

14 October 2011

To: SQA Co-ordinator
EA and Independent Secondary Schools
Higher Education Institutes
HMIE
Directors of Education
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 members 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

The 2011 Internal and External Assessment reports will be published shortly on the SQA website. The reports include advice from Principal Assessors 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

The 2011 Past Papers and accompanying Marking Instructions are now available to download from the SQA website. MP3 files to accompany Listening papers are available via a link on accessing the website.

3. 2012 Timetable – Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig

Issues arising from the 2011 examination timetable have been reviewed, and the 2012 timetable has been designed so that Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig exams take place on different days. This is to support, particularly, lone teachers and smaller Gaelic departments. The 2012 timetable is now available at the following link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/1439.html>

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4. **Key Dates – 2011/2012**

The key dates regarding candidate entries and assessment arrangement requests for 2011/2012 (August 2011 – January 2012) are now available from the Operational Help Centre on the SQA website. The Operational Help Centre is available at the following link:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/15094.html>

5. **Course Assessment of Speaking – NQ Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig**

The Course Assessment of Speaking (2007 onwards) document has been updated to provide more detailed information on the requirements of the assessment of Speaking in Gaelic and Gàidhlig.

The updated version is available on the SQA website at the following link:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Gaelic_Course_Assessment_V2.pdf

6. **AH Speaking Assessments**

Centres are reminded that all candidates' AH Speaking Tests will be recorded onto cassette or CD. Centres should ensure that the accommodation used for the conduct of the tests provides a suitable environment for cassette/CD recording and that appropriate recording equipment is available in the examination room. Please note that, if recording a performance directly onto CD, you must ensure that only a stand-alone 'real time' recorder is used. The use of recording to and from digital files/MP3/podcast etc, is **not** permitted. It is highly desirable that an external microphone is used. Audio cassette tapes/CDs will be provided by the Visiting Examiner.

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

Centres are reminded of the change to the Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners) Optional Writing paper from 2010: candidates now answer **one** Writing question, rather than two. The questions in this paper are based on the following topics – **self, holidays, school trip** and **leisure/significant event**. Candidates should be reminded that when a question stipulates a specific format eg a letter, the response should be written in this form. A specimen Writing paper is available on the SQA website at the following link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/40226.html>

8. **Intermediate 1 and 2 Gaelic (Learners) Section B (ii) Writing**

Candidates should be reminded that it is not appropriate to reproduce learnt NAB pieces in the Writing section of the exam paper. Candidates' writing in this section of the exam should relate directly to the question selected.

9. **Use of half marks in Marking Instructions for prelims – Intermediate and Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners)**

Centres are advised not to adopt half mark penalties for mis-contextualisation or incorrect use of plurals in their prelim Marking Instructions. This is in line with SQA marking of Gaelic (Learners) exam papers, where Markers consider the whole of the candidate's response and assess that holistically. Marking Instructions from the last three years are available on the SQA website.

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10. Scottish Languages Baccalaureate

Centres are reminded that candidates may use Gaelic or Gàidhlig as part of their Baccalaureate. A link is available from the NQ section of SQA's website, where centres can access up-to-date information. Please contact Lorna Grant, the Baccalaureate Development Manager at lorna.grant@sqa.org.uk for further information.

11. Curriculum for Excellence – Key Dates

Centres are reminded of the following key dates regarding the implementation of new qualifications:

- The last diet of Standard Grade will be in 2013
- In 2014 and 2015, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 will dual run with the new National 4 and 5 qualifications
- In 2015, the current Higher will dual run with the new Higher

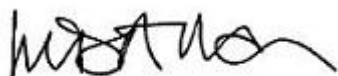
12. Curriculum for Excellence – Your feedback

Practitioners are reminded that draft documents are published at every stage of the new qualifications development process. Please visit the Curriculum for Excellence website and 'Have Your Say' on Gaelic and Gàidhlig developments – all comments are collated and presented to our CARGs and QDTs.

13. Curriculum for Excellence – Appointee Vacancies

SQA is recruiting teaching professionals to help shape the new National Qualifications. These new teams will develop and quality assure the new assessments for the first examination diet of the new National Qualifications in 2014. Opportunities are open to existing appointees as well as teaching professionals hoping to work with SQA for the first time. Full details and application forms are available at the following link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46838.3089.html>

Yours faithfully



Margaret Allan
Qualifications Manager