

Our ref: CSS Update 2002

04 November 2002

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

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

Contact Name – Larry Cheyne at GLASGOW
Direct Line – 0141 242 2334
E-Mail – Larry.Cheyne@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Contemporary Social Studies – Update Newsletter, 2002

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Contemporary Social Studies.

Principal Assessor's Report

The full report is on the SQA web-site (www.sqa.org.uk). The main points are summarised below:

- ◆ As last year, markers felt that the presentation group was more obviously composed of Foundation Level pupils rather than marginal General or mainstream General candidates. Most made an honest attempt at the General Paper, which is worth commenting on because, in several previous years, many candidates were prone to leaving a lot of the answer paper blank. It was clear, however, that many were out of their depth. A minority showed that they were comfortable with the demands of the General Level Paper and answered well.
- ◆ This year's Knowledge and Understanding questions seemed to be answered slightly better than in some previous years and, with the increased use of multiple choice and cloze passages, it is hoped that the relative level of difficulty of this element will begin to fall.

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- ◆ The basic response patterns remain unchanged from previous years, with significantly poorer performance in the Knowledge and Understanding element than at Evaluating. Likewise, the areas of content strength and weakness tend to have shifted little, with candidates more secure in the area of the Environment than in the other two sections. It is noticeable that the same areas of weakness are mentioned year after year, viz., the functions and workings of the Public Enquiry ('F', Question 3); the role of Trade Unions ('G', Question 6); the concept of 'culture' ('G', Question 8 and 9). Many candidates were also unsure about the responsibilities of the different levels of government, post devolution and post the amendment to the Conditions and Arrangements ('G', Question 10).
- ◆ There were signs of some candidates having been well drilled in the technique of summarising the main points of a graph, but many candidates did little more than transcribe the graph into words without any attempt to process or synthesise the information, or identified *only* the main item of expenditure, viz. education ('F', Question 10). Even at Foundation level, a straight transcription from a graph would gain no more than half marks. Candidates should be encouraged to comment on "the most", "the least", or to rank the activities, providing figures as a backup.
- ◆ This type of question is guaranteed to recur annually and it would be a good investment in time to give pupils plenty of practice in dealing with it. Similarly, questions which ask the candidate to "describe changes" are a recurrent format. Candidates have to be coached into using both sources and making the changes *explicit* in their answer, rather than merely listing what can be seen on just the one source.

Report of Senior Moderator

This can also be accessed on the SQA web-site.

Sample Log Book

It is hoped to put a centre-devised exemplar log book on the web-site in the future.

Assessment of Investigating

In order to assist centres in the assessment of the element of Investigating, the enclosed "Advice to Centres: Assessing Investigating" is offered.

Please contact me should any clarification be necessary.

Yours faithfully



Larry Cheyne
Qualifications Manager

Encs

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Contemporary Social Studies SG Investigating

Advice to Centres: Assessing Investigating

Aim

The aim is to give credit for successful performance in relation to the GRC for the course.

Nature of Investigating in Contemporary Social Studies

The assessment of the element is based on the Extended Grade Related Criteria for Investigating.

Assessment of this element in CSS is fundamentally different from the assessment of Investigating that pertained in the other Standard Grade social subjects, in that it is the **process** of carrying out the Investigating that is paramount.

In CSS, the sub-elements identified in Investigating relate to:

- ◆ Planning and preparation
- ◆ Locating and obtaining
- ◆ Reporting

They exclude Knowledge and Understanding, and Evaluating. These elements are assessed externally in Contemporary Social Studies through the Question Papers. Weakness or strength in these elements should not be allowed to influence Grades awarded in the Investigating element.

The nature of Moderation Assessment: Moderation Procedures

Moderators will read through the submission, bearing in mind the key differentiating factors described below. This process will identify the level of performance for each sub-element. Moderators will then consider each sub-element in detail to establish a Grade within the Level. These Grades for the sub-elements are then aggregated to establish an overall Grade for the element.

Moderators will not give undue weight to the Reporting sub-element; each sub-element grade will be considered and justified separately.

The Grade for the element is arrived at by calculating the arithmetic average of the Grades for the sub-elements. The normal rule for rounding decimals is applied (ie .5 or above).

