

Our ref: PA/cm

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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

### **Modern Languages Update**

We wish to bring the following matters to your attention.

#### **1 Revised Standard Grade Arrangements - Folio of Writing**

As you are aware, assessment in the Writing element is compulsory for all candidates from 2003 onwards.

#### **Estimates**

You should not put a grade on the final folio pieces which are to be submitted to SQA by 27 March 2003. However, as in previous years, you will be required to submit an estimate grade for each candidate on Form Ex 5. In the event of an assessment appeal, you will be expected to submit as evidence other pieces of writing, produced during the Standard Grade course, which support the estimate.

#### **Assessment /Missing folio pieces**

The final grade for the folio, which will be externally assessed, will be generated by aggregating the grades awarded to each of the three pieces. (For examples of this process, see the Arrangements Document, page 28.) If a candidate submits only two folio pieces, the missing piece will be counted as grade 7, in order to allow credit to be given for the other two pieces. If, however, there are two or more pieces missing, the candidate will be given no award for the Writing element and will therefore not achieve an overall award for the subject.

### **Submission of folio pieces**

Folios are to be submitted to SQA by 27 March 2003. Flyleafs to accompany each folio and instructions on their submission will be issued by SQA in due course.

### **Folio of Writing and special assessment arrangements**

*What support is available to candidates who have specific learning difficulties?*

SQA has the responsibility of ensuring equal opportunities and access to assessment for all candidates including those with specific learning difficulties. Where special arrangements operate, the candidate should gain no unfair advantage and assessment standards should be maintained.

In the assessment of Writing at Standard Grade in Modern languages, it is the overall quality of the **written** language which is being assessed. Candidates with specific learning difficulties should, where possible, complete their own work. The absence of time constraints when producing pieces for possible inclusion in the Folio, the availability of dictionaries and/or word processors with spell check facilities, and the opportunity to re-draft work with advice from the teacher should make this feasible for the vast majority of candidates. It is always preferable that candidates develop strategies which allow independence.

Candidates with specific learning difficulties who normally use a scribe may be permitted such support in the production of Folio pieces. However, as grades in Writing are awarded on the basis of length of submission, structure and/or focus, range of vocabulary and of grammatical structures, and **accuracy**, a scribe must follow explicit instructions from the candidate with regard to spelling.

In the case of candidates with very severe specific learning difficulties for whom the use of a scribe, as described above, would not be appropriate, centres may apply to SQA's Special Assessment Arrangements department in the normal way, for omission of the Writing element. Any overall award would then be based on the other elements (Reading, Listening and Speaking). This arrangement should be sought only for candidates for whom all of the previous options are genuinely inappropriate.

### **Specimen Question Papers at Standard Grade**

These have already been issued in French, Spanish and German. Audio cassettes for the French and German papers will be distributed shortly. A specimen paper for Italian and its accompanying cassette will follow in due course.

### **Moderation of speaking**

If your centre is selected for moderation, you will not be issued this year with moderation activities (sheets SP1 and SP2). The Visiting Moderator will wish to be present during six examples of a prepared talk and six examples of teacher/candidate interaction (Arrangements Document page 23.). You will be notified in late January/early February if your centre has been selected for moderation.

Please note: if you have an SQA Moderator in your department, you may still be selected for moderation

### **Standard Grade Arrangements Document (April 2001)**

Please note the following two amendments:

On page 22 (Reading) the seventh entry should read:  
 “At least one passage in each paper will be work-related and will require comprehension at text level, **eg** (not ie) candidates will have to identify....”

On page 42, the total for example 1 should read **1.5** and not 1.33. The overall grade would remain as 1.

## **2 Advanced Higher**

The paper copy of the revised course details and unit specifications which was issued to centres in October contains an error on page 8. A replacement page has been issued and the web version has been corrected. The mark allocation for Paper 2 (Listening/Writing) should read as follows:

**Listening        40 marks (20%)**  
**Writing         30 marks (15%)**

A revised version of the categories, criteria and pegged marks for the **external** assessment of **Discursive Writing** at Advanced Higher is attached to this letter. (Appendix A)

In Paper 2, the use of a dictionary continues to be permitted for both the Listening and the Writing sections, although it is suggested that candidates be advised to make use of this facility principally for the Writing section.

We hope to be able to issue Revised Specimen Question Papers in French and Spanish incorporating the changes to the external assessment of Listening before the end of this term, and in German early next term. There are no plans at present to issue Revised Specimen Question Papers in Italian or Russian.

Following the successful pilot which ran in 2002, **all external Speaking tests carried out by SQA’s Visiting Examiners will be recorded in and after 2003.**

You are reminded that for writing in the foreign language for **internal** assessment, candidates will not be penalised for exceeding the word limit but should be discouraged from doing so. (Extended Reading/Viewing NAB page 12. Language in Work NAB page 15). They will, however be penalised for exceeding the word limit for the folio essays in English for **external** assessment. (Advanced Higher Modern Languages- Guidance on the folio of Writing page 6)

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3 **Higher**

Centres should be mindful of the change to the internal assessment of **Extended Reading/Viewing** at Higher, where candidates are to produce a piece of writing in the target language of approximately 100-150 words relating to **one aspect** of the text(s) studied (Arrangements Document p21).

4 **Intermediate 1 – Assessment of Speaking**

You are reminded that for those candidates undertaking the course assessment at Intermediate 1, only **one** speaking assessment is required and this can be taken from **any one** of the three mandatory units. This assessment is dual purpose and will satisfy the evidence requirements for the Speaking outcome for all three units.

