

28 November 2003

To: Head of Centre  
SQA Coordinator  
Scottish Executive  
Local Authority — SQA Coordinator

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of  
National Qualifications in Science**

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

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Dear Colleague

**National Qualifications Update — Science (Standard Grade)**

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and make contact with you as the recently appointed Qualifications Manager for Science.

This letter is the latest in the series of update letters from SQA specifically designed to keep specialists in Science abreast of developments in the subject area. I place a very high importance on liaison between SQA and practitioners and these letters form one strand of this communication strategy. In addition I can be contacted in a number of ways, with my direct dial and e-mail address noted above.

Many of you will be aware that Charlie Penman has moved on, and is now the Business Manager for the Mathematics and Science Team in SQA. Louise Lilley, the Qualifications Officer in the Mathematics and Science team, is now working with the Business and Technology team. The new Qualifications Officer for Science is Jayne Terzza, who has moved from a similar post in the Business and Technology team to join the Mathematics and Science team.

**1. Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator Reports**

The Principal Assessor (PA) report for the 2003 diet of examinations is on the SQA website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). Please refer to the PA report for statistical information about the examinations, and comments on candidate performance. The PA report details areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well, and areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty.

The Principal Assessor would like to take this opportunity to remind teachers that candidates should be encouraged to show working supporting an answer where it is appropriate to do so. Where an answer is incorrect, candidates may achieve partial credit if there is appropriate working shown.

The Senior Moderator (SM) report will be placed on the website in the near future. The SM notes that centres are in general following the guidelines and procedures outlined in the Arrangements document.

## **2. SQA Past Question Papers**

At the recent Science Assessment Panel meeting the availability of past question papers for Standard Grade Science was raised.

Standard Grade Science (Credit, General and Foundation level) past question papers are available to purchase from SQA, priced £4.00 per paper. Please note that Marking Instructions are not included.

To order past question papers, for the preceding two examination diets, please contact SQA's Customer Contact Centre by telephone: 0845 279 1000, fax: 0141 242 2244, or e-mail: [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk).

For further advice, and information on the purchase of Question Paper Booklets for 2003 from Leckie and Leckie, please refer to SQA's website. Information is available on the NQ homepage.

## **3. Appeals 2003**

The number of appeals against this year's exam results is significantly down compared with last year. A major reason behind the reduction is the increased number of candidates who achieved their estimate.

Experience from the Appeals procedures this year indicates that some centres are still submitting inadequate evidence in support of appeals. The Examiner must be sufficiently persuaded by the quality and quantity of the evidence to improve the award to the estimate grade.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a number of letters and publications relating to Appeals issued by SQA over the last few years.

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ The letter from Hugh Gordon dated 15 February 2002 and containing *Notes of guidance for centres on the appeals process and on the preparation of evidence to support estimates and appeals*
- ◆ The letter from Tom Drake dated 4 November 2003 referring to *Note of guidance for centres on the use of commercially-produced examination papers*

When submitting evidence for appeals purposes, centres may wish to clearly identify the sources from which questions are drawn. For example, for an SQA past paper, an indication of the year, paper number, and question number, and if the question has been modified. This will greatly assist the Examining team in making a judgement of the suitability and reliability of the evidence.

## **4. Investigation into the proposed development of National Courses in Science**

SQA fully recognises the importance of Standard Grade Science, and the rationale for developing further multi-disciplinary Science courses.

A consultant has been recently appointed to investigate the possibility of developing an NQ Course structure in multi-disciplinary Science from Access 3 through to Higher level. A major part of the investigation will be to consult widely amongst the scientific community and interested parties. SQA welcomes contributions to the review and development process. If you have any comments or views you wish to pass on to me at this early stage please contact me at the address given on the first page of this letter, or my colleague Jayne Terzza (telephone: 0141-242 2203, or e-mail: [jayne.terzza@sqa.org.uk](mailto:jayne.terzza@sqa.org.uk)). Your comments and views will be passed on to, and discussed, with the consultant.

Yours faithfully

*Noël Donoghue*

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Mathematics and Science