

Autumn 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinator
CAMs
Local Education Authorities
Directors of Education
All centres
HMIE

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	Note — update/information only

Contact: Alistair Wylie at Glasgow
Direct line: 0845 213 5488
E-mail: alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Subject update — Business Education

The contents of this letter should be passed to the members of staff responsible for Business Education subjects.

General information and advice

Assessment Panel

The autumn meeting of the NQ Business Education Assessment Panel will take place on Wednesday 29 October 2008.

Standard Grade — Accounting & Finance, Administration, Business Management Practical Abilities Projects 2009

Practical Abilities Projects have now been distributed to all centres as per the distribution model used for the 2008 projects. The number of projects allocated to centres was based on certificated numbers for diet 2008. Extra copies are available to download via the secure area of SQA's website. Please contact your SQA Co-ordinator for access to these materials. Any problems or requests for a large number of copies will be handled by the Customer Contact Centre (tel: 0845 279 1000).

Understanding Standards

All staff are encouraged to make use of this valuable resource. There is a link on each of the SQA Business Education pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk),

and this will take you directly to the Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org). The following subjects have been updated with new material for 2008:

- ◆ Higher Administration
- ◆ Intermediate 1 & 2 Administration
- ◆ Intermediate 2 Business Management

Please note that access to this site is no longer password restricted and this resource is available to candidates as well as teachers.

External Assessment reports 2008

External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports (previously known as Principal Assessors' reports and Senior Verifier reports) are available from the subject pages on SQA's website. All centres are reminded of the importance of these reports and the fact that particular issues which have been identified will apply in the current session.

Marking instructions for diet 2008

Marking instructions for all examinations are currently being uploaded to SQA's website. They are available to download from the NQ subject pages for all subjects and levels.

Past papers for diet 2008

Past papers for all examinations are available to download from SQA's website free of charge. They are available from: www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers.

Internal assessment — oral re-assessment

Centres are reminded that they should exercise caution when re-assessing internal assessments. The use of oral re-assessment is to be discouraged. Centres are reminded that should they be selected for verification, they may be required to justify their assessment decisions. The over-riding principle should, therefore, be that where there is doubt in the validity of the assessment decision, the candidate should be offered another opportunity to undertake a different NAB assessment.

Appeals

When generating Estimates and compiling evidence for Absentee consideration and Appeals, you should refer to:

- ◆ SQA Guidance on Estimates and Appeals
- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course Grade Descriptions
- ◆ Course Assessment Specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions

- ◆ External Assessment (formerly Principal Assessor) reports, which include information on Grade Boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course Reports, subject update letters).

These materials, and more, are also available on the subject pages of our website (www.sqa.org.uk).

All centres should also note that where SQA past papers are used to construct a prelim, questions must be carefully selected from a **minimum of three** papers, preferably adapted and must be checked to ensure that they meet the current standard of the external examination paper.

A well-designed commercially-produced question paper can, as long as it is checked to ensure that it meets the National Standard, provide valid and reliable evidence for estimates of a candidate's expected performance in a Course assessment. It can also provide full or partial evidence to support an External Assessment Appeal. The use of these question papers is both convenient to centres and acceptable to SQA — provided that our guidance on validity, reliability and security is adhered to.

Commercial question paper producers make considerable effort to meet Course requirements with regard to validity and reliability. However, SQA does not prior-moderate commercially-produced question papers, and there is **no guarantee** that these question papers meet all Course requirements. Centres are responsible for the validity and reliability of the assessment evidence submitted to support External Assessment Appeals, and therefore **must** evaluate these papers in the same way as centre-devised papers.

Only the current year's commercial papers can be considered in their entirety for External Assessment Appeals. Because these papers and associated marking instructions find their way into the public domain, which provides candidates with opportunities for access to them, past papers cannot be accepted in their entirety to support External Assessment Appeals.

Curriculum for Excellence update

Consultation on the next generation of national qualifications

As colleagues will know the Scottish Government is currently finalising its consultation on the next generation of National Qualifications for Scotland as part of its Curriculum for Excellence programme. The consultation period ends on 31 October 2008. Thereafter responses will be analysed by Ipsos Mori and a report will be made to the Government. It is anticipated that the Government's formal response will be published in the spring of 2009. SQA is currently establishing a new 'Curriculum for Excellence' Qualifications Development Team to lead the development of new and revised qualifications emerging from the consultation.

Action research projects

Following the success of last year's projects and their showcase at the Scottish Learning Festival in September, we are delighted to announce that six new projects have recently been commissioned. The six — at Bathgate Academy, Brannock Academy, Cumnock Academy, Kersland School, North Lanarkshire Council and St Roch's Secondary — involve participant led exploration of assessment, attainment and achievement through existing SQA qualifications with a view to informing innovation and change within Curriculum for Excellence. Projects include developments in online assessment, Supply Chain Management and Core Skills, vocational approaches to modern languages, and personal development.

For further detail on any of this work please contact John Allan, Policy and New Products team (e-mail: john.allan@sqa.org.uk).

Further subject-specific information is contained in the following Appendices:

Appendix 1 — Accounting & Finance

Appendix 2 — Administration

Appendix 3 — Business Management

Appendix 4 — Economics

Should you require further information about the content of this letter or any other matter relating to Business Education subjects, please contact the staff listed below:

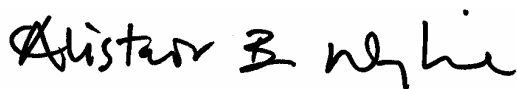
Alistair Wylie — Qualifications Manager, Business Education
(tel: 0845 213 5488, or e-mail: alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk)

Shazia Anwar — Qualifications Officer, Business Management
(tel: 0845 213 5487, or e-mail: shazia.anwar@sqa.org.uk)

Julie Scanlan — Qualifications Officer, Administration
(tel: 0845 213 5486, or e-mail: julie.scanlan@sqa.org.uk)

Liz Sinclair — Qualifications