

November 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)  
Directors of Education  
SCIS  
Business Development Managers

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

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

Contact: Mary Hainey at Glasgow  
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E-mail: mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications in Philosophy**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Philosophy.

### **Diet 2009**

The External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for diet 2009 can now be found on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). These include:

- ◆ External Assessment report Intermediate 2 and Higher
- ◆ Internal Assessment report National Qualifications Units

### **Appeals**

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 Appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting Appeals:

- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA5212, November 2009)

Please note that the document referred to above clearly specifies subject-specific evidence required when submitting an Appeal for question paper based Courses.

When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, you should also refer to:

- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course Grade descriptions
- ◆ Course Assessment specifications

- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ External Assessment reports, which include information on Grade Boundaries
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters)

All of these documents can be downloaded from SQA's website.

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for Appeals this year were:

- ◆ wrong or incomplete marking schemes
- ◆ evidence did not cover the complete Course
- ◆ prelim questions were drawn from too few sources
- ◆ sections were lifted en-bloc, ie Critical Thinking
- ◆ the use of a commercially produced question paper without checking the validity of the paper
- ◆ where NABs were used the KU/AE balance was not adjusted or questions were not adapted
- ◆ the KU/AE balance clearly laid out in the Course Assessment specifications and the specimen question paper was not adhered to

It is important to emphasise the clarity required when identifying sources. Centres must ensure that details of the sources of each prelim question are included with Appeals evidence. For example: Question 2 – SQA QP 2007 – Paper 1 or Section 1.

Centres should note that the above problems will disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the External Assessment reports.

### **Marking instructions**

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for diet 2009 Course assessments at each level are posted on the NQ Philosophy subject page of SQA's website.

### **National Qualifications Courses**

As stated in the update letter of December 2008, a Review Group of representative teachers/lecturers was set up to consider revising Intermediate 2 and Higher Philosophy. It is SQA's policy to review qualifications on a regular basis and as a result of feedback from centres, it was agreed to make minor amendments at both levels.

We are certain that the revisions are in the best interests of both candidates and teachers/lecturers, as well as the subject. The revised Courses will be implemented in August 2010 with the first exam in June 2011.

A launch event is being held on 14 January 2010 in the Stirling Management Centre. Full details on how to register have been sent to each centre. There are no significant changes to the Units; this review has clarified existing content and improved areas where centres have raised concern.

The revised Course Specification, NABs and specimen question paper will be published on the NQ Philosophy subject page of SQA's website in January 2010. The amendments at Higher include:

- ◆ Critical Thinking — a more detailed Appendix clarifying what is required to be delivered with clearer Evidence Requirements
- ◆ Epistemology — minor amendments to content
- ◆ Metaphysics — Agnosticism has been removed and the Ontological Argument has been added. Clarification on what is required to be delivered on Freewill
- ◆ Moral Philosophy — Outcome 4 has been removed (the Emotivist position)

### **Electronic marks capture**

It was proposed that the marking of the Intermediate 2 Philosophy 2010 question paper would be included in the papers that use some form of electronic marking. Electronic marking from paper combines the advantages of central marking and traditional marking at home. Markers must complete practice papers and qualifications papers before going on to mark their actual allocation. The Principal Assessor is able to track the progress of Markers and is available online at specified times to assist Markers with queries.

At this stage SQA is not increasing the number of subjects and papers using this marking method. Intermediate 2 Philosophy, and other question papers, will be reconsidered in future years.

### **Assessment Panel**

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet annually to look at issues arising in Philosophy as well as the other Social Science subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers.

### **Marking for SQA**

Each year the number of entries for the Philosophy Courses are increasing. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Philosophy, please visit the Appointee Management section of SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk/am](http://www.sqa.org.uk/am)) or call our Marker Helpline (tel: 0131-561 6825) and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you are in your third year of teaching the Course. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. The Philosophy Courses are Centrally Marked – this entails the Marker marking scripts over one extended period in the same venue. In a number of subject areas we have had recent examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the marking team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands of Course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502 or e-mail [mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Hainey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Mary Hainey  
Qualifications Manager  
NQ Social Sciences and Care