A candidate with missing or defective sub-element evidence may be awarded Grade 7 **for that sub-element** and the calculation made on that basis, as before. An award of Grade 7 acknowledges that the course has been completed and allows a Grade for the element to be awarded.

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Establishing Grades within Levels

The general principle is that a satisfactory performance merits the lower grade within the Level, a high standard the upper grade. Any candidate who conscientiously follows the course ought to be able to achieve a Grade 6.

Support provided for candidate's work

The degree of support provided by the teacher limits, but does not finally establish, the level of award for Inv1 and Inv2. "Detailed Instructions" limit a performance to Foundation Level, but "outline instructions" do not automatically lead to a General Level award.

The responsible teacher's entries must provide the necessary information on the degree of support provided. **[Failure to indicate this accurately could prejudice a candidate's attainment].**

Even at Foundation level, there must be **evidence** that the candidate has demonstrated some elementary planning and preparation. Where teachers have undertaken a standard group exercise as a way of starting the Investigation, markers will look for evidence of some level of individual planning.

Evidence of support from adults other than teachers should be treated in the same way as support from the teacher.

Evidence in relation to Inv1 and Inv2

Inv1 Plan and Prepare

Evidence may include:

- ◆ Statement of aims
- ◆ Introductory paragraph
- ◆ List of questions derived from these aims
- ◆ Indication of sources which will be sought
- ◆ Spider diagrams from initial planning
- ◆ Rough drafts of questionnaires etc.

Where there is **no** evidence of planning, a Grade 7 may be awarded.

Inv2 Locate and Obtain

Evidence may include:

- ◆ Record of sources used
- ◆ Diary of locating activities
- ◆ Samples of raw data, eg questionnaire responses
- ◆ Samples of rough notes
- ◆ Copies of letters sent
- ◆ Replies received

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Indiscriminate copying of source material may lead to a Grade 7 being awarded.

Moderators will be alert to methods stated or intended, which are not followed through from the planning stage, or evidenced in the presentation, e.g. lengthy book lists that do not appear to have been used or surveys that have not been carried out.

Choice of Topic

CSS is a multi-disciplinary course, based on Economics, Geography, History and Modern Studies. This must be reflected in topics/issues investigated. Where topics are deemed to be inappropriate or irrelevant, and the investigation does not demonstrate the skills of the course in a social subjects context, the submission will be re-graded, downwards, by a whole grade in the sub-element Planning and Preparing.

The title alone will not provide a sufficient guide. "Ice skating", for example, would be acceptable if the investigation explored the growing popularity of the activity, but unacceptable if it merely addressed the technical physical skills involved. (See **Guidance on Investigating**, 1989; **Guidance on Assessment**, 1990; **Further Guidance on Assessment**, 1991).

Chronology of Evidence

Moderators will consider the most recent evidence first.

Where a centre has submitted a series of evidence produced with a decreasing degree of teacher support, and the work produced with "outline instructions" is unsatisfactory, moderators will grade on the basis of the earlier work produced with "detailed instructions".

Submissions requiring special attention

Moderators will look closely at the following:

- ◆ Grading inconsistent with indication of support
- ◆ Work produced explicitly collaboratively where individual contribution cannot be identified.
- ◆ Irrelevant topics
- ◆ Photocopied material: this can give rise to questions over provenance and should be avoided. Teachers are advised to include a clarifying comment where this has been unavoidable.

Similarly, if candidates have been provided with raw data from a previous year's investigation, eg questionnaires, this should be clarified by the centre. (This is acceptable for the purpose of processing and analysing the data, but would not be acceptable evidence of Locating and Obtaining).

Establishing Levels of Performance

Inv1: Planning and Preparation

If a topic is inappropriate, the **Planning** grade is reduced by one grade.

Foundation Level

Preparation following **detailed** instructions for **limited** investigation.

Preparation

Not really a plan

eg a list of tasks, or a list of questions for an interview.

Detailed Instructions

This partly depends on teacher tightly limiting the scope of the investigation

eg "Select questions from this list"
"You should ask about x, y, z"
"Write to Mr A at Y plc asking for permission to visit at 2.00 pm on Monday".

