

December 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Customer Account Managers

Action by Recipient
Response required
✓ Note and pass on
Note — update/information only

Contact: Tom Stannage
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E-mail: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Sociology

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

Diet 2008

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment reports for Sociology for diet 2008. These reports contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Sociology.

The following reports can be found on the NQ Sociology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk):

- ◆ External Assessment report Intermediate 2 Sociology
- ◆ External Assessment report Higher Sociology

This was the second year of the revised Higher and Intermediate 2 Sociology Course assessments and once again candidates responded well. Results were in the main quite pleasing showing that staff and candidates have settled well into the revised examination structure at both levels.

Marking instructions

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for diet 2008 Course assessments at Higher and Intermediate 2 level are posted on the NQ Sociology pages of SQA's website. It is hoped that these will be of benefit to staff when preparing a prelim paper or when submitting evidence for appeals.

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. There were still a number of problems found in evidence submitted for appeals. The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ Evidence was partial and did not sufficiently represent the whole Course.
- ◆ Evidence submitted did not match the estimate made.
- ◆ Wrong or incomplete marking schemes.
- ◆ Prelim questions were drawn from too few sources.
- ◆ Security of prelim papers was compromised.
- ◆ Where NABs were used the KU/AE balance was not adjusted or questions were not adapted.
- ◆ The KU/AE balance clearly laid out in the Course Assessment Specifications and the specimen question paper was not adhered to.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates.

Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following document prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA0992, June 2007)

The document noted above — *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* — has undergone revision and has been posted on SQA's website. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper-based Courses.

Marking for SQA

Each year the number of entries for the Sociology Courses is increasing and as a result we require more Markers. We would therefore welcome applications for diet 2009. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Sociology, please e-mail **markers@sqa.org.uk** or call our Marker Helpline (0131-561 6825) and we will send a form to you. 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.

Course papers are centrally marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one extended period in the same venue. 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. It also gives the opportunity to network with teachers and lecturers from other colleges and schools and can lead to a good improvement on your own results.

Assessment Panel

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in Sociology as well as the other social sciences subjects.

Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers. The membership of this Assessment Panel has been revised and the first meeting took place during September 2007.

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 contact me either by telephone on 0845 213 5502 or by e-mail at **tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stannage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tom Stannage
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Subjects