

Our ref: PG/UL/PE

18 November 2002

To: SQA Co-ordinator  
Secondary Schools and F E Colleges

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

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Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications – Physical Education Update**

This newsletter updates centres on issues that have arisen from the 2002 Examination Diet for Physical Education. The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Physical Education.

### **Assessment Panel**

The Physical Education Assessment Panel meets twice a year to provide SQA with operational advice on the qualifications being delivered in centres. The Convener of the Panel is Mr Stuart Forsyth with members being Principal Teachers of Physical Education. Many teachers have emailed or written with concerns which are discussed in this forum.

At the previous meeting the Panel invited a representative from Strathclyde University Business to discuss their candidate selection and the status of Higher Physical Education. The Panel concluded that further dialogue should be had with the Business School. Although it was acknowledged that the NQ Review of PE may have to take this forward.

There was a thorough discussion of the Principal Assessor and Moderator Reports for diet 2002. Also discussed was the National Qualifications Review of Physical Education. The panel saw this as a unique opportunity to address the concerns of staff. Since the panel met a Development Officer, Jon Anton, has been appointed to take forward the recommendations of the Review.

### **Appeals**

Centres should now have the results of Appeals and for those Appeals which were unsuccessful a feedback form will have been provided giving reasons for this. However, it should be noted that whilst SQA is intending to refine these forms in future, staff are not in a position to enter into dialogue on comments given to individual centres.

### **Advanced Higher Physical Education**

There were 31 centres presenting 60 candidates for Advanced Higher. Overall performance in this second year of presentation was slightly disappointing. While there was a pattern of high performance marks this was not so with the dissertation.

Some candidates presented a dissertation, which was very similar to a Higher Investigation. This showed a lack of understanding of the issues involved and areas to be addressed. Inevitably, this meant that candidates were unable to access the marks in some sections of the marking scheme. Almost all students had difficulty staying within the 3500 word allocation. Staff are reminded that all final dissertations submitted should be signed. In order to address this the flyleaf has been changed to permit signing on the front of the sheet.

The Assessment Panel and the Principal Assessor Report highlighted the need to offer presenting centres an opportunity for a staff seminar. This was held on 8<sup>th</sup> November in Glasgow. The purpose was to support staff in dealing with internal and external assessment. This was a highly successful event. Obviously, if there were a demand for such a seminar in future this would be considered. Staff are asked to contact me at the above address with their opinion.

### **Higher Physical Education – Performance**

The number of entries (pre-Appeal) for diet 2002 was 3696. The high performance marks of previous years were again maintained with the mean score being 75.8. Particular concern still exists about the relatively modest achievements of students in Investigation of Performance and Analysis of Performance.

This year has seen a significant fall in the number of candidates achieving passes at all grades. With the level of difficulty of Investigation and Analysis of Performance remaining unchanged this would suggest the average ability of candidates being down.

The cut-off scores are available on the website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk). It is worth pointing out that a “C” pass at Higher begins at 100. This reflects the 50% weighting of performance marks but encourages candidates to demonstrate a reasonable level of competence in Analysis of Performance and Investigation.

Although a vast number of candidates performed reasonably well and an even spread of awards were achieved, there is evidence that some candidates had been inappropriately presented or insufficiently prepared for the demands of the Higher level external assessment.

In the Marker reports there was an indication that there have been an increase in the number of centres adopting a prescriptive and standardised approach to completing the Investigation of Performance Report. In these instances students did not have the opportunity to plan and complete their report in a way that best suited the chosen activity and line of enquiry.

For a significant number of students the Higher level examination was very challenging and they were only able to score modestly.

There was a general pattern of some students being relatively successful at answering the parts of question that assessed Competency 1 in describing and explaining performance and then having difficulty with Competencies 2 and 3 where the demonstration of a level of critical thinking was required. They generally lacked the ability to show how they would apply relative concepts and knowledge in the development of their performance. For example, descriptions of the specific fitness demands of successful performance in an activity would be sound, but in discussion of how the principles of training could be applied in the planning and implementation of an appropriate training programme would present difficulties.

## **Recommendations**

### **Analysis of Performance**

- ◆ Students should be encouraged to take time to read and understand all that is being asked in examination questions. Markers reported that “Describe” questions which are followed by the invitation to “give reasons why” or “give specific examples” are only partially answered.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to relate their responses to what is asked in the question. Frequently students write down everything they know about a particular area, much of which is irrelevant to the question asked. Although candidates often display knowledge they fail to apply this to the key points.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are able to offer the level of depth and breadth of knowledge of key concepts that is appropriate at Higher level. The work of some candidates presented is considered to be well below that of the standards illustrated in the national exemplification of standards.

