

October 2010

To: SQA Coordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS

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

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(s) of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Sociology.

Diet 2010

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment Reports for Sociology at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for Diet 2010. These reports which were formerly known as Principal Assessor 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 SQAs website (www.sqa.org.uk):

- External Assessment Report Intermediate 2 Sociology
- External Assessment Report Higher Sociology

Results continue to improve from previous years with a decrease in the number of No Awards. This is encouraging and indicates that centre staff are now familiar with the course arrangements and candidates are prepared well for the exam. It is also pleasing that there was a significant increase in the number of candidates presented in 2010 at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels.

Marking Instructions

The 2010 Question Papers and finalised marking instructions for Higher and Intermediate 2 levels are now available on the Sociology page of SQAs website. It is hoped that these will be of benefit to staff when preparing a prelim paper or when submitting evidence for appeals.

Appeals

Appeals procedures for stage 1 and stage 2 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 submitted did not match the centre's estimate
- Marking in evidence submitted was leniently applied.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates.

It is also important to remind centres of the clarity required when identifying sources.

Centres must ensure that details of the sources of each prelim question are included with Appeals evidence. For example: Question 2 – SQA Past Paper 2007 – Q5 adapted.

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

- ◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements*

The document – *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* has undergone revision and has been posted on the SQA website. The revised version clarifies what subject specific evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

Understanding Standards

Work is now completed on exemplar materials for Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology for the Understanding Standards website. These materials will give centres an accessible, definitive and comprehensive resource which enables them to understand the standards used by SQA when assessing their candidates' work and allows them to develop their skills in working with these standards through a series of interactive exercises with feedback.

Becoming a Marker

Each year the number of entries for Sociology Courses is increasing and SQA are in need of additional Markers. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Sociology, information and application forms are available on our Appointee Management section of the SQA website.

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.

We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. Sociology continues to be centrally marked.

This entails Markers marking scripts as a team over an 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 annually 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 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 to mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Hainey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "Hainey".

Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care