

October 2010

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

Contact: Mary Hainey at Glasgow
Direct line: 0845 213 5502
E-mail: mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Psychology

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

External Marking 2010

This was the first year of the revised Courses and results at all levels were encouraging. Despite some centres clearly not adhering to the new structure of the question paper, the majority of centres had prepared candidates well. Centres are reminded that two topics are studied from a choice of three in Section A Psychology: Understanding the Individual and two topics from Section C Psychology: The Individual in the Social Context.

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for Psychology for diet 2010. 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 October:

- ◆ 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

Marking instructions

The 2010 question papers and finalised marking instructions for diet 2010 will be available on the Psychology page of SQA's website. These can be useful documents for centres when constructing prelims and preparing candidates for external assessment.

Revised NABs

Although the revised Courses and NABs have been well received by centres, there was some feedback on the mark allocations and KU/AE balance structure in the NABs. Therefore a revision has been carried out to all NABs at all levels ie Higher, Intermediate 2 and Intermediate 1. Centres are urged to use the updated version of the NABs and destroy previous versions. These changes will be signposted by the publication dates and/or details of changes. Revised versions will automatically replace existing NABs. Centres should therefore use whichever version is current.

Appeals

Stage 1 and 2 Appeals were completed during September and October. There was a slight increase in the number of candidates presented for Appeal. This is expected in the first year of a revised course. It did, however, raise a concern regarding evidence submitted for appeal by using NAB evidence to support an Appeal for Grade C. Although candidates are required only to be assessed on one topic to achieve a unit pass for the units *Psychology: Understanding the Individual* and *Psychology: the Individual in the Social Context*, appeals evidence must show the same breadth of coverage of course content as SQA's question paper. This would require evidence of two topics from the aforementioned units. Guidance to centres will be revised in the document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* for 2011.

Some of the most common issues related to Appeals evidence included;

- ◆ evidence submitted does not reflect centre estimate
- ◆ validity of the evidence to replicate the standard, format and duration of SQA's question paper
- ◆ centres not clearly identifying where marks are awarded

Centres should note that the above problems generally disadvantage candidates. 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.*

Events

Association of Teachers of Psychology Scotland (ATPS)

The annual conference of the ATPS will be held on Saturday 5th February 2011 in Stirling Management Centre. 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

Eight Research Investigation briefs are now listed for session 2010/11. 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* and can be found on the NQ Higher Psychology page of SQA's website, along with the Revised Higher Research Investigation Guidelines and Marker Checklist. This checklist provides centres and candidates with an overview of how SQAs Markers mark the Reports.

Centres are reminded that all Higher Research Investigations must be submitted to SQA for external marking. Research Investigations will be uplifted from your centre on **Wednesday 27 April 2011**.

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 2010)* issued by SQA and available on the NQ Higher Psychology page of SQA's website and the *Research Investigation Ethics Guidance*.

Being an SQA Marker

Each year the number of entries for 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 this year. Psychology will continue to be 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.

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,

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