

Our ref: GS/PSE/UL/1103

8 January 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinator  
Secondary schools and FE colleges  
Education authorities  
Customer Account Managers

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

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Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications update — Social and Vocational Skills**

This briefing note is intended to offer practical advice and support on the issues linked to Social and Vocational Skills (SVS) and should be distributed to those staff responsible for this area. It contains information on the following:

1. Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports
2. National Qualifications Review in Personal and Social Education (see also in Appendix)

#### **1. Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports**

SQA would like to encourage all centre staff responsible for SVS to read the Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for session 2005/06 and the corresponding examination diet. These reports contain detailed and useful advice and information pertaining to candidate performance, guidance for centres and specific issues relating to individual examination questions. They are available on the SVS subject page of SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

In particular, the following areas of advice may be of use to centres:

##### *Principal Assessor's report*

- ◆ Centres are advised to consider whether successful performance in practical abilities is likely to be replicated in the exam, where communicative abilities are being assessed and the potential of some candidates may not be as great. Presentation policy should take account of this
- ◆ Some candidates are only being entered for one level and this may disadvantage them
- ◆ More candidates seemed to appreciate the need to set out answers clearly and logically and this meant more marks were achieved in these areas than in the past
- ◆ The Foundation paper was generally well done

- ◆ In the General paper, the information in the letter was conveyed clearly but the technical aspects of letter writing were poorer
- ◆ A number of candidates failed to attempt whole questions when they might have been able to answer the second part, although the first part had been demanding
- ◆ Extended response questions in the Credit paper did not always receive full answers, eg in question one candidates failed to give reasons in their answers

*Senior Moderator's report*

- ◆ The quality of evidence submitted for moderation continues to be of a high standard
- ◆ Centres are interpreting the grade related criteria accurately
- ◆ Centres are reminded that the overall level awarded for internal assessment cannot be greater than the level awarded for the task undertaken. This means that centres should take care when setting particular task for individual candidates

## **2. National Qualifications Review in Personal and Social Education**

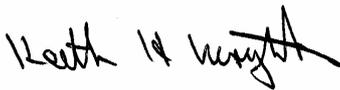
Many centres delivering SVS continue to express interest in the work being undertaken in the Review in Personal and Social Education. The revision of Units and the Course is taking account of the key aspects within *A Curriculum for Excellence* and is building on the good practice of skills development long associated with the SVS Course. When the revised provision is introduced in August 2008 it will run in parallel to the SVS Course which will continue to be available on the same basis as Standard Grade Courses in other subjects.

The Appendix attached to this letter provides centres with information about:

- ◆ implementation dates
- ◆ Courses rationale
- ◆ Course structure
- ◆ Course content
- ◆ differentiation
- ◆ verification
- ◆ Core Skills
- ◆ support materials
- ◆ future information

I hope that the notes above and the materials attached are of help to you. If you have any queries about these or any other issues relating to Personal & Social Education, please contact me or Greg Storey, the Qualifications Officer in this area, at the details given above.

Yours faithfully



Keith H Wright  
Qualifications Manager  
Social Subjects

## Appendix

### SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

#### REVISED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION (PSE) COURSES

The development has been carefully researched and accounts for good practice current in both PSE National Courses and Social and Vocational Skills (SVS) Standard Grade. It encompasses many of the recommendations in key documents such as *Determined To Succeed* and *A Curriculum for Excellence* and will provide a suitable progression route for SVS candidates who wish to further enhance their social and vocational skills and abilities.

The working title for the revised Course in Personal and Social Education is *Personal Development* (PD).

##### a) *Implementation*

The introduction of revised provision for PD Courses is planned for implementation of Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses in session 2008/09. This delays for one year earlier information conveyed to centres about the implementation date for Access 3 and Intermediate 1 levels. These new Courses will replace the current suite of PSE Courses and will provide a clear, coherent framework of provision and progression. All centres who are currently delivering PSE Courses will be contacted individually to find out if this delay will cause them any difficulties and where this does occur, solutions will be sought to deal with these.

