

Our ref: GS/MR

6 October 2003

To: Head of Centre

cc Directors of Education, SCIS, Scottish Executive  
Key Stakeholders, Teaching Associations and  
SQA Co-ordinators (all centres)

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

Dear Colleague

## **National Qualifications Review – major subject reviews**

The purpose of this letter is to update centres on the major subject reviews that SQA is carrying out. SQA has been working with the Scottish Executive to review all NQ subject areas and, in particular, to consider how best to reduce the complexity, variety and total volume of assessment in each subject. Significant changes have already been made to reduce unnecessary demands on teachers, lecturers and candidates in just over one hundred National Courses. This process is continuing and the SQA has identified seventeen subjects requiring more fundamental review. Work on the first phase of major reviews started in January 2003 and work on the second phase will start in October 2003.

### **1 Phase 2 major subject review areas**

Five subjects will be covered in the second cycle of major reviews, beginning in October 2003. The subjects are Construction, Gaelic (for learners), Gàidhlig, Philosophy and Sociology. The revised Courses in these subjects will be for implementation in session 2005/6, along with the revised Courses in Music and in Art and Design which are both two-year reviews.

## **2 How consultation will be carried out**

For the second cycle of major reviews a number of subject consultations will be carried out with key stakeholders to gather views on the best way forward. Art and Design will also be carrying out further consultation during this period. This will not involve release of any of your staff. For each subject consultation, SQA will target those centres currently offering the National Courses in that subject. Centres can expect to be involved in either paper-based or telephone surveys covering the key issues identified in the Subject Review Reports.

In addition to the major reviews your centre may also receive consultation questionnaires or be asked to take part in telephone surveys for subjects where more minor reviews are taking place.

Consultation questionnaires are expected to be sent out to all centres currently offering National Courses in the subject area during December 2003. Questionnaires will also be posted on SQA's website. The response time for all questionnaires will be around four working weeks.

If consultation is by means of a telephone survey then subject specialists will be contacted to arrange a convenient interview time. The interview questions and background information will be sent out in advance of the interviews. The interviews will last no more than 20 minutes. If a telephone survey is used, then this will also be posted on the SQA website to give all centres the opportunity to respond.

## **3 The NQ Review Subject Advisory Groups**

SQA is in the process of setting up NQ Review Subject Advisory Groups for each of the major review subjects in the second cycle. More detailed information about the remit and membership of these groups is included in Appendix 1. It is planned that these groups would meet on a maximum of five occasions during 2003/4. If SQA invites someone from your centre to be a member of one of these groups, then normal SQA release fees will be paid for attendance of that individual at the meetings.

If you want further clarification on any of the information included in this letter then please get in touch.

This circular has been copied to your SQA Co-ordinator for information.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gill Stewart', written in a cursive style.

Dr Gill Stewart  
Head Of NQ Review

### **Remit and Membership of the NQ Review Subject Advisory Groups**

The overall aims of the NQ Review Subject Advisory Groups are to:

- provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to participate in the work of the NQ Review
- ensure the responsiveness of SQA to the needs of deliverers and users of the qualification
- provide a mechanism for gathering feedback from stakeholders not already involved in the work of the NQ Review.

The membership of these groups will include:

- a number of teachers/lecturers delivering the subject
- representatives from FE/HE to advise on progression routes
- an industry representative (if appropriate)
- an LTS and/or SFEU representative to inform the development of support materials.