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To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary schools and FE colleges
Education authorities
Customer Account Managers

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

Contact Name: Keith Wright
Direct Line: 0845 213 5501
E-mail: keith.wright@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications update — Personal & Social Education

This briefing note is intended to offer practical advice and support on the issues linked to Personal & Social Education and should be distributed to those staff responsible for this area. It contains information on the following:

1. National Qualifications Review (see also in Appendix)
2. Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports
3. Folios and Personal Statements
4. Verification
5. Updated advice on Estimates and Appeals

1. National Qualifications Review

The Appendix attached to this letter provides centres with information about:

- ◆ implementation dates
- ◆ courses rationale
- ◆ course structure
- ◆ course content
- ◆ differentiation
- ◆ verification
- ◆ Core Skills

2. Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports

SQA would like to encourage all centre staff responsible for PSE to read the Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for session 2005/06 and the corresponding examination diet. These reports contain detailed and useful advice and information pertaining to candidate performance, guidance for centres and specific issues relating to individual examination questions. They are available on the PSE subject page of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

In particular, the following areas of advice may be of use to centres:

Principal Assessor report — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2

- ◆ some candidates had difficulty identifying the headings for an Activity Log
- ◆ the different stages of the problem solving process require to be well understood
- ◆ knowledge of the four variables (place, people, resources, task) is important to assist candidates answer questions effectively
- ◆ questions on roles, responsibilities and strengths were difficult for some candidates
- ◆ a thorough knowledge of the various types of evaluation techniques, logs and plans is important

Principal Assessor report — Higher

- ◆ performance was commended at this level
- ◆ some weaknesses were noted where candidates had to work with the four variables (see above)
- ◆ the concept of negotiation as opposed to co-operation was not fully appreciated by all candidates
- ◆ assessment techniques used in the NABs give candidates a clear indication of those they should know for the external assessment
- ◆ evaluation techniques for reviewing progress need to be well understood

Senior Moderator reports

- ◆ evidence of good practice in the Personal Statements and Folios which are part of the National Courses is provided
- ◆ flexible and innovative ways of using the National Units as freestanding Units is also noted

3. Folios and Personal Statements

The specification for the Folio of Evidence 2006/2007 has been available since November of this year. All centres have been notified of this by e-mail and invited to request the number of copies required for candidates being presented this session.

The Personal Statement will be issued to presenting centres in January 2007. This will be accompanied by marking instructions and also the document *Instructions to Centres on Visiting Moderation for Course Assessment in Personal and Social Education*.

4. Verification

Courses and Units in PSE will be subject to visiting verification. Course verification will take place between 19 March and 8 May 2007.

Freestanding PSD Units (previously National Certificate Modules) will also be subject to visiting moderation on their completion.

5. Updated advice on Estimates, Absentees and Appeals

SQA has recently updated the *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* document and this is now available on our website. A hard-copy is being issued to every centre. In particular, the document clarifies subject-specific

requirement as well as guidance on the general principles for generating Estimates and submitting Appeals.

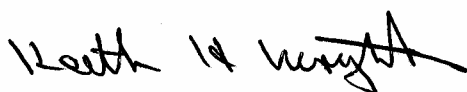
When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, you should also refer to:

- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course grade descriptions
- ◆ Course assessment specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ Principal Assessor reports, which include information on grade boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters)

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

I hope that the notes above and the materials attached are of help to you. If you have any queries about these or any other issues relating to Personal & Social Education please contact me or Greg Storey, the Qualifications Officer in this area, at the details given above.

Yours faithfully



Keith H Wright
Qualifications Manager
Social Subjects

Appendix

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

REVISED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION (PSE) COURSES

The development has been carefully researched and accounts for good practice current in both PSE National Courses and Social and Vocational Skills (SVS) Standard Grade. It encompasses many of the recommendations in key documents such as *Determined To Succeed* and *A Curriculum for Excellence* and will provide a suitable progression route for SVS candidates who wish to further enhance their social and vocational skills and abilities.