### **Investigation of Performance**

- ◆ The work should retain a performance and activity focus at all times. Some candidates become so involved in particular conditioning or technique development programmes that they forget to explain how this work is benefiting their whole performance in the chosen activity. This is particularly important towards the end of the Investigation where the mark scheme offers rewards for candidates who can discuss the effectiveness of the Investigation process and explain the specific effects it has had on their performance.
- ◆ The quality of the data gathered by the student is crucial. Unless it has a level of depth and detail students find it difficult to draw interpretations which will be significant to the progression of their topic and which will help them identify the needs of their training programme.
- ◆ The series of steps followed during the Investigation process are often well described and good marks are gained for identifying and justifying an appropriate topic, gathering relevant and significant data, and then outlining an appropriate course of action.
- ◆ Students often tend to score low marks in the interpretation and discussions of the marking scheme. Often the conclusions are drawn based on what the candidate would have wished rather than what can be validly claimed from an evaluation of the work undertaken.

## **Intermediate Physical Education**

There were 1711 candidates presented at Intermediate 2 level and 400 candidates presented at Intermediate 1 level for diet 2002.

96.7% of candidates received an award at Intermediate 2 level. Although there is concern in the rise of no awards, this may be due to candidates being presented at this level when Intermediate 1 would have been more appropriate.

98.5% of candidates received an award at Intermediate 1 level. This suggests that candidates are being presented at this appropriate level.

## Grade boundaries

The cut-off scores are available on the website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) . It is worth pointing out that a “C” pass at Intermediate 2 begins at 99. The “C” pass at Intermediate 1 begins at 103. These cut-off scores take into account the relative weighting of the performance marks. Given that teacher estimates are higher than the cut-off scores it is important that this information is used to inform the creation of estimates.

## Recommendations

- ◆ At Intermediate 2 no logbooks should be sent to SQA, only the Report for external assessment.
- ◆ Outcomes 2 and 3 in the Investigations were poorly done. Centres may need to spend more time on these.
- ◆ Candidates who have not studied Performance Appreciation in their course should be advised not to answer this section in the external assessment.
- ◆ General concern that Investigations are developing a centre formula. In many cases materials are sent to SQA which are not candidate work nor are they explained effectively.
- ◆ At Intermediate 1 level some candidates answered all sections of the question paper. Staff are reminded of the need to ensure that candidates understand the instructions when answering the questions in the external assessment.

## Standard Grade Physical Education

The number of Standard Grade Physical Education entries (pre-Appeal) for diet 2002 was 17,271.

Centres should not submit evidence from before 1998 as a prelim paper. More than one piece of evidence should be submitted for the level centres are appealing for.

There were instances of centres presenting candidates at F/G despite estimating at C. Some of these centres then appealed for candidates to be upgraded to credit the level of estimate. Centres are reminded that an appeal cannot be made for the level above presentation ie if the estimate is for a 2 (credit) some candidates were presented for Foundation/General level.

From markers reports it is apparent that candidates are not demonstrating the depth of knowledge/response at General/Credit level.

The following understanding has been gained through feedback from the marker’s reports:

### Foundation:

Evaluation – 5(a) and (b) where they were asked to view shot putt

Knowledge and Understanding – 2(d) –fitness tests in relation to an aspect of fitness

5(d) –Power

**General:**

Evaluation:

Questions 3(a) and (b) – comparing/contrasting volleyball techniques

Knowledge and Understanding:

Question 3(d) – Muscles/bones/joints – strong feeling this should have been a Credit question.

Question 4(d) – Reaction time – some markers questioned whether this lay within the syllabus (arrangements document checked at vetting)

F/G markers reported that part (d) questions were poorly answered by most candidates. In addition to the above, Q1 (d) – personal and physical qualities were confused.

**Credit:**

Evaluation: no pattern in marker's feedback to specify any area performed particularly poorly

Knowledge and Understanding: 1(d) – suppleness and its benefits to performance  
3(c) and (d) – methods of practice  
4(c) and (d) – principles of training/training methods

Difficulty with 3(d) arose, primarily, through ambiguous wording which was addressed at the markers meeting. Some concern was expressed re practice methods incorporated in the question re shadow practice/pressure drills. Had the wording been clearer there was a simple route through this question ie whole/part/whole and small-sided games both which lie firmly within the Standard Grade syllabus. Principles of training/training methods have been answered poorly by candidates over the past few years. Difficulty with suppleness question may have been due to the fact that it has been some time since this area has been examined.

**Areas of common misunderstanding****General Paper**

Evaluation:

Candidates are still experiencing difficulty in describing similarities and differences between actions, hence, the poor performance in 3(a). This type of question will require further practice within centres.

Knowledge and Understanding:

Due to the fact that question 3 part (d) was over the page from 3 part (c) candidates failed to see the opportunity to pull down information to assist with part (d).

**Credit Paper**

Knowledge and Understanding:

Wording of question 3(d) was ambiguous and led to confusion. Candidates were unclear whether two different methods of practice from part (c) could be used or not. Therefore, some candidates attempted to describe four methods of practice when two would have been sufficient.

In 4 (c) the term “progressive overload” caused some confusion in relation to strength. Candidates described how they would progress training rather than how they would overload the body.

