

11 December 2007

To: Head of centre

cc: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary schools and FE colleges
Education Authorities
HMIE

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

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Dear Colleague

NQ Travel and Tourism

This briefing note is intended to offer practical advice and support on the issues being raised by centre staff with SQA, and should be distributed to those staff responsible for Travel and Tourism.

It contains information about the following:

1. Principal Assessor reports
2. Senior Verifier report
3. Intermediate 2: Changes to *Tourist Destinations* Unit (DM4N 11)
4. Feedback on *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals*
5. National Certificate Group Awards
6. Project-based National Courses
7. Additional useful information and advice

1. Principal Assessor reports

SQA would like to encourage all centre staff responsible for Travel and Tourism to read the reports of the Principal Assessors and Senior Verifier for session 2006/07 and the corresponding examination diet. The reports contain detailed advice and information pertaining to candidate performance, guidance for centres and specific issues relating to individual examination questions. These are available on the Travel and Tourism page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

These reports contain information on the following:

Principal Assessor report: Higher Travel and Tourism

- ◆ topics which were well answered including Tourist Destinations and the Scottish Tourism Product sections
- ◆ topics where answers were weaker including those on tourist industry organisations, the structure of the industry, the application of SWOT analysis, the ‘marketing mix’ and itinerary planning

Principal Assessor report: Intermediate 2 Travel and Tourism

- ◆ topics which were well answered including those on promotion and tourist destinations
- ◆ topics where answers were weaker including those dealing with social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism, front and back office functions, booking and reservation systems, winter sun destinations

Principal Assessor report: Intermediate 1 Travel and Tourism

- ◆ topics where answers were weaker including booking forms, cost calculations and currency conversions

The report notes that overall there was a very satisfactory performance at this level.

Principal Assessor report: Intermediate 2 Selling Overseas Tourist Destinations

- ◆ the significance of the planning and research stages which were generally well done
- ◆ the requirement to number pages and ensure that where maps are drawn that they are both legible and useful

Principal Assessor report: Higher Retail Travel and Selling Scheduled Air Travel

- ◆ areas which require particular attention including legibility of handwritten submissions, the need to retain rough working, printouts, etc, the format and style of final presentation and itineraries, the need to focus on assisting candidates in the evaluating stage of the project

2 Senior Verifier report

This report is available on SQA’s website and provides general guidance to centres about the assessment of Units. It commends the generally high quality of organisation of evidence, internal quality assurance procedures and organisation of this evidence. It also notes that centres should:

- ◆ not be using half marks in the marking of any assessment
- ◆ continue to use cross marking or equivalent internal quality assurance procedures
- ◆ use current NABs to avoid the danger of failing to assess current outcomes and performance criteria

3 Intermediate 2: Changes to *Tourist Destinations* Unit (DM4N 11)

This Unit has now been revised to take account of stakeholder concerns about its length and complexity. These changes consist of a **reduction** in:

- ◆ the number of destinations candidates must study
- ◆ the amount of information candidates must know about each destination studied

No other changes have been made to the Arrangements document beyond the appendix to this Unit. Specimen examination questions reflecting the reduction in content of Tourist Destinations will be published on SQA's website early in 2008.

There are currently **two** versions of the Arrangements documents for the Travel and Tourism Course at Intermediate 2 on our website. The current (ie second edition) Arrangements will be valid until July 2008, at which point they will be superseded by the third edition Arrangements, valid from August 2008 onwards. The two different sets of Arrangements are clearly labelled on our website. This is the only place where the revised Unit specification can be located at present. It will 'go live' on the NQ Unit search section of our website when the Unit becomes valid. Revised NABs, which will not be valid until August 2008, will also be placed on the secure area of our website early in 2008.

Because the only changes to the Unit will be in the form of reduced content, centres delivering the Intermediate 2 Travel and Tourism Course over two years from August 2007 to May 2009 may choose to either continue delivering the content of the current version of the Unit throughout the Course, or take account of the reduced content of the revised Unit and tailor their teaching accordingly. There will be no additional content or assessment as a result of this revision.

