

30 October 2006

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

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

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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 2006

Centres are advised to access the Principal Assessor reports for Sociology for diet 2006. These reports contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Sociology.

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

- ◆ Principal Assessor report Intermediate 1 and 2 Sociology
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Higher Sociology
- ◆ Principal Assessor report Advanced Higher Sociology

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, April 2004)

The number of appeals at both Higher and Intermediate 2 levels were down on last session. This would indicate that staff are preparing candidates well for the examination and that estimates were more accurate. There were, however, 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 had been marked inconsistently, did not match the national standard or standards had been interpreted leniently
- ◆ Evidence had not been graded nor any comments made on why a candidate had been estimated at a particular grade
- ◆ Evidence submitted did not match the estimate made
- ◆ Evidence produced outwith supervised conditions

Most of the above problems were reported in the 2005 update letter, however, similar problems were replicated in 2006.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates.

The document *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* referred to above is currently undergoing revision with the revised version due to be posted on SQA's website in October. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper-based Courses and states:

‘An integrated prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course plus supporting evidence, such as a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit would support an Appeal for a Grade C (and possibly a B), but not for a Grade A.

For an Appeal for a Grade A, the most convincing evidence would replicate the standard format, duration and security of SQA's question paper.’

Marking instructions

The finalised marking instructions for diet 2006 Course assessments at Higher and Intermediate 2 level are posted on the Sociology page of SQA's website.

Revised Sociology Course (C228 11/12)

A reminder that the Arrangements documents for Sociology Courses (C228 11/12) are available on the Sociology pages of SQA's website and the previous course (C074) is now only available at Advanced Higher level.

Units at Intermediate 1 have the same titles and are hierarchical with Intermediate 2 Units in terms of content and progression, however, there will be no Course assessment at this level. Centres are also reminded that this is the final year where candidates can be entered for the Advanced Higher Course. The Units will remain as free-standing Units but there will be no Course assessment.

Marking for SQA

Each year the number of entries for the Sociology Courses is increasing. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Sociology, an application form can be downloaded from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). Alternatively, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years, preferably 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. Course papers are centrally marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one extended period 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.

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.

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



Tom Stannage
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NQ Social Sciences and Care