

21 March 2012

To: Head of centres

Cc : SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and Colleges
Education Authorities
HMIE

Action by Recipient	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Response required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Note and pass on
<input type="checkbox"/>	None — update/information only

Contact: Angela Baird
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Dear Colleague

This letter is intended to offer advice and support for staff responsible for Geography. It contains information about the following:

1. **Component Marks**
2. **Scottish Association of Geography Teachers (SAGT) Consultation**
3. **AH Geography Support Event**
4. **Access 3 Geography Toolkits**
5. **Understanding Standards**
6. **Arrangements and NABs**
7. **Internal and External Assessment Reports**
8. **OS Maps**
9. **Appeals**
10. **Training and Performance Reports**
11. **Qualification Support Teams**

1. Component Marks

From the 2012 diet of examinations centres will receive a breakdown of the component marks which make up the Geographical Folio. This change is reflected in the Conditions and Arrangements documents on the SQA website.

2. Scottish Association of Geography Teachers (SAGT) Consultation

Thank you to the SAGT for consulting with staff in centres. Thank you also to the staff who took the time to complete the questionnaire. The feedback is proving to be most helpful.

3. Support Events

SQA organised three support events which took place between November 2011 and January 2012. The events were very well attended. The focus of the events was the

Geographical Folio. The presentations from the event can be found in the Understanding Standards Event Presentation via the following section of the SQA website:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2474.html>

4. Access 3 Geography Toolkits

Centres are reminded that the Toolkits are available on the SQA Secure site for use in producing NABs for Access 3.

5. Understanding Standards

Centres are reminded about the Understanding Standards website which can be accessed directly at www.understandingstandards.org.uk or through SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). We intend to add additional items to the website over the next few months. This is an excellent resource for any candidate or teacher who wishes to understand more fully the standards required at each level.

6. Arrangements and NABs

Centres are reminded to use the current arrangements documents which are available on the SQA website. The current NABs can be downloaded from the SQA secure site (https://secure.sqa.org.uk/secure/NQ/NQ_Subjects/Geography/Geography).

Centres should be aware that NABs are confidential and must be kept securely within centres. Centres experiencing difficulty obtaining the maps for particular NABs are advised to use a map of a similar geographical area and adapt the question accordingly.

7. Internal and External Assessment Reports

The 2011 reports are currently being processed and will be available on the SQA website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2474.html>). These reports offer useful advice on candidate performance to those involved in the delivery of Geography.

8. Appeals

Centres are reminded that when constructing prelim examinations which will be used as evidence for appeals, that the prelim must replicate the SQA paper in terms of the standard, format, duration and security. When adapting old past paper questions for use in a prelim, centres must therefore ensure that the mark allocation reflects current practice. More detailed information can be found in the Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals advice which can be found on the following page of the SQA website:

www.sqa.org.uk/appeals

9. OS Maps

SQA is not able to provide centres with OS maps. SQA purchases maps specifically for use

in the examination. Any spare maps, of which there are very few, are sent to the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers.

10. Training and Performance Reports

Centres often request training in relation to internal and external assessment as well as information on their candidates' performance. Information on the services available to centres can be found using the following links:

Performance Report (External Assessment)

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47472.3062.html>

Bespoke In-service Training (External Assessment)

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47470.3063.html>

11. Qualification Support Team

SQA recently introduced National Qualifications Support Teams (NQSTs) which will be used for stakeholder engagement on qualifications content and assessment issues.

NQSTs will use dedicated and secure online discussion forums as their primary method of engagement. The online forums will be particularly advantageous in allowing NQST Members to communicate on an immediate basis with fellow Members and the relevant SQA Qualifications staff as and when issues arise.

The forums will also allow for an increased membership from as wide a representation of delivering practitioners as possible and from all geographical regions as this method of communication eliminates the difficulties surrounding release to attend physical meetings.

Further information on NQSTs and how individuals can nominate themselves can be found via the following link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48097.html>

I trust that this information is of use to you. Should you wish any further advice about the content of this letter please contact me as indicated above.

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Yours faithfully



Angela Baird
Qualifications Manager
People and Service