

9 December 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 Psychology**

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Psychology

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

Diet 2009

Results at all levels remained good in 2009. Markers' reports indicated that there was a better understanding by candidates of the structure of the external assessment. This would suggest good exam preparation by centres.

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for Psychology for diet 2009. These reports, formerly known as Principal Assessor and Senior Verifier reports, contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Psychology.

The following reports will be posted on the Psychology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) by the end of November:

- ◆ External Assessment report for Intermediate 1 Psychology
- ◆ External Assessment report for Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ External Assessment report for Higher Psychology
- ◆ Internal Assessment report for Psychology

Revised Courses

Centres are reminded that the Arrangements Documents and Course Assessment Specifications, including Specimen Question Paper(s), for the revised Course structures are now in operation for the 2010 diet. The revised Courses (C263 10, 11 and 12) were implemented in August 2009 and revised National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials are now available on the SQA secure website for all Units in the revised Course.

Important note: Although there were no changes to unit content for the Unit (*DF5L*) *Investigating Behaviour*, a revision has been carried out on the NAB materials. These changes take account of the interim changes notified in October 2007, ie only one research task is required at Intermediate 1 and 2, and also changes of KU/AE balance and cut-off score (50%) at all levels in line with revised NABs for the associated Units of the Revised Courses. The revised NABs are now available on the SQA secure website and centres are advised to use the revised version. Where centres have delivered the previous versions of the NABs, this will be accepted by the verification team, so long as they have been delivered in their entirety with regards to KU/AE balance and cut-off scores.

A review is also being undertaken on the NAB packs at all levels for the Units (*F5B4*) *Psychology: Understanding the Individual* and (*F5B5*) *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context*. These minor amendments will clarify questions with regards to KU/AE balance and give more guidance in the Marking Instructions.

Given the timing of these changes, where centres have delivered the current versions, this will be accepted by the External Verification Team.

Electronic marking

Marking of the Intermediate 1 Question Booklet and the Research Investigation at Higher level were electronically marked by SQAs Electronic Marks Capture system (EMC). This involved the Intermediate 1 question booklets being scanned and markers marking the papers electronically. Electronic marking from image 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 on-line at specified times to assist markers with queries. This has proved to be an efficient way to quality assure marking at the start of the marking procedure to agreed marking standards.

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 Appeals were completed during September and October. The number of Appeals was greatly reduced this year at all levels. The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted were:

- ◆ Evidence submitted does not reflect centre estimate
- ◆ KU/AE balance and structure clearly laid out in the Course Assessment Specifications and the specimen question paper was not adhered to

Centres should note that the above problems generally disadvantage candidates.

It is also important to remind centres of 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.

Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting Appeals:

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

The document noted above — *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* — has undergone revision and has been posted on SQA's website. The revised version clarifies what subject specific evidence is required when submitting an Appeal for question paper based Courses.

Events

Association of Teachers of Psychology Scotland (ATPS)

The annual conference of the ATPS will be held on Saturday 6 February 2010 in the Stirling Management Centre, at Stirling University Campus.

The aim of this event is to provide opportunities for pre-university Psychology teachers and lecturers to meet and discuss issues of common interest in relation to Psychology teaching and the Psychology curriculum. Contact www.atps.org.uk for further information.

Higher Research Investigation (RI)

Eleven RI briefs are now listed for session 2009/10. Candidates **must** base their investigation on one of these briefs. This list covers all the topics in the Units *Psychology: Understanding the Individual* and *Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context* within the Course Arrangements and can be found on the NQ Psychology page of SQA's website, along with the Revised Higher Research Investigation Guidelines and the Research Investigation: Ethics Guidance.

It is important to remind centres of the guidelines issued by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Association for the Teaching of Psychology in Scotland (ATPS) regarding the use of under-age children as participants in research and the safety of candidates when carrying out research with the general public for the Research Investigation Higher. The guidelines laid down by these bodies are summarised in the document *Research Investigation Guidelines (revised August 2009)* issued by SQA and available on the NQ Psychology page of SQA's website.

Centres are reminded that all Higher Research Investigations must be submitted to SQA for external assessment. Research Investigations will be uplifted from your centre on **Monday 26 April 2010**.

Being an SQA Marker

Each year the number of entries for the Psychology Courses is increasing and SQA are in need of additional Markers. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Psychology, information and application forms are available on our Appointee Management section of the SQA website. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you are in your third year of teaching the Course or have been teaching it within the past three years.

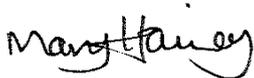
We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for 2010. Psychology is currently centrally marked. This entails Markers marking scripts over one or possibly two separate weekend periods in the same venue. In a number of subject 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.

Assessment Panel

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet annually to look at issues arising in the assessment of Social Science subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the panel via the Qualifications Manager or Qualifications Officers.

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.

Yours faithfully,



Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Humanities and Social Sciences