Revised assessment criteria taking account of the new interactive speaking assessment are attached. (Appendix B)

5 **NABs update**

Most revised NABs (001) have been issued to centres or will be issued shortly. NABs (002) will follow in due course. It is SQA's intention to re-record the listening tests in these replacement NABs. However, since there are no significant changes to these at Higher, Int 1 and Int 2 other than those relating to currency, it is possible in the meantime to use tapes already in centres with the new NABs.

Where no new NABs have yet been issued at Advanced Higher for the Language unit, it is possible to use the existing NABs ; for Listening purposes, you may translate the questions into English and amend the marking keys as appropriate. It is, however, perfectly acceptable to continue to use the target language questions.

6 **Exemplification of Speaking**

We hope to be able to issue, in CD format only, exemplification of Speaking at Higher in French, German, Italian and Spanish and at Intermediate 2 in German, Italian and Spanish before the end of this term. Exemplification of Speaking at Intermediate 2 in French will follow in the new year. Exemplification at Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher will be issued after the 2003 examinations.

7 **Report on performance of candidates in the 2002 examinations**

A report highlighting aspects of candidates' performance in the 2002 examinations is available on the SQA website. ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk))

7 **Higher National update**

Suites of four Units (4 x 1 credit Units), designed according to the revised Higher National Unit specification, are available on the SQA website. These suites, available at present for English for Speakers of Other Languages, French, Gaelic, German, Italian and Spanish, are levelled at level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications

Framework. Free-standing Units (each of 1 credit), in Speaking, Reading, Listening and Writing at SCQF level 7 will be available on the SQA website in due course for the above six languages.

8 **Use of CD players for Listening tests**

SQA does not recommend a specific type of CD player for the above. It is our intention to issue all Listening tests in CD format. However, you will be contacted shortly to ascertain whether you would prefer to be issued with audio cassettes for this purpose.

10 **Extraneous Rule**

We have been requested to provide information on the Extraneous Rule. This applies only in the assessment of Listening and Reading at Standard Grade, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2.

For the rule to apply, the candidate must firstly **have exceeded the total** number of items for which points will be awarded **and** the additional information given must be **wrong**. The **maximum deduction** per question/sub-question for extraneous material is **1 mark**.

Yours faithfully



Phil Allan  
Qualifications Manager

Encs Appendix A  
Appendix B

*Appendix A AH Discursive Writing*

**Task: Discursive essay in the target language on theme/topic drawn from the Language Unit.**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Pegged marks</b>
Very Good	The language is characterised by a high degree of accuracy and/or may show some flair. Uses a good range of structures and vocabulary appropriate to Advanced Higher with few, if any, errors of spelling and/or punctuation. The essay is well structured and all aspects are relevant to the title.	30
Good	The language is clearly comprehensible throughout and fairly free of serious errors in areas appropriate to Advanced Higher. Contains a reasonable range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the level. There are few errors in spelling and/or punctuation. The essay has an adequate sense of structure and most aspects are relevant to the title.	24
Satisfactory	Sufficient control of structures appropriate to Advanced Higher to convey meaning clearly. Contains a reasonable range of vocabulary and some complex sentences. Spelling and punctuation are generally correct. The essay has some sense of structure and most aspects have some relevance to the title. Performance may be uneven, but the good outweighs the bad.	18
Unsatisfactory	The language is insufficiently accurate to convey meaning clearly and consistently. Very limited range of vocabulary and/or structures appropriate to Advanced Higher. Inappropriate use of learned material, and possibly some unidiomatic translation from English. The essay may be lacking in structure and less than half of the aspects have any relevance to the title.	12
Poor	The language contains frequent basic errors and/or other tongue interference which seriously impede communication. The essay may be unstructured and few aspects are relevant to the title.	6
Very Poor	No redeeming features.	0

**Appendix B Intermediate 1 Speaking**

**Task: A face to face conversation/simulation/role-play of approximately 2 minutes.**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Pegged marks</b>
Very Good	Communicates fluently and accurately and recovers well when there is some hesitation. A good range of vocabulary and structures for Intermediate 1. Understands almost all of what is said. Pronunciation and intonation sufficient to be readily understood by a sympathetic speaker of the language.	30
Good	Communicates fairly fluently and accurately and generally recovers well where there is some hesitation. An appropriate range of vocabulary and structures for Intermediate 1. Understands almost all of what is said, although may require some clarification. Pronunciation and intonation sufficient to be readily understood by a sympathetic speaker of the language.	24
Satisfactory	Handles language appropriate to Intermediate 1 with sufficient grammatical accuracy and a reasonable range of vocabulary to ensure that communication is achieved. May speak with considerable hesitation, but makes some attempt to recover. Understands most of what is said clearly and slowly by a sympathetic speaker of the language. Pronunciation and intonation sufficient to be understood by a sympathetic speaker of the language.	18
Unsatisfactory (Near Miss)	Difficulty in achieving communication because of limited range of vocabulary and structures and/or serious inaccuracies in language appropriate to Intermediate 1. May speak with considerable hesitation, but makes some attempt to recover. Has difficulty in understanding what is said, even with help. Pronunciation and intonation sufficient to be understood by a sympathetic speaker of the language although some points may not be immediately clear.	12
Poor	Communication seriously impeded because of very limited range of vocabulary and structures and/or serious inaccuracies in language appropriate to Intermediate 1. Has difficulty in understanding what is said. Pronunciation and/or intonation may be such as would not be readily understood without clarification, even by a sympathetic speaker.	6
Very Poor	No redeeming features.	0