

24 September 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator
All Gaelic/Gàidhlig Departments

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications update

The content of this letter should be passed on to the member of staff responsible for Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig subjects.

Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig update

We would like to bring the following matters to your attention.

1. External Assessment reports and Internal Assessment reports diet 2009 (formerly known as Principal Assessor, Senior Verifier and Course reports)

SQA will publish the above reports by October 2009. These will be available on each NQ language section of SQA's website. The reports are based on information and data from candidate performance, examiner feedback and the observations of question paper markers. Principal Assessors offer advice on performance and future preparation of candidates which centres will find useful for departmental planning and discussion.

2. Availability of past question papers on SQA's website

All past papers are available to download from SQA's website. Papers and MP3 files to accompany Listening papers are available via a link on accessing the website.

3. Texts for NQ Examinations

In the Literature sections of NQ examinations in Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig, up to **four** texts may be taken into the examination room. A text may be a book, or a collated booklet of poems or short stories. These **must** be unannotated and the titles should be recorded by candidates inside the front cover of their answer booklet. Up to **six** texts can be taken into the exam by candidates at Advanced Higher Gàidhlig.

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4. **Reminder of language use in Gàidhlig papers**

Candidates should be reminded to answer all Gàidhlig papers (i.e. all non Gaelic (Learners) papers) in Gàidhlig, and **not** in English.

5. **Change to Standard Grade Writing, Gaelic (Learners)**

There will be a change to the Gaelic (Learners) Optional Writing paper from 2010: candidates will answer **one** Writing question, rather than two as in previous examinations. There will be a specimen Writing Question on the SQA website from November 2009, and CLAS will provide support material free of charge.

Please ensure that you communicate this change to your learners.

6. **Support materials**

Materials to support Gaelic learners at Higher level will shortly be available on the 'Understanding Standards' section of the SQA website.

7. **SQA Gaelic Language Plan**

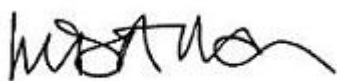
SQA has now completed work on its Gaelic Language Plan. We would appreciate any feedback from members of the Gaelic teaching profession. Please contact Marilyn Waters marilyn.waters@sqa.org.uk with your comments.

8. *is toigh l'* and *cha toigh l'*

With differences in usage a natural part of any language, it can be challenging to agree on one single spelling or usage convention. One such instance is the use of *is toigh l'* and *cha toigh l'* (versus *is toil* and *cha toil*) in SQA examination papers. At Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 in previous years the practice has been to avoid using the latter forms. An Orthographic Scrutineer for Gaelic ensures further standardisation across the entire range of examinations, adhering to the principles of the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions

After discussing the matter with examination teams and the Gaelic Assessment Panel, it has been agreed that SQA will continue to use *is toigh l'* in its examination papers. Being very aware of the need to avoid any confusion amongst candidates, however, SQA wishes to make it clear to centres that **both** versions are acceptable in answers and that usage of both forms is acknowledged as being widespread.

Yours faithfully



Margaret Allan
Qualifications Manager