The Review work will also involve examining provision within the suite of freestanding Units in Personal and Social Development (PSD) currently available in the NQ catalogue. It is proposed that a programme of review, revision and rationalisation of these Units will be rolled out over the next two to three years. This will also involve consultation with current centres and, notwithstanding any additional priorities which emerge, it is likely that high uptake areas will be examined first.

##### b) *Course rationale*

Scottish education recognises the need to educate the whole person, providing them with the skills and knowledge to participate fully in society and giving them the potential to lead rich, fulfilling lives.

*A Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive 2004) identifies aspirations for every young person. These are that they should become:

- ◆ successful learners
- ◆ confident individuals
- ◆ responsible citizens
- ◆ effective contributors

The *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive 2002) policy paper recommended all young people should have a greater entitlement to enterprise activities and develop the desired attitudes, skills and knowledge associated with enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Personal Development Courses will offer a flexible approach to the development of life skills related to employment, social interaction, and self awareness. This will contribute

to meeting the aspirations of both *A Curriculum for Excellence* and *Determined to Succeed* by allowing candidates to develop transferable skills and abilities through experience and activity in a wide range of contexts. This will enhance their self confidence and allow them to be more effective contributors to society. Learning gained through Personal Development Courses will complement and enhance learning in other subjects and give candidates the potential to become more successful learners in new and challenging situations.

Candidates will be able to select a study context which can be linked to many areas within and beyond the formal curriculum. These may be taken from a local, national or global setting. Examples of contexts for study include: enterprise, study skills, health education, citizenship, internet use, independent living, career planning, rights and responsibilities and learning styles.

The new Personal Development Courses will be ungraded and consist of four internally-assessed Units. At Access 3 the Cluster Award will be based on three ungraded Units.

At all levels the Personal Development Course will allow candidates to develop the following personal, social and vocational skills, qualities and abilities:

- ◆ practical abilities in personal, social and vocational settings
- ◆ self-awareness qualities such as self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confidence
- ◆ task management skills such as planning, organising, handling information and completing tasks
- ◆ interpersonal skills such as group work, teamwork, relationships and presenting information
- ◆ evaluative skills including target-setting, reviewing and concluding
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of self, society and the world of work

Self-awareness will be explicitly assessed at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels through a Unit based around this theme, and at Access 3 will be delivered through social and/or vocational experiences. Although there will be a Unit on *Self Awareness* at Intermediate 1 level, it will not form part of the Course.

**c) Course structure**

The Course will consist of four 40 hour Units at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher and of three 40 hour Units at Access 3. Each Unit will have a different focus:

| <b>Units</b>  | <b>Focus</b>   | <b>Levels</b>                  |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Practical Abilities:<br/>Social and Vocational</b> | Demonstrate social and vocational skills through activity and experience | Access 3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher |
| <b>Self in Society</b>                                | Develop interpersonal skills through planning, doing and reviewing       | Access 3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher |
| <b>Self and Work</b>                                  | Develop task management skills through planning, doing and reviewing     | Access3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher  |
| <b>Self Awareness</b>                                 | Develop self-awareness through planning, doing and reviewing             | Int 1, Int 2, Higher           |

The Course offers good opportunities for candidates to progress through the different levels. The structure of the Course allows centres the flexibility of having candidates working at different levels within the same group. Although Units may be studied in isolation, completion of the Course will enhance candidates' personal development by allowing them the opportunity to develop a range of skills through a variety of activities and experience.

Units will also become available at Access 2 as the development progresses.