The working title for the revised Course in Personal and Social Education is *Personal Development* (PD).

a) *Implementation*

The introduction of revised provision for PD Courses is planned for implementation of Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses in session 2008/09. This delays for one year earlier information conveyed to centres about the implementation date for Access 3 and Intermediate 1 levels. These new Courses will replace the current suite of PSE Courses and will provide a clear, coherent framework of provision and progression. All centres who are currently delivering PSE Courses will be contacted individually to find out if this delay will cause them any difficulties and where this does occur, solutions will be sought to deal with these.

The Review work will also involve examining provision within the suite of freestanding Units in Personal and Social Development (PSD) currently available in the NQ catalogue. It is proposed that a programme of review, revision and rationalisation of these Units will be rolled out over the next two to three years. This will also involve consultation with current centres and, notwithstanding any additional priorities which emerge, it is likely that high uptake areas will be examined first.

b) *Course rationale*

Scottish education recognises the need to educate the whole person, providing them with the skills and knowledge to participate fully in society and giving them the potential to lead rich, fulfilling lives.

A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive 2004) identifies aspirations for every young person. These are that they should become:

- ◆ successful learners
- ◆ confident individuals
- ◆ responsible citizens
- ◆ effective contributors

The *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive 2002) policy paper recommended all young people should have a greater entitlement to enterprise activities and develop the desired attitudes, skills and knowledge associated with enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Personal Development Courses will offer a flexible approach to the development of life skills related to employment, social interaction, and self awareness. This will contribute to meeting the aspirations of both *A Curriculum for Excellence* and *Determined to*

Succeed by allowing candidates to develop transferable skills and abilities through experience and activity in a wide range of contexts. This will enhance their self confidence and allow them to be more effective contributors to society. Learning gained through Personal Development Courses will complement and enhance learning in other subjects and give candidates the potential to become more successful learners in new and challenging situations.

Candidates will be able to select a study context which can be linked to many areas within and beyond the formal curriculum. These may be taken from a local, national or global setting. Examples of contexts for study include: enterprise, study skills, health education, citizenship, internet use, independent living, career planning, rights and responsibilities and learning styles.

The new Personal Development Courses will be ungraded and consist of four internally-assessed Units. At Access 3 the Cluster Award will be based on three ungraded Units.

At all levels the Personal Development Course will allow candidates to develop the following personal, social and vocational skills, qualities and abilities:

- ◆ practical abilities in personal, social and vocational settings
- ◆ self-awareness qualities such as self-reliance, self-esteem and self-confidence
- ◆ task management skills such as planning, organising, handling information and completing tasks
- ◆ interpersonal skills such as group work, teamwork, relationships and presenting information
- ◆ evaluative skills including target-setting, reviewing and concluding
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of self, society and the world of work

Self-awareness will be explicitly assessed at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels through a Unit based around this theme, and at Access 3 will be delivered through social and/or vocational experiences. Although there will be a Unit on *Self Awareness* at Intermediate 1 level, it will not form part of the Course.

c) *Course structure*

The Course will consist of four 40 hour Units at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher and of three 40 hour Units at Access 3. Each Unit will have a different focus:

Units	Focus	Levels
Practical Abilities: Social and Vocational	Demonstrate social and vocational skills through activity and experience	Access 3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher
Self in Society	Develop interpersonal skills through planning, doing and reviewing	Access 3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher
Self and Work	Develop task management skills through planning, doing and reviewing	Access3, Int 1, Int 2, Higher
Self Awareness	Develop self-awareness through planning, doing and reviewing	Int 1, Int 2, Higher

The Course offers good opportunities for candidates to progress through the different levels. The structure of the Course allows centres the flexibility of having candidates working at different levels within the same group. Although Units may be studied in

isolation, completion of the Course will enhance candidates' personal development by allowing them the opportunity to develop a range of skills through a variety of activities and experience.

