

30 October 2006

To: SQA Co-ordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)  
Directors of Education  
SCIS  
Customer Account 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             |
| None — update/information only |

Contact Name: Tom Stannage at Glasgow  
Direct Line: 0845 213 5502  
E-mail: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk

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 2006**

Centres are advised to access the Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for Psychology for diet 2006. These reports contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Psychology.

The following reports can be found on the Psychology pages of SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)):

- ◆ Principal Assessor report for Intermediate 1/Intermediate 2 Psychology
- ◆ Principal Assessor report for Higher/Advanced Higher Psychology
- ◆ Senior Moderator report for Psychology

### **Marking instructions**

The finalised marking instructions for Course assessments at each level are posted on the Psychology page of SQA's website.

### **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:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, April 2004)

Copies of these documents can be downloaded from SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

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

- ◆ Evidence is partial and does not sufficiently represent the whole Course
- ◆ Evidence has been marked inconsistently and does not match the national standard
- ◆ Evidence has not been graded
- ◆ Evidence submitted does not reflect centre estimate
- ◆ Marking instructions did not follow the example in the specimen question paper
- ◆ The balance of knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation (KU 60% and AE 40%) as set out in the specimen question paper must be adhered to in the prelim
- ◆ NABs submitted as evidence did not take account of the difference in the KU/AE balance between question paper and NABs

These issues were reported in last year's update letter and Principal Assessor report; however, similar problems were replicated in 2006. In addition, Examiners were disappointed with the quality of the presentation of evidence from some centres. This related to uncoordinated evidence such as several pieces of evidence for each candidate with no clear or direct link to the assessment instrument.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates.

The document *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* referred to above is currently undergoing revision with the revised version due to be posted on SQA's website in October. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses and states:

'An integrated prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course plus supporting evidence, such as a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit would support an Appeal for a Grade C (and possibly a B), but not for a Grade A.'

For an Appeal for a Grade A, the most convincing evidence would replicate the standard format, duration and security of SQA's question paper.'

### **Higher Research Investigation**

Six briefs are now listed for session 2006/07. Candidates **must** base their investigation on one of these briefs. This list covers the constraints/choices within the new Course Arrangements and can be found on the Psychology page of SQA's website along with the Revised Higher Research Investigation Guidelines.

Centres are reminded that all Higher and Advanced Higher Research Investigations must be submitted to SQA for external assessment. All Research Investigations will be uplifted from your centre on **Thursday 26 April 2007**.

Concerns have been raised by the Principal Assessor (PA) and the examining team regarding apparent lack of regard for ethical considerations when conducting research for the Research Investigations (RI) — despite repeated reminders. It is important that 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 carrying out research for the Research Investigation Higher is adhered to. The guidelines laid down by these bodies are summarised in the document *Research*

*Investigation Guidelines (2004)* issued by SQA and available on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) on the NQ Psychology page.

### **Intermediate 1 and 2 Psychology event**

SFEU are hosting an event on 10 November 2006 designed specifically for teachers and lecturers of Intermediate 1 and 2 Psychology. The intention is to build on the lessons learned from both the first and second years of the revised Courses, to help identify key ways that teachers and lecturers can effectively prepare their candidates for the exam in future. A range of issues will be addressed, including some specific areas such as preparation for exam questions on research studies, and for assessment of research methods. The day will include workshop discussion activities, giving teachers and lecturers the opportunity to generate feedback and share good practice. PA presentations will include analysis of candidate's performance in 2006, and recommendations for improving performance in 2007.

For further details and to book a place, please visit the SFEU website ([www.sfeu.ac.uk](http://www.sfeu.ac.uk)).

### **Being an SQA Marker**

If you are interested in becoming a Psychology Marker, an application form can be downloaded from SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). Alternatively, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years, preferably within the past three years. We welcome applications throughout the year and we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. Psychology will continue to be centrally marked — this entails markers marking scripts over two separate weekend periods in the same venue. We are, however, slowly building up our marking team so that marking can be completed over one weekend rather than requiring some additional days over a second weekend. We have had a number of cases over the past few years where centre results have improved dramatically as a consequence of members of staff becoming involved in marking. This is an excellent opportunity for individual professional and personal development.

### **Assessment Panel**

The remit and make-up of the Social Sciences Assessment Panel has been reviewed with the result that there are now more representatives for each subject — Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Politics. The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year 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 either directly through panel members or via SQA 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: [tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk](mailto:tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully,



Tom Stannage  
Qualifications Manager  
NQ Social Sciences and Care