

Our ref: CH/EM

25 November 2002

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

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

Contact Name – Elaine McFadyen at Glasgow
Direct Line – 0141 242 2342
E-Mail – elaine.mcfadyen@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National and Higher National Qualifications in Sociology

This circular updates centres on issues arising in Sociology from exam diet 2002 and session 2001/02.

Diet 2002

The Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator Reports for diet 2002 can now be found on the SQA web-site – www.sqa.org.uk. These include:

PA report Intermediate 1

PA report Intermediate 2

PA report Higher

Senior Moderator report National and Higher National Qualifications

The reports contain feedback on candidate performance in the 2002 exam diet and are of benefit to all teachers and lecturers of Sociology. Information includes identification of areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well or had difficulty and identification of areas of common misunderstanding. The reports also give recommendations to centres for the future.

Appeals

Stage 1 & 2 appeals are now complete. It was noted during the appeals process that some centres were still submitting invalid evidence. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

The Appeals Process: a guide to centres June 2002 – AS0690/3

Notes of guidance to centres on the Appeals process and on the preparation of evidence to support estimates and appeals.

Both documents can be downloaded from the SQA web-site.

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

- ◆ Evidence not supplied for each of the course component units. The exam paper samples from across all units.
- ◆ Prelim not always robust enough to provide sufficient merit for an upgrade. The prelim should sample the whole course and should replicate the conditions of the exam. Because of sampling issues, it is useful to have both the prelim and all internal assessment evidence.
- ◆ Some estimates appear to have been made on the evidence of internal assessment that has required reassessment (sometimes fairly extensive). If areas of reassessment coincide with weaknesses in the exam paper then there may be insufficient evidence to upgrade. Centres should think carefully about the estimates given for candidates who require reassessment throughout the course and about appealing when the estimate is not achieved.
- ◆ Centres should submit all the evidence they have for a candidate – prelim and internal assessment. In exams, some candidates leave whole questions unanswered or, as is the case with Higher, write one A4 page for a 30-mark question. This will inevitably bring down their marks and robust evidence is required to merit any change in grade.

National Qualifications Review

National courses in Sociology are part of ‘phase 3’ of the national review of courses. The review of Sociology will begin in August 2003. A copy of the report arising from initial consultation undertaken with centres at the end of last year is currently on the SQA web-site.

The main objectives of this review are:-

- ◆ To establish a relevant and coherent mandatory section for the Advanced Higher Course, which reflects its title, rationale and purpose.
- ◆ To reduce the volume of internal assessment especially at Higher and Advanced Higher.
- ◆ To investigate the sudden increase in the external assessment demand between Intermediate 2 and Higher and resolve if required.
- ◆ To monitor the uptake of Courses at Intermediate 1 and Advanced Higher.

Further details about this review will be issued in the New Year.

Higher National Qualifications

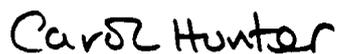
The new HNC/D Social Sciences, which was validated in March 2002 using the pilot HNC/D design rules, is now in its first year of implementation. The expiry date for the old HNC is 31 July 2004. The expiry date for the old HND is 31 July 2005. This means last entries for both the old HNC and old HND will be July 2003. A suite of new units with accompanying exemplar materials has been distributed to all centres that are represented on the HNC/D Social Sciences consortium. Units can also be downloaded from the SQA web-site.

Assessment Panel Social Sciences

The panel is now up and running and will meet twice a year. If you wish to make contact with your representatives on this panel, please contact christine.nicol@sqa.org.uk.

I hope that you find this information useful. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to telephone Carol Hunter on 0141 242 2326 or Elaine McFadyen on 0141 242 2342.

Yours faithfully



Carol Hunter
Qualifications Manager