

Our ref: RG/NQ Economics

12 January 2004

To: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

For the attention of Centre Staff responsible for NQ Economics

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

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Dear Colleague

Update Letter in Economics

Diet 2003

The Principal Assessor's Reports for Economics are now available on the SQA website. With regard to the appeals submitted for 2003, it was noted by the Principal Assessor, that in general appeals tended to be successful where the evidence submitted included a robust prelim paper, ie where the prelim mirrored the external assessment in structure, covered the syllabus and was marked according to a marking scheme which clearly identified the cut off scores. Please refer to SQA's 'Guidance on generating evidence for National Course Estimates and Assessment Appeals' for further guidance.

Change to length of AH Dissertation

With effect from Session 2003/4, the length of the Advanced Higher dissertation has been increased from 2,000 – 3,000 words to 3,500 – 4,000 words. This recommendation was made to give candidates more scope to do as well as they possibly could in the external assessment, which we hope both centres and candidates will find helpful.

NQ Review in Economics

The consultation with centres delivering Economics National Qualifications has taken place and we would like to thank all of you for taking the time to consider and respond to the issues in the questionnaire. Your responses were very helpful indeed. The Investigation Report is now going through the various processes towards ministerial approval and we will update you once the Report has been authorised. In the meantime, we expect that the proposed revisions will take effect from the start of Session 2005/6. The proposed changes will mean that the

content of the courses remains largely unaltered, and that the volume of internal assessment will be reduced to within agreed parameters.

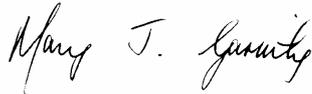
Advanced Higher Approval of Dissertation Topic from Session 2003/4

SQA has streamlined its procedures for approval of dissertation topics at Advanced Higher across all subject areas. The change will mean that centres no longer send in topics for approval by SQA and in Economics, guidelines have been produced to allow teachers/lecturers to approve candidates' topic titles themselves. A copy of these is enclosed for your information. This change is being introduced for Session 2003/4. The Principal Assessor has kindly agreed that any centres having difficulties implementing the guidance this year are free to contact him by email on MCarrington@ESMGC.COM for further assistance.

Notification of Change of SQA Personnel

Please note that as from December 2003, your SQA staff contacts will change due to internal re-organisation. The Business Manager is Roderic Gillespie, the Qualifications Manager, who starts on 5 January is Alistair Wylie and the Qualifications Officer is Julie Scanlan.

Yours faithfully



Mary Garrity
Qualifications Manager: Services, Social Subjects and the Arts
Qualifications Assessment Development

ADVANCED HIGHER DISSERTATION

How to choose a suitable topic

Please read the following in conjunction with the guidelines issued by the SQA in September 2000. Please note that you are now required to produce one dissertation only; this dissertation is worth 25% of the marks available for the examination.

50 Suggested topic areas for consideration

These titles should act as a stimulus for the student and are not intended to be specific titles for immediate use. They can be adapted by the student and used as the basis both for selecting a topic and for developing their own lines of investigation of any one of the topics listed. The list is not exhaustive and students are reminded that they can choose any subject that has clear economic content that is deemed to be of current significance during the eighteen months preceding the examination.

1. Why have many countries chosen to use monetary policy in order to control their economies?
2. Where is the inflation target not set at zero rather than 2.5%?
3. Can we avoid the liquidity trap?
4. Should the Royal Mail be privatised?
5. How successful has UK economic policy proved since the Bank of England was granted operational independence?
6. Why has UK unemployment fallen in recent years?
7. What have been the economic effects of the introduction of the minimum wage on the UK economy?
8. Has the UK's trend rate of growth increased?
9. Is deflation a greater threat to our economy than inflation?
10. What is the best way to deal with an economic recession?
11. How will the admission of new member states affect the European Union and the new member states that join the EU?
12. Should the UK join the euro?
13. Is running a budget deficit acceptable?
14. Why has the UK Government introduced the PFI and what are the likely economic effects of its operation in the short term and in the long term?
15. What is the best way to help the developing world?
16. Has the transition of the Russian economy proved a success?
17. What economic measures should be taken to counter the economic effects of economic development? How can the users of the environment be charged for the consequences of their economic activity?
18. Are the IMF and the World Bank biased against the interests of the poorer nations?
19. What are the economic advantages and disadvantages of globalisation?
20. The role of oil in the (world) economy
21. What lessons can be learned from the demise of the Argentine (or any other) economy?
22. What is the best way to transform the quality of public transport provision in the UK?
23. Are petrol taxes too high?

24. Is free trade economically desirable? What steps have been taken to create a free trading world economy?
25. What is the best way of ensuring the adequate provision of public and merit goods in a developed economy?
26. Is the rise in living standards throughout the world economy sustainable?
27. How can productivity be advanced without undermining the value of the individual worker?
28. The economic consequences of growing concentration in the food retail market
29. Reforming the NHS; is it wise to increase UK health spending to the EU average?
30. Does the UK's balance of payments deficit matter?
31. Does the decline of the manufacturing sector matter?
32. Should farm subsidies be abandoned?
33. What is the best way to deal with urban traffic congestion?
34. Is an independent Scotland a viable economic option?
35. Has the trade cycle been defeated?
36. Why have stock markets fallen in value?
37. To what extent has inward foreign direct investment (FDI) assisted the diversification of the Scottish economy?
38. Will the Internet transform the ways in which economic business is transacted?
39. What lessons can we learn from Japan's economic experience since the early 1990's?
40. How did China become the workshop of the world?
41. What are the economic effects of an ageing population and what measures can be taken to counter these effects?
42. How can the economics of football clubs be based on a more secure foundation?
43. What have been the economic effects of the shift from direct to indirect taxation?
44. How can a viable pensions scheme be devised for the future?
45. Will the housing boom end in tears?
46. Why has household debt soared in the UK and what might be the economic consequences of this burden of debt?
47. Should the Barnett formula be reviewed?
48. Why is capital investment much lower in the UK than in other developed economies?
49. Has the 'New Deal' been a success?
50. Why are small businesses less likely to be established in Scotland and what might be the results for the Scottish economy of a lower level of entrepreneurial initiative?

MJC

September 2003