### **Performing component**

Since the inception of the new National Qualifications SQA has been running a pilot where we retain marks for the performing component of Physical Education courses. There has been virtually no uptake for this and so the pilot will not be renewed from August 2002 onwards. As part of SQA openness initiatives any further developments will be taken forward within this broader context.

Changes were made to the submission of data for Performance marks in diet 2002. The accuracy of data submissions for courses in PE improved in 2002, but was still problematic. The majority of centres took on board the information given early in the year. However, some centres still found it difficult to distinguish between resulting the performance unit and giving a mark for performance for the external assessment. Course levels were often changed in error when centres intended to result the performance unit at a level greater than the course entry.

Given that no NQ Review changes will be made to Physical Education in session 2002-03 and that forms and stationery will remain the same, it will suffice to use the same flowchart previously issued.

Centres should note that while it was the desire of SQA to simplify the collation of performance marks some teachers have desired to continue to use the grid to create estimates. There is no objection to the use of the grid if centres find this useful.

### **Moderation – Written**

Generally centres were making unit assessment decisions in line with national standards. However, centres should:

- ◆ ensure that NABs are followed carefully and all pages required for assessment are included. In the submission of Analysis of Performance assignments, can centres ensure that the data which students have gathered and discussed in the assessment of Outcome 1 is included as part of the assignment. Staff comments either on or at the end of the work or in the form of a completed proforma should indicate the member of staff’s judgement about the level of competency displayed by the student.
- ◆ much of the NAB evidence had no or very brief comments from staff to indicate their view of the work for moderators or in providing feedback to students. This information is important to moderators and will influence their decision about a centres ability to judge candidate evidence.
- ◆ If submitting additional question and answer material for the assessment of Analysis of Performance evidence, centres should ensure that the questions and an appropriate marking scheme are included.

When Investigation reports are submitted as unit evidence, teachers should indicate where in each student’s work the relevant outcomes and criteria of the unit have been met. This can be done by highlighting and commenting on particular sections of the text or completing a summary proforma relating to each student’s work.

## Moderation – Performance

A number of issues have arisen from this year's moderation exercise:

- ◆ A small number of centres still have difficulty in applying the full range of marks available at Advanced Higher level although there appears to be an improvement from last year.
- ◆ Confusion still exists with some teachers as to how to deal with candidates who are performing two levels above their course duty. Guidance on this is contained in the operational guide issued to all centres covering all qualifications.
- ◆ The changes in the procedures from last year to cut down on the amount and complexity of the paperwork for centres and moderators has proved to be very successful. Some confusion still exists, however, as to the purpose of, and information required on, the PE MOD 1 FORM. This form is used for the moderation exercise and then by SQA for final comparison and quality checks – it is **not** used to return final performance marks.
- ◆ This year for the first time the responsibility for the transmission of final marks for Performance to SQA lay with the centre and that these marks did not have to be submitted until the end of April using the new Internal Assessment Mark Form. Concerns were expressed that this left the system open to abuse since this deadline could be up to two months after the moderation visit. A check was carried out on a small number of centres to see if the moderator's instructions in terms of adjusting marks had been followed. It was found that in only one case a centre had **not** made the appropriate adjustments to marks.
- ◆ Staff in a number of centres, however, appreciated the extra time made available by the above change in order to finalise marks.
- ◆ Some moderators encountered staff in centres who are still unaware of the range of support materials available to assist in assessing Performance e.g. the set of videos and case studies exemplifying Performance at all levels.

## Website

Staff are reminded that the Principal Assessor Reports and the Moderator Reports have been placed on the SQA website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk). Should any member of staff wish to apply to become a marker the form can also be downloaded from the SQA website. There is also issued to centres an SQA cd rom entitled "Exemplification of Standards" which has examples of work to assist in understanding the national standards for Physical Education.

It should be noted that the Arrangements Documents for SQA National Qualifications remain unchanged for diet 2003. Therefore concerns some staff have raised about changes to Logbooks or Investigation will be dealt with as part of the NQ Review but the status quo will remain at present.

SQA would like to thank all Physical Education Principal Assessors, Examining Teams, Markers and Moderators for the excellent work undertaken for diet 2002. Particular thanks are expressed to Ms Patricia Rooney who is stepping down as Principal Assessor for Standard Grade. She is replaced by the Senior Examiner for Standard Grade, Mr Jim Fergusson. The other Principal Assessors for Physical Education are Tom Hardie – Advanced Higher, David Lobban – Higher, Jon Anton – Intermediate 1 / 2. The full time Moderator for Physical Education is Mr Andrew Fairnie who can be contacted by email address: [Andrew.Fairnie@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Andrew.Fairnie@sqa.org.uk).

The Physical Education/Sport and Leisure Advisory Group has been stood down. Members are thanked for their valued strategic advice given to SQA over the past three years.

If staff wish to contact me about this Update or any other matter relating to Physical Education they can do so by postal or email address above.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Gallacher', written in a cursive style.

Paul Gallacher  
Qualifications Manager