Limited Investigation

This usually is on a very restricted scale, requiring simple and accessible sources.

A title which is too open makes the task much more difficult, and in these circumstances moderators will credit isolated pieces of satisfactory work contained within a broader mass.

Limited investigations might be "Changing working conditions at Y plc in the last 5 years" or "Who uses our sports centre?" Titles alone are not sufficient guide, since either of these titles could obviously form the basis of very extended studies.

General Level

Make **plans** and **preparations** following **outline** instructions for an **investigation**.

Plans

Evidence of aims and of working questions

A list of tasks to be completed

Preparations

Preparing questions for an interview

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General Level (continued)

Outline instructions

These partly depend on teacher's role in establishing a defining topic.

eg "Write down 6 questions to ask Mrs X about changing technology in plc".
"You should interview two people who work for the company."

An investigation

The difference from Foundation Level is in how the topic is developed rather than necessarily in the title itself,

eg Range of issues, range of sources, aspects, depth.

Credit Level

Detailed plans and preparation following **general** guidance for an **extended** investigation.

Detailed plans and preparation

There has to be an explicit plan. This must outline the broad aim of the investigation, the issues and questions to be explored, sources to be explored in relation to each, tasks to be undertaken, and an action plan/schedule.

There has to be evidence of thorough preparation

eg Background reading leading to refinement of aims
Well-developed survey instruments.

General guidance

This will tend to be teacher remediation rather than the provision of prior structures.

Extended investigation

The topic has to be issue-driven in order to meet this criterion.

It must be extended both in scale and complexity of issues. The title alone is not a sufficient guidance,

eg "A comparison of life in Y and X streets" could be treated at General or Credit Level, depending on how fully it was developed.

Inv2: Locating and Obtaining Information

Foundation Level

Identify and **obtain** sources for **limited** investigation following **detailed** instructions.

Identify

eg Choose from those provided by teacher.

Obtain

eg Ask clearly and comprehensibly for a source relevant to a **specific** topic
Draw up a questionnaire which may be limited in number (eg 20) and may have been administered only within the class or centre.

Limited investigation

ie very straightforward questions.

Detailed instructions

eg “Write to X asking for Y. You should explain why you need this.
You should thank X. You should enclose a SAE.”

General Level

Identify and obtain sources for investigation following **outline** instructions.

The complexity and scale of investigation and hence the complexity and scale of the sources which have to be accessed are greater, e.g. a sample of 50 questionnaires might be appropriate and might be expected to have been administered outwith the school; some awareness of sampling should be evidenced, such as consideration of age or gender.

Outline instructions

eg “You should write to the local Council to get this information.”

Credit Level

Identify and obtain sources for an **extended** investigation following **general guidance**.

Inv3: Reporting

Foundation Level

Accurately present **simple** information in an **understandable** way.

Accuracy is essential at all levels of performance. It is differentiated only by the context ie simple/complex information.

Simple information

eg A survey of class leisure activities.

Understandable

eg Graphs would have to be well enough labelled to be meaningful.

Where a candidate offers no conclusions, a Grade 6 will be awarded. The conclusions need not necessarily be presented separately at the end of the submission, but may be contained at various points throughout.

General Level

Accurately present **information** in a **logical sequence and appropriate form.**

Present information

Accuracy remains essential, context is more complex.

Logical sequence

There should be 'flow' and the whole should be linked together.

There has to be a clear structure of introduction/main text/conclusion.

NB Evaluation is a separate element, and hence quality of conclusion should not be allowed unduly to influence assessment of Inv3.

Appropriate form

Raw data should be processed as appropriate, eg, into graphs.

Maps and pictures should be labelled and should be relevant to the aim.

To provide a basis for judging sequence and appropriate form, there has to be a clearly stated aim.

Inv3 (continued)

Credit Level

Accurately present **a range of information** in a **logical and coherent** sequence and appropriate form.

A range of information

The greater scope and complexity of the aims of the investigation provide the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the higher level skills which are required.

Logical and coherent

“Coherence” as well as “logical structure” calls for a tighter internal structure. Irrelevance, for example, would have to be severely penalised.