Units will also become available at Access 2 as the development progresses.

d) Course content

The Course offers candidates the opportunity to develop transferable skills, qualities and abilities in a wide range of contexts. These skills, qualities and abilities are:

- ◆ task management
- ◆ self-awareness
- ◆ interpersonal skills
- ◆ planning
- ◆ reviewing
- ◆ evaluating
- ◆ practical abilities

Some of these skills and abilities are common across all of the Units. However, as indicated previously, each Unit will have a focus on particular skills. For example, task management skills are present to an extent in all of the Units but are being explicitly assessed in the *Self and Work* Unit. This approach avoids duplication of assessment whilst at the same time providing candidates with a clear focus on particular skills. The following table shows Course content and highlights the skills focus:

Unit title	Practical Abilities: Social & Vocational	Self in Society	Self and Work	Self Awareness
Activity	Interpersonal & task management activities	Group activity	Work-related activity	Personal project
Skills	Information retrieval & handling, communication, presentation	Planning Implementing Evaluating Interpersonal skills	Planning Implementing Evaluating Task management skills	Planning Implementing Evaluating Self-evaluating skills
Knowledge	Knowledge of techniques to demonstrate above skills	Knowledge of working with others.	Knowledge of task management skills	Knowledge of self in relation to study context.
Examples of Contexts for Study	Combination of social & vocational contexts, either from other Course Units or unrelated curricular activities	Group activity: Sustainability Environmental issues Local community Distant community	Work-related activity: Workplace Enterprise Vocational options	Personal activity: Learning styles Independent living Leisure and recreation Study skills

It is important to note that whilst the range of study contexts will allow candidates the opportunity to develop their knowledge of those contexts it would be inappropriate to assess this knowledge since the primary aim of the Course is to develop personal, transferable skills.

e) *Approaches to teaching, learning and gathering evidence*

The Course allows an integrated approach to study in that it is possible for one context to be carried through all Units, eg a candidate studying *Health* may:

- ◆ produce a personal health profile for *Self Awareness*
- ◆ work with others in producing a health booklet for *Self in Society*
- ◆ find out about health and safety at work for *Self and Work*
- ◆ demonstrate social and vocational practical abilities through health activities; these will be evident in the production of the health booklet and the presentation of findings about health and safety at work

The gathering of evidence in the Units will be process driven and will not depend upon formal end of Unit assessments. Evidence will be broad based and will arise naturally within the teaching and learning which takes place. It is possible that this may depend upon e-technology, eg blogs, electronic diaries and logs where these are used to assist with learning and delivery of the Units. Discussions are taking place with Computer Assisted Assessment in SQA to access for verification purposes evidence generated in this way.

f) *Differentiation*

Differentiation between levels is determined by both the amount of support a candidate receives and their level of involvement in/ownership of their activities. For example:

Action	Access 3 SCQF level 3	Intermediate 1 SCQF level 4	Intermediate 2 SCQF level 5	Higher SCQF level 6
The candidate will work with...	Directive supervision	Supervision	Minimum supervision	Non-directive supervision
The candidate will ...	Participate in	Contribute to	Negotiate	Take some supervisory responsibility
Tasks and communications will be ...	Basic	Simple	Detailed	Complex

g) *Verification*

It is the intention to support centres with high levels of verification, enhanced over the first two years to include two verification contacts per year. Possible methods of supporting centres include Professional Development Workshop events, visiting or central verification. This will be discussed with the Assessment Standards Team. Both Course and freestanding Units will benefit from this approach.

h) *Core Skills*

The nature of the Units on *Self in Society* and *Self and Work* will merit claims at the level of the Units for the core skills of *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* respectively.

i) *Support materials*

SQA will be producing assessment support materials to assist centres with judgement about candidate performance and it is working in partnership with LTScotland to provide support materials to exemplify some of the contexts in which Personal Development Units may be taught.

j) *Future information*

Further information will be made available to centres in update letters, on the subject page of SQA's website and by articles in the monthly electronic newsletter E-zine which is circulated to centres. Launch events for the revised Course are provisionally planned for autumn 2007.