

March 2005

To: SQA Co-ordinator  
Directors of Education

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

Contact: Tom Stannage at Glasgow  
Direct Line: 0141-242 2324  
E-mail: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications in Sociology**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Sociology.

### **Diet 2004**

The Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports for diet 2004 can now be found on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). These include:

- ◆ PA report Intermediate 1 and 2 Sociology
- ◆ PA report Higher Sociology
- ◆ PA report Advanced Higher Sociology
- ◆ SM report National Qualification Units

### **Appeals**

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in '*Estimates, Absentees and External Assessment Appeals: guidance on evidence requirements — April 2004*'. This document can be accessed/downloaded from SQA's website.

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals were:

- ◆ Evidence was partial and did not sufficiently represent the whole Course.

- ◆ Evidence had been marked inconsistently, did not match the national standard or standards had been interpreted leniently.
- ◆ Evidence had not been graded nor any comments made on why a candidate had been estimated at a particular grade.
- ◆ Evidence submitted indicated that candidate had achieved on first or second re-assessment, but estimated grade was high.
- ◆ Evidence produced outwith supervised conditions.

Most of the above problems were reported in the 2003 update letter, however, similar problems were replicated in 2004. In addition, Examiners were disappointed with the quality of the presentation of evidence from some centres. This related to uncoordinated evidence such as several pieces of evidence for each candidate with no clear or direct link to the assessment instrument.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates.

### **National Qualifications Review**

The review of these Courses is running in line with the published schedule and regular update reports via SQA's website. Revised Courses will be produced at Higher and Intermediate 2 levels and revised Units only at Intermediate 1 level. No development work has taken place at Advanced Higher level — as it is likely that the current Course will be withdrawn in line with our Low Uptake policy. The Arrangements documents for the revised Courses and Units will be available on SQA's website in early autumn of 2005, a launch event will be held in November 2005 and implementation will take place 2006-07.

### **NABs**

#### **Interim Arrangements**

Please find attached a copy of a letter sent to centres during December 2005 which refers to an alternative approach to the use of NABs for the *Understanding Human Society 1* and 2 (Higher) Units for 2004–2005 and 2005–2006.

#### **Amendment to NAB D431 11 — 001, 002, 003**

It has recently been brought to our attention that there are some minor errors in the above NABs. These are as follows:

- ◆ Question 2 relates to Outcome One, and not Outcome Two, as indicated on the instrument of assessment.
- ◆ Question 3 asks the candidate to write the required number of the method they have chosen and describe it. However, in the marking guidelines, candidates are given marks for naming the method and providing an example. Candidates should be credited as per

the instrument of assessment instructions, and not the marking guidelines for these two questions, using the appropriate mark allocation.

### **Assessment Panel**

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in Sociology as well as the other social sciences subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers. The membership of this Assessment Panel has been revised and the first meeting took place during November 2004.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me either by telephone on 0141-242 2343 or by e-mail at [tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk](mailto:tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stannage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Stannage  
Qualifications Manager  
NQ Social Subjects

**Copy of a notice sent to centres during December 2004**

**National Qualifications in Sociology**

**Guidelines on an Alternative Approach to the Use of the NABs for the Units**

***Understanding Human Society 1 and 2 (Higher) — 2004–2005 and 2005–2006***

As a result of the Review of National Qualifications, revised Courses and Units for Sociology will be implemented in session 2006/2007. In order to reduce the burden of assessment in the above Units in the interim period, an alternative approach to the use of the NAB for these Units is offered to centres for use in sessions 2004–2005 and 2005–2006.

Guidelines on this alternative approach to the use of the NABs have been produced for both the *Understanding Human Society 1* and *Understanding Human Society 2* Units. Due to the complexities and vast range of content identified in the Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the *Studying Human Society: The Sociological Approach* Unit, it has not been possible to create an alternative approach to the NAB for that Unit.

If centres choose to use the alternative approach offered, it will substantially reduce the assessment burden for candidates, though centres are still at liberty to continue with the original NABs if they wish. In any case, the original NABs will require to be utilised for the purposes of marking candidate evidence, as will be seen from the Guidelines.

The Guidelines on the alternative use of these two NABs can be accessed via the secure site for NABs on the SQA website, using the password issued to your centre.

If you have any queries regarding the use of the Guidelines, please contact Tom Stannage on 0141-242 2342.