4 **Feedback on *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals***

The 2008 version of the document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* is available on SQA's website. This contains generic and detailed subject advice to centres. This advice notes that appeals provide an opportunity for centres to seek upgrades in Course awards for **exceptional** cases where a candidate has failed to perform to the standard expected.

A number of appeals submitted after the 2007 diet were unsuccessful as the evidence did not meet the criteria set out in this guide. In these instances examiners did not accept evidence submitted if it failed to do one or more of the following:

- ◆ draw on at least three different sources for prelim papers where SQA past papers were being used
- ◆ adequately sample **all** Units in the Course
- ◆ when setting grade boundaries, take account of the reduced level of challenge provided by an assessment which does not directly mirror the level of challenge of the final exam
- ◆ mark candidate responses to the same standard as required in the question paper

Marking guidelines are available on the Travel and Tourism page of SQA's website. The Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk) provides sample marked scripts, with examiner comments for both Intermediate 2 and Higher level.

5 National Certificate Group Awards

Work on the development of National Certificates and National Progression Awards is ongoing and centres will be kept informed through separate correspondence of progress in this area of work. The new National Certificate Arrangements will be published in April 2008 and the Course at Intermediate 2 will be available from August 2008. This Course, which is aimed at the further education sector, will run in parallel to the NQ Course at the same level. A final decision is still to be taken about the start date for the National Certificate Course at Higher level.

6 Project-based National Courses (PBNCs)

a) *Selling Overseas Tourist Destinations* — the case study on golfing holidays has been withdrawn from the list of choices for 2007/08 and has been replaced by a new case study on activity holidays involving climbing and water sports.

b) *Retail Travel* — the Practical Assignment Brief for the project on Italy is being revised to accommodate travel to a different destination. The revised brief will be available to download from our website in January 2008.

7 Additional useful information and advice

a) *Intermediate 2 Course Assessment* — centres will by now have become accustomed to the use of a pamphlet in the exam as the basis of questions relating to the assessment of marketing. The use of such a resource is not mandatory and it should be noted that a resource of this type may not always be used in this part of the exam.

b) *Winter sun destinations* — markers' reports from the 2007 diet noted that many candidates were not selecting 'winter sun' destinations for the question on this topic. There are a number of specialist holiday brochures dealing with this holiday type and candidates should refer to one of the destinations specifically mentioned in these when answering questions on this topic. The marking instructions for this paper (see question 15b) identify the destinations that are accepted under this heading as the Canary Islands, Costa del Sol, Costa Blanca, Algarve, Madeira, Malta, Turkey, Cyprus, Majorca and the Neopolitan Riviera. Should other destinations feature in this category of holiday brochure in future these would be accepted.

c) *Resources for teaching travel and tourism industry* — the last update letter listed a number of websites which might be used to access resources to assist in both the delivery of the content of the Courses and to help centres keep abreast of changes in the travel and tourism industry. These websites continue to be useful. Others which might be studied include:

- ◆ **www.hotelsalesonline.com** — a site dealing with online marketing strategies for hotels
- ◆ **www.travelweekly.co.uk** — weekly subscription available but this is expensive. This site contains a useful search facility to access articles on travel industry
- ◆ **www.visitscotland.org** — also **www.scotexchange.net** — is the official corporate website of VisitScotland which is the national governmental tourism organisation. It is where candidates will find all the information they require

about the role and organisation of VisitScotland, statistics and all sorts of useful information about Scottish tourism

- ♦ **www.visitscotland.com** — is a commercial website. VisitScotland.com is the trading name of eTourism Ltd — a private limited company owned jointly by VisitScotland, Tiscover, Partnerships UK Ltd and Atos Origin. A key facility of this site is to provide an online reservation service for anyone wishing to visit Scotland

I hope that the notes above are of help to you. If you have any queries about these or any other related issues please contact me at the details given above.

Yours faithfully



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