

Our ref: GS/SVS/UL/1103

28 November 2003

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

National Qualifications Update – Social & Vocational Skills

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 Social & Vocational Skills.

1 Review of Standard Grade Social & Vocational Skills

SQA recently appointed a consultant to carry out a review of Standard Grade Social & Vocational Skills. The findings of the review formed the basis of a report which detailed a number of recommendations in relation to the course. This report was presented to SQA's National Qualifications Management Group (NQMG) in October 2003 for consideration.

As a result of this process, it has been decided that SQA will revise the Practical Abilities Assessment Sheets. The revised versions of these materials will be implemented in session 2004-05.

It was further agreed that any wider review of Standard Grade Social & Vocational Skills must also take account of other related areas, namely Core Skills, Scottish Group Awards and the National Qualifications in Personal and Social Education, and that the review findings should feed into the projects in these areas.

NQMG also praised the involvement of SVS teachers and related associations and networks in supporting the course.

2 **Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator Reports**

At the conclusion of each examination diet, Principal Assessors and Senior Moderators produce reports which contain valuable information for teachers and lecturers in preparing candidates for future examinations.

The reports for Social & Vocational Skills are available on the SVS page of the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk). Centre staff responsible for SVS are advised to read these reports, as they provide information which will be useful in determining estimate grades and when generating evidence for appeals. The Principal Assessor's report also contains statistical data, including the grade boundaries used for the 2003 examinations.

In particular, SQA would like to bring to your attention comments from the Senior Moderator in relation to the assessment of Grade Related Criteria in Practical Abilities. Most Social and Vocational Skills teachers apply these very well. We would, however, like to reiterate the following guidance in relation to the assessment of Practical Abilities:

The level (i.e. Foundation/General/Credit) of the evidence is determined initially by the complexity of the task in terms of the Extended Grade Related Criteria.

Credit level awards will not be applicable to tasks of General or Foundation levels, even if they are well organised or completed in a highly competent manner. The level awarded cannot be higher than the level indicated on the Assessment Sheet.

3 **Marking Instructions for Diet 2003**

SQA will shortly be posting the marking instructions for Standard Grade Social & Vocational Skills 2003 on the Social & Vocational Skills page of the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk).

4 **Central Moderation of the Practical Abilities Element 2004**

Centres will be issued with the appropriate number of copies of the Internal Assessment Flyleaf for the external moderation of Standard Grade Social & Vocational Skills. In line with the procedure followed in 2003, flyleafs will no longer be provided for all candidates being presented for SVS, only for the moderation sample group.

Documentation regarding arrangements for the submission of internally generated marks and moderation activity will be issued towards the end of February. Overall grades awarded internally must be submitted to SQA by 25th March.

Central moderation will take place in the month of April.

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 Social & Vocational Skills please contact me at the details given above.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith A. Wright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Qualifications Manager