**d) Course content**

The Course offers candidates the opportunity to develop transferable skills, qualities and abilities in a wide range of contexts. These skills, qualities and abilities are:

- ◆ task management
- ◆ self-awareness
- ◆ interpersonal skills
- ◆ planning
- ◆ reviewing
- ◆ evaluating
- ◆ practical abilities

Some of these skills and abilities are common across all of the Units. However, as indicated previously, each Unit will have a focus on particular skills. For example, task management skills are present to an extent in all of the Units but are being explicitly assessed in the *Self and Work* Unit. This approach avoids duplication of assessment whilst at the same time providing candidates with a clear focus on particular skills. The following table shows Course content and highlights the skills focus:

| <b>Unit title</b> | <b>Practical Abilities: Social &amp; Vocational</b>           | <b>Self in Society</b>  | <b>Self and Work</b>  | <b>Self Awareness</b>   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Activity</b>   | Interpersonal & task management activities                    | Group activity  | Work-related activity   | Personal project  |
| <b>Skills</b>     | Information retrieval & handling, communication, presentation | Planning<br>Implementing<br>Evaluating<br><b>Interpersonal skills</b> | Planning<br>Implementing<br>Evaluating<br><b>Task management skills</b> | Planning<br>Implementing<br>Evaluating<br><b>Self-evaluating skills</b> |
| <b>Knowledge</b>  | Knowledge of techniques to demonstrate above skills           | Knowledge of working with others.                                     | Knowledge of task management skills                                     | Knowledge of self in relation to study context.                         |

|                                       |  |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Examples of Contexts for Study</b> | Combination of social & vocational contexts, either from other Course Units or unrelated curricular activities | Group activity:<br>Sustainability<br>Environmental issues<br>Local community<br>Distant community | Work-related activity:<br>Workplace<br>Enterprise<br>Vocational options | Personal activity:<br>Learning styles<br>Independent living<br>Leisure and recreation<br>Study skills |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|

It is important to note that whilst the range of study contexts will allow candidates the opportunity to develop their knowledge of those contexts it would be inappropriate to assess this knowledge since the primary aim of the Course is to develop personal, transferable skills.

e) ***Approaches to teaching, learning and gathering evidence***

The Course allows an integrated approach to study in that it is possible for one context to be carried through all Units, eg a candidate studying *Health* may:

- ◆ produce a personal health profile for *Self Awareness*
- ◆ work with others in producing a health booklet for *Self in Society*
- ◆ find out about health and safety at work for *Self and Work*
- ◆ demonstrate social and vocational practical abilities through health activities; these will be evident in the production of the health booklet and the presentation of findings about health and safety at work

The gathering of evidence in the Units will be process driven and will not depend upon formal end of Unit assessments. Evidence will be broad based and will arise naturally within the teaching and learning which takes place. It is possible that this may depend upon e-technology, eg blogs, electronic diaries and logs where these are used to assist with learning and delivery of the Units. Discussions are taking place with Computer Assisted Assessment in SQA to access for verification purposes evidence generated in this way.

f) ***Differentiation***

Differentiation between levels is determined by both the amount of support a candidate receives and their level of involvement in/ownership of their activities. For example:

| <b>Action</b>                        | <b>Access 3<br/>SCQF level 3</b> | <b>Intermediate 1<br/>SCQF level 4</b> | <b>Intermediate 2<br/>SCQF level 5</b> | <b>Higher<br/>SCQF level 6</b>       |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| The candidate will work with...      | Directive supervision            | Supervision                            | Minimum supervision                    | Non-directive supervision            |
| The candidate will ...               | Participate in                   | Contribute to                          | Negotiate                              | Take some supervisory responsibility |
| Tasks and communications will be ... | Basic                            | Simple                                 | Detailed                               | Complex                              |

**g) *Verification***

It is the intention to support centres with high levels of verification, enhanced over the first two years to include two verification contacts per year. Possible methods of supporting centres include Professional Development Workshop events, visiting or central verification. This will be discussed with the Assessment Standards Team. Both Course and freestanding Units will benefit from this approach.

**h) *Core Skills***

The nature of the Units on *Self in Society* and *Self and Work* will merit claims at the level of the Units for the core skills of *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* respectively.

**i) *Support materials***

SQA will be producing assessment support materials to assist centres with judgement about candidate performance and it is working in partnership with LTScotland to provide support materials to exemplify some of the contexts in which Personal Development Units may be taught.

**j) *Future information***

Further information will be made available to centres in update letters, on the subject page of SQA's website and by articles in the monthly electronic newsletter E-zine which is circulated to centres. Launch events for the revised Course are provisionally planned for autumn 2007.