

Our ref: ES/NQAdmin

28 November 2002

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 Qualification in Administration

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

Appeals for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher

Subject specific guidance on generating evidence for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher Appeals is provided in the *Guidance on generating evidence for National Course Estimates and Assessment Appeals*. This document was issued to all presenting centres in February 2001 and the guidance provided within it is valid for 2002/2003. An extract from this document relating to Administration is provided for information (appendix 1). SQA will be revising this document for 2003/2004. Meanwhile, we would offer the following as guidance on **best practice** in preparing prelim examinations.

1 Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher

Given the nature of the IT tasks, it would be acceptable to use IT tasks from past operational papers or exemplar papers. Centres should devise their own Knowledge and Understanding questions or use a judicious selection of individual questions drawn from a range of past papers, preferably adapted. Sets of questions should not be lifted en bloc from past papers. Centres should ensure that prelim papers sample the whole course content.

A checklist is attached for Higher to assist you in devising valid prelims (appendix 2).

Appeals for Standard Grade

Following this year's appeals, the Principal Assessor has supplied the following advice to assist centres in devising valid prelims for Standard Grade:

- ◆ Prelim evidence supplied must not include whole papers in the public domain, for example, the Specimen paper, or 2001 and 2002 Examination Papers.
- ◆ No more than one third of marks in prelim evidence supplied in any one element should be derived from any single paper in the public domain.
- ◆ Prelim evidence supplied should sample the whole course.

28 November 2002

- ◆ Prelim evidence should have a mark allocation that corresponds to that of the final examination, for example a total of 60 marks for General paper with at least 29 marks for each of the Knowledge and Understanding and Problem Solving. There should be no combined cut-off scores, for example, 30/60.
- ◆ Time allocations for prelim evidence should correspond to that of the final examination and should be clearly shown on the evidence; Foundation – one hour; General – one hour 15 minutes and Credit – one hour and 30 minutes.
- ◆ Given the nature of the Practical Abilities assessment – a 15 to 20 hour project – the project is the best evidence of the candidates' competence. An appeal therefore would only be expected in exceptional circumstances and must be accompanied by appropriate alternative evidence. Evidence generated after completion of the project would not be acceptable. Evidence must be of a similar type and level of task according to the Extended Grade Related Criteria, for example, mini-projects.

NQ Interim Review

Centres will no doubt be aware that SQA has carried out an Interim Review of the Internal Assessment for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Administration. This has resulted in a substantial reduction in the volume of assessment required by candidates and teachers/lecturers. The Course Arrangements have not changed therefore, this should not change the teaching and learning as all topics can be covered in the final examinations. The new internal assessment arrangements were effective from August 2002. Details of the new internal assessment arrangements were distributed to centres in June 2002 and a copy was posted on SQA's website.

NQ Review

Administration is included in the next phase of National Qualification reviews. A Development Officer has been appointed and is expected to take up post early in the new year. The main aims of the review are to revise the content, structure and assessment of the Courses. Many teachers and lecturers have already given valuable feedback on these qualifications and their comments will be taken into consideration during the review. Further consultation will take place giving centres the opportunity to comment on the structure, content, assessment and other related issues. Further information will be provided on the progress of the review and the likely timescale for implementation of revised arrangements and NABs as soon as possible.

Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher – Keying in Knowledge and Understanding Answers in Examinations

The Assessment Panel has agreed that it would be acceptable for Intermediate 1 and 2 candidates to key in their answers to the Knowledge and Understanding questions as the IT tasks and Knowledge and Understanding questions are contained within a single paper. However, this is not the case for the Knowledge and Understanding questions at Higher. Candidates must provide written responses for Paper 1.

Advanced Higher

The Principal Assessor for Advanced Higher Administration has set up an e-group to encourage sharing of ideas, issues and resources. Centres offering or considering offering the Advanced Higher can join this group by logging on to <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/adadmin/>

A second set of NABs is currently being produced and should be available early next year.

28 November 2002

Inputting Files for Examinations

SQA wrote to centres in August 2002 requesting details of the types of software used for Administration courses. The response to this survey was outstanding and SQA would like to take this opportunity to thank all centres for taking the time to respond. As expected, there is a wide variety of software and versions used in schools and colleges. SQA will contact centres again once it has determined whether or not it is possible to provide the data and files required for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher examinations on disk.

Principal Assessor Reports

Extracts from the relevant Principal Assessors' annual reports relating to the 2002 examination diet are available on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk. These reports provide valuable information relating to candidates' performance in this year's examinations.

Markers

SQA is currently recruiting Markers for 2003 in Standard Grade Practical Abilities and Knowledge and Understanding Question Papers.

To qualify for consideration as a Marker, you must have been teaching Administration, or related subject, for 3 years, with experience of preparing candidates for National Qualifications courses, or 3 years assessment experience in tertiary education. If you meet the criteria and are interested in becoming a Marker you can obtain an application form from the following sources:

Website www.sqa.org.uk
E-mail appointments@sqa.org.uk
Phone 0131 561 6825
Post Scottish Qualifications Authority, Appointments Team
 Ironmills Road, Dalkeith EH22 1LE

We hope you find the information in this letter useful. If you require clarification on any of the above points, please contact:

Elaine Snell, Qualifications Manager 0141 242 2336
Mags Paterson, Qualifications Officer 0141 242 2324

Yours faithfully



Elaine Snell
Qualifications Manager – Business and Languages

Enc

Part 2: subject-specific advice, revised 2001 (please read in the context of Part 1)

Administration: Advanced Higher, Higher, Intermediate 2, Intermediate 1

Headroom provided by NABs	Orientation of Grade Descriptions	Basis of evidence for Estimates and Assessment Appeals
Very limited headroom	Mainly task	<p>Evidence for Estimates and external Assessment Appeals at all levels must show sufficient breadth of coverage and content of component Units of each Course, and should be based on the Course Grade Descriptions, as detailed in the Arrangements document.</p> <p>A preliminary examination is very good evidence of sampling of the Course. It should mirror the layout and structure of the external examination paper — using similar tasks, reflecting the range, balance and depth of the Course. Due to the nature of the papers, it would be acceptable to use previously unseen complete papers (exemplar or operational) for Administration prelims. Questions could also be drawn from the exemplar external papers 1–3 issued by HSDU.</p> <p>NAB evidence could consist of a mixture of knowledge and understanding based outcomes and skills based tasks which reflect the range and depth exemplified in the specimen paper and the 2000 paper. It should be noted that mark allocations in NABs are not identical to the external Course examination although skills and knowledge and understanding assessed are the same. The knowledge and understanding tasks in the Information Technology for Management Unit, at each level, provide some headroom, where there are cut off scores provided, and these could, therefore, lend weight to an Appeal.</p> <p>Evidence for Assessment Appeals could be compiled by combining the evidence gathered for the estimate, eg the prelim, along with any other relevant assessment evidence generated towards the end of the Course (ie between submission of Estimates and the end of the examination).</p>

HIGHER ADMINISTRATION

GUIDANCE ON CONSTRUCTING PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

The following information is issued as a guide for Centres that wish to construct their own preliminary examination. The checklist can be used to help ascertain internally whether an instrument of assessment is valid. An instrument of assessment must be valid to be considered for appeals.

It should be noted that following the information in this guide will not necessarily result in a valid instrument of assessment being constructed, but should help to minimise the occurrences of constructing an invalid instrument of assessment.

Any internally produced preliminary examination should mirror the format and construction of the external examination produced by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

DETAILS OF THE INSTRUMENTS FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

External assessment is based on 2 papers of 60 marks each:

Paper 1 (1 hour 30 minutes)

This instrument will examine knowledge and understanding, covering the course content.

The paper will comprise of 2 sections, the first consisting of stimulus material e.g. a newspaper/magazine article or company report (300-500 words), with questions. The second section will require candidates to complete 2 extended response questions from a choice of 5.

This paper will be allocated 50% of the total marks available.

Paper 2 (1 hour 10 minutes)

This instrument will cover the use of Information Technology for problem-solving in business. The IT skills tested will be drawn from the course content as described in the Arrangements document. It is envisaged that a minimum of 2 applications will be sampled in this paper, which will be allocated 50% of the marks available.

Teachers/lecturers should note that candidates will not be required to pass both papers to achieve an overall pass in this subject.

MARKING GUIDELINES

Associated marking guidelines should also mirror marking guidelines issued by SQA. Marking guidelines should be rigorously applied to all scripts. Candidate scripts should show adequate annotation that allows members of the SQA examining team to see clearly where marks have been awarded and how the marking guidelines have been applied.

The general principles for marking Administration (issued to Centres 9 March 2001) can still be applied to marking guidelines. In addition, in Paper 1, candidates who do not demonstrate higher order skills when answering questions, may be penalised by a deduction of 2 marks per question. So in essence, if a candidate merely lists points when say, comparing and contrasting, then marks may be awarded up to a maximum of 6/8, 4/6 etc – 2 marks being deducted from the total possible mark allocation for non-demonstration of higher order skills.

CHECKLIST

Paper 1	Comments	Yes/No
The paper reflects:		
300-500 words of stimulus material		
coverage of the course content and both component units	The whole course content should be sampled in a paper. (note: if due to the timing of the prelim the centre is not able to cover the whole course, centres should ensure that additional evidence is generated to support the appeal)	
that higher order skills are examined eg compare and contrast; justify; differentiate	For example at higher level it is not sufficient for a candidate to merely list/state	
questions that do not focus solely on one area of the course content but are constructed from across the course		
even-handed mark allocation in questions	Avoid, where possible, 1 or 2 mark questions, especially in Section 2. Section 2 questions should comprise of no more than 3 or 4 parts. In marking guidelines ½ marks should be avoided.	
5 choices are given in section 2		
that each question adds up to 20 marks		
Paper 2		
The paper reflects:		
a minimum of 2 applications are sampled		
that candidates have to identify a problem, gather information, produce, implement and modify a strategy for solving the problem.	The problem should be presented to candidates as one task/job. Candidates should not be given the component steps that would enable them to solve the problem.	
that candidates are required to present work in accordance with organisational house style or accepted convention		
that data has been integrated across files and across applications		
that if amendments to a spreadsheet file are required, the amendments can include inserting data, changing formulae and changing layout		
that if amendments to a database file are required, the amendments can include altering the structure, changing layout, editing records, records and searching on multiple (at least 2) fields.		
that if amendments to a the word processing, graphics or desk top publishing file are required, the amendments can include changing page size or orientation, changing fonts and paginating the document		