Skills for Work pages of SQA's website.

Two transition information events will take place in late April/early May to support pilot centres with the 'roll-out' of these Courses. These events aim to:

- ◆ consolidate information previously sent to centres by SQA
- ◆ provide support and guidance on moving from the pilot phase to mainstream delivery of Skills for Work Courses

Invitations to these events have been issued to pilot centres and local authorities.

In addition to the ten pilot Courses, three new Skills for Work Courses will be launched in April:

- ◆ Engineering Skills — Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
- ◆ Hospitality — Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
- ◆ Health and Social Care — Higher (SCQF level 6)

Individual launch events for each of the three new Courses are being organised for centres hoping to deliver them. The focus of these events will be on the structure, content and assessment of the Courses, as well as teaching/learning approaches. Final Course and Unit specifications and sample National Assessment Bank items (NABs) will be available at the events, together with information on the support materials being developed to assist with the delivery of the Courses. Therefore, the target audience is subject specialist staff who will be directly involved in the delivery of these Skills for Work Courses. Invitations to these events have been issued.

National Courses at Access 2 and Access 3

The term *National Cluster* has been used since the Higher Still Development Programme to refer to subject-specific groupings of Units at Access 2 and 3 level (made up of three Unit credits) which provide articulation with Courses at Intermediate 1 level and above.

The term *Cluster* was discussed as part of a consultation carried out in 2004 during the review of our Qualification Portfolio and one of the conclusions of that review was that we should change the title of *National Clusters* to *National Courses* to bring them into line with other qualifications within our portfolio. As a result, from 1 January 2007 we replaced the title *National Cluster* with *National Course* and this title will be used in all new publications and on the new Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC).

Developments in Access 1 and 2

National Units at Access 1 and 2

There has been considerable interest in the Access 1 Units first introduced in 2003 at Supported and Independent levels. As centres have been asking for greater choice at these new levels, we have now developed a further batch of eleven Units, in the areas of Art, Music, Morals and Rules, and Understanding Religious Festivals. These Units are available on our website, and centres were sent a CD-ROM containing all of the existing and new Unit specifications at Supported and Independent level at the end of February 2007.

Other activities for Access 1 and 2

Other developments and activities in this area include:

- ◆ the development of a new website to improve ease of access to information
- ◆ new NABs for six of the new Skillstart Units are to be made available by the end of March 2007
- ◆ support visits to centres by the Qualifications Development Manager

For more information relating to Access 1 and 2, you can contact Sandy Riddell, the Project Manager, by e-mail at: sandy.riddell@sqa.org.uk.

New and Revised Courses and Units for 2007/08

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

National Courses in ESOL at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels (SCQF levels 5 and 6) have been available since August 2006. SQA has now developed suites of National Units at Access 2 and Intermediate 1 levels (SCQF levels 2 and 4), as well as a National Course at Access 3 level (SCQF level 3). These have been validated and launch events for centres will be held in May. A suite of e-learning materials to support these qualifications is currently being developed and will be available to all centres for August delivery. For more information relating to ESOL, you can contact Alan Wilson, Qualifications Manager, by e-mail at: alan.wilson@sqa.org.uk.

Graphic Communication

A new National Course in Graphic Communication at Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4) has been validated and will be available from August 2007. There will be a launch event for this Course on 23 May 2007 in Glasgow. For more information, you can contact Derek Middleton, Qualifications Manager, by e-mail at: derek.middleton@sqa.org.uk.

Urdu

A new National Course in Urdu at Higher (SCQF level 6) has been validated and will be available from August 2007. For more information, you can contact Alan Wilson, Qualifications Manager, by e-mail at: alan.wilson@sqa.org.uk.

Care

Revised National Courses in Care at Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher have been validated and will be available from August 2007. A very successful launch event was held in Stirling in February 2007. For more information, you can contact Tom Stannage, Qualifications Manager, by e-mail at: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk.

New National Courses and Units for 2008/09

Developments are continuing in the following areas, and new Courses and Units will be available from August 2008.

Subject	Development	For further information, contact
Home Economics	New National Course at Access 3 (SCQF level 3)	Graeme Findlay, Qualifications Manager, at: graeme.findlay@sqa.org.uk
Modern Studies	Revised National Course at Advanced Higher (SCQF level 7)	Larry Cheyne, Qualifications Manager, at: larry.cheyne@sqa.org.uk
Modern Languages	Units at Access 3 and Intermediate 1 (SCQF levels 3 and 4)	Jim McDonald, Qualifications Manager, at: jim.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk
Personal Development	New National Courses at Access 2, Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher (SCQF levels 2 – 6)	Sandy Riddell, Project Manager, at: sandy.riddell@sqa.org.uk (for information about Access 2) Keith Wright, Qualifications Manager, at: keith.wright@sqa.org.uk (for information about Access 3 – Higher)

Withdrawal of Derived Grades

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that we have withdrawn the statistically based derived grades procedure. The appeals process will operate as normal.

2 Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

SQA's low uptake policy was endorsed by the National Qualifications Steering Group (NQSG) in October 2003. This policy states that 'existing National Courses will have a minimum life of five years. Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher which have failed to attract 100 candidates a year after five years and 50 candidates a year at Advanced Higher will be reviewed to determine whether they continue to be offered'. However, since the policy was agreed, the environment has changed significantly because of the publication of *A Curriculum for Excellence* and developments in our portfolio review. The full impact of these two development programmes is not yet clear, and may affect decisions about which Courses continue to be offered. Therefore, this year we have only considered whether Courses with zero or very low uptake will continue to be offered. As a result of these considerations, we have decided that, of the Courses in these categories:

- ◆ some will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2007. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the catalogue
- ◆ some will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2008. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the catalogue
- ◆ some will be retained in the NQ Catalogue, but will be reconsidered in line with the policy at a later date if they remain in the very low uptake category

Details of decisions are shown in Appendix One. If the withdrawal of any of these Courses will cause your centre any difficulties, please contact Linda Murray, Project Manager, at linda.murray@sqa.org.uk, as soon as possible, outlining your concerns.

I would take this opportunity to remind you that the following National Courses will also be withdrawn after diet 2007, as identified through the NQ Review:

- ◆ Art and Design: Research and Appreciation (Advanced Higher)
- ◆ Philosophy (Advanced Higher)
- ◆ Sociology (Advanced Higher)

3 Support for centres

This session's programme of Professional Development Workshops for specific National Qualifications was very successful. Planning is already under way for the development of the 2007/08 programme.

The publication of the updated guidance on *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals* (EAAs) for the 2007 diet was supplemented by a series of seminars held in January/February 2007. All presentations and workshop materials developed for the events are being posted on SQA's website. We are looking at how, in the light of this updated guidance on EAAs, we can improve feedback to centres on unsuccessful appeals. We are also developing an interactive electronic version of the guide.

We would like to thank participants for feedback about both the workshops and the seminars. It has been very positive and very helpful to us in planning for future events.

4 Related developments

National Qualification Group Awards

Our work to develop National Qualification Group Awards (NQGAs) is well underway. As part of this, we plan to develop 60 National Certificates and 36 National Progression Awards over the next four years. We are on track to have five National Certificates and 14 National Progression Awards available to centres by August 2007 — these are listed in Appendix Two. National Certificates are larger Group Awards aimed at those in full-time education whereas National Progression Awards are smaller more focused Group Awards.

New and revised National Units will be developed as part of these NQGAs. These Units will be available for centres to offer as free-standing Units, as is the case with existing National Units.

A full detailed list of developments is available in the NQGA Development Schedule which has now been published on SQA's website and will be updated monthly. The schedule will be added to as further qualifications needs are identified.

National Qualifications for the future

As part of the Scottish Executive's *Curriculum for Excellence* programme, Ministers intend to undertake a formal consultation around summer this year on qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5 (Standard Grade at General and Credit level and Intermediate 1 and 2) and on how best to give greater formal recognition to learners' wider achievements. The Scottish Executive has set up the Assessment and Qualifications Task Group (AQTG) involving SQA, LTS and others to help develop the options for consultation. The outcome of this consultation will help to shape our National Qualifications for the future.

Ministers intend to retain Access, Higher and Advanced Higher as points of stability within the system. These qualifications will have to adapt over time to reflect *A Curriculum for Excellence* but this will be built into the normal procedures for updating and refreshing National Qualifications. The main focus of work is on addressing the use of Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications (SCQF 4 and 5) in providing a unified structure that reflects *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

We are currently leading a programme of pre-consultation engagement activity on the review of qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5.

For more information relating to our work on *National Qualifications for the Future* and our work in relation to the *Curriculum for Excellence* programme, you can contact Lena Gray, SQA's Business Manager for *A Curriculum for Excellence*, by e-mail at: lena.gray@sqa.org.uk.

If you would like to discuss any other aspect of this letter, please contact my colleague Lesley Joyce at: lesley.joyce@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Gill Stewart
Depute Director, National Qualifications

Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

National Courses with zero or very low uptake to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2007 (last examination diet 2007)					
Course	No of entries				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Crop Establishment (Intermediate 2)	0	0	0	0	0
Fish Husbandry (Intermediate 2)	3	0	0	0	0
Investigating Fish Rearing Systems (Intermediate 2)	3	0	0	0	0
Investigating the Natural Environment (Intermediate 2)	3	0	0	0	0
Livestock Production (Intermediate 2)	0	0	1	1	0
Automotive Engineering (Higher)	0	0	0	0	0
Beauty: Beauty Care (Higher)	11	0	0	0	0
Electrical Engineering (Higher)	0	0	0	0	0
Electronics (Higher)	21	6	8	0	0
Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (Higher)	0	11	0	0	0
Hairdressing: Principles of Colouring Hair (Higher)	0	11	17	0	0
Mechanical Engineering (Higher)	15	5	0	0	0
Applied Mathematics: Numerical Analysis (Advanced Higher)	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1

Note: The Units making up the above Courses will be retained in the NQ Catalogue

National Courses to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2007, as identified through the NQ Review (last examination diet 2007)
Art and Design: Research and Appreciation (Advanced Higher)
Philosophy (Advanced Higher)
Sociology (Advanced Higher)

Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses (continued)

National Courses with very low uptake to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2008 (last examination diet 2008)					
Course	No of entries				
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Fabrication and Welding (Intermediate 2)	4	5	7	4	6
Hospitality — Reception and Accommodation Operations (Intermediate 2)	7	11	0	0	7
Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations (Higher)	10	11	7	8	10
Food Production Supervision (Higher)	3	1	4	8	2
Hospitality — Food and Drink Service (Higher)	3	10	7	2	3
Sports Organisation (Higher)	18	14	5	5	5
Structural Engineering (Higher)	8	5	11	9	5
Russian (Advanced Higher)	3	4	6	9	3

Note: The Units making up the above Courses will be retained in the NQ Catalogue

National Courses with very low uptake to be retained in the NQ Catalogue	
Course	Reason(s) for retention
Greek (Standard Grade)	These Courses are to be retained until the impact of <i>A Curriculum for Excellence</i> becomes clearer.
Greek (Intermediate 1)	
Russian (Intermediate 2)	
Economics (Intermediate 1)	These Courses were reviewed as a result of the NQ Review. It is expected that their uptake will increase as a result. This will be monitored.
Gàidhlig (Intermediate 1)	
Media Studies (Advanced Higher)	
Classical Greek (Advanced Higher)	This Course has been retained as there is the possibility of increasing uptake. This will be reconsidered after diet 2007.

National Qualification Group Awards (NQGAs) scheduled to be available to centres by August 2007

Type of NQGA	Title (titles in <i>italics</i> are working titles)	Level	For further information, contact the Qualifications Manager
National Certificate	Building Services Engineering	6	Diane Anderson at diane.anderson@sqa.org.uk
National Certificate	Digital Multimedia Computing	4	Mike Jannetta at mike.jannetta@sqa.org.uk
National Certificate	Digital Multimedia Computing	5	
National Certificate	Early Education and Childcare	6	Tom Stannage at tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk
National Certificate	Health and Social Care	6	
National Progression Award	Construction	5	Diane Anderson at diane.anderson@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Cosmetology	4	Paul Gallacher at paul.gallacher@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Digital Literacy	3	Mike Jannetta at mike.jannetta@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Financial Services	6	Sue MacFarlane at sue.macfarlane@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Internet Technology	4	Mike Jannetta at mike.jannetta@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Internet Technology	5	
National Progression Award	<i>PC Passport</i>	4	
National Progression Award	<i>PC Passport</i>	5	
National Progression Award	<i>PC Passport</i>	6	
National Progression Award	Playwork	4/5 (detailed content scoping will determine the final level)	Paul Gallacher at paul.gallacher@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Sports Coaching	4	Paul Gallacher at paul.gallacher@sqa.org.uk
National Progression Award	Sports Coaching	5	
National Progression Award	Sports Coaching	6	
National Progression Award	Web Design Fundamentals	5	Mike Jannetta at mike.jannetta@sqa.org.uk