

27 February 2004

To: SQA Co-ordinators

**For the attention of staff responsible
for the delivery of the National
Qualification in Politics**

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

Contact Name: Larry Cheyne at Glasgow
Direct Line: 0141-242 2334
E-mail: larry.cheyne@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Politics

Diet 2003

Entries continued to rise for Higher Politics, but entries elsewhere were disappointing.

The Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for the 2003 diet can now be found in full on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

In summary, in the Higher examination, some candidates did have difficulty in distinguishing between concepts, ideas and principles. Centre staff may wish to refer them to the Subject Guide and ensure such differences are understood. Some candidates could improve their essay techniques, eg by referring to the words in the question when answering it; drawing a conclusion based on the points raised in the answer; making explicit rather than implicit references. The onus is on candidates to be very explicit about what they are writing and not for the examiner to guess or read between the lines.

Appeals

Stage 1 appeals were completed successfully. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, February 2001)

NB Revised versions of both documents are due to be issued in March 2004. Copies of these documents can be downloaded from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Qualifications Review

The National Qualifications Review Investigation in Politics was published in October 2003. Its summary recommendations are as follows:

- ◆ When SQA's policy and procedures for dealing with low uptake Courses have been finalised, Courses at Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher should be withdrawn from the catalogue. Component Units should remain as free-standing Units, and their uptake should be monitored. No development work should take place on the Courses.
- ◆ All Units in Politics at Intermediate 2 should be reviewed, and provision should be revised and rationalised to create a small suite of Units which meets users' needs. When the revised Units become available, the Course at Intermediate 2 should be withdrawn from the catalogue.
- ◆ The Higher Course should be reviewed and revised to address the Course structure issues. Course component Units at Higher should be reviewed and revised to reduce the volume of assessment and meet users' needs.

SQA will be working on these recommendations henceforth.

Assessment Panel

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in Politics and other social sciences. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers. Provision of Assessment Panels is currently under review and centres will be informed of developments.

Contacts

In October 2003 SQA restructured its qualifications staff with a view to providing a more focused service to centres. For HN and SVQ matters in Politics, the contacts remain Carol Hunter and Fiona MacKinnon (0141-242 2330). For National Qualifications in Politics (and Modern Studies, Contemporary Social Studies and History), contacts are:

Larry Cheyne

Qualifications Manager
Telephone: 0141-242 2334
E-mail: larry.cheyne@sqa.org.uk

Veronica Curran

Qualifications Officer
Telephone: 0141-242 2332
E-mail: veronica.curran@sqa.org.uk

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 contact us.

Yours faithfully



Larry Cheyne
Qualifications Manager