

14 December 2004

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges
EA Special School
Independent Secondary
Higher Education Institutions

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update

The contents of this letter should be passed on to the member of staff responsible for Modern Languages.

Modern Languages Update

We wish to bring the following matters to your attention.

1 Candidate Overview of Internal and External Assessment

In order to give candidates a readily available guide to assessment, an overview has been prepared for internal and external assessments, at Intermediate 1, 2, Higher and Advanced Higher levels. These guides are attached to this letter. Advice for Access 3 internal assessment is in preparation and will be published in due course.

2 Extended Pegged Mark Descriptors for the Assessment of Writing

Work is progressing on the production of Extended Pegged Mark Descriptors which will give centres greater guidance on the effective assessing of Writing tasks at all levels. Attached is an Extended Descriptor for Writing at Intermediate 1 level. Exemplification of Writing, graded against the Extended Descriptors at Intermediate 1 will follow in 2005. Preparation of Extended Descriptors and exemplification at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels is underway, with a provisional completion date of Spring 2006.

3 Advanced Higher

Release of Component Marks

From 2005 centres will be able to access candidate marks in discrete papers at Advanced Higher in Modern Languages. The component marks will be issued to centres together with notification of results in August.

4 Intermediate 2 Extended Reading and Viewing Optional Unit

This Unit has been available for study since August 2004, and the Unit Specification is available on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk. We wish to draw your attention, however, to the fact that the existence of the Unit is omitted in the Summary of Assessment Procedures, in Appendix Two of the Arrangements document. Please refer to Candidate *Overview of Internal and External Assessment* for ready details.

5 Standard Grade Folio of Writing

Submission of Appeals

Whilst it is accepted that the best pieces of candidate work may have already been submitted in the Folio, centres may wish to include drafts and other pieces of work as evidence to support an appeal for individual candidates. Centres should only consider requesting an Appeal where it would alter the overall grade. A Rationale should also be submitted when Appeals are made for more than 10% of any cohort.

6 Standard Grade Predictions: Awarding of Grades

For the Elements of Listening and Reading, the *a priori* ('cut-off') scores are 50% or the lower award and 70% for the higher award. This information should be used by centres when predicting estimates for candidates in these Elements.

7 Intermediate 1 Writing

From 2005 the Writing examination will include the addition of three lines beneath each of the four prescribed headings, in response to a need for candidates to write clearly and legibly.

8 Advanced Higher Paper 2

The allocation of marks in this paper will change from 2006 onwards. Section I (Listening) will be worth **30 marks** and Section II (Discursive Writing) will be worth **40 marks**. Pegged Marks will alter only in that they will be graded proportionately from 40.

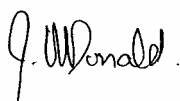
9 Use of the Extraneous Rule at Standard Grade, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

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

10 Higher French: Online Marking Website

SQA has been leading the development of a new website which will explain how external assessments for National Qualifications are marked. This website is designed specifically for teachers/lecturers rather than pupils or parents and its aims are to explain the principles underlying the marking of assessment evidence and to develop, interactively, the user's skills in applying these principles to a selection of candidate responses. The website is scheduled to be launched nationally in late November 2004 with an initial group of around a dozen high-uptake subjects which includes Higher French. Details of how to access the website can be obtained from SQA co-ordinators.

Yours faithfully,



Jim McDonald
Qualifications Manager



Alan Wilson
Qualifications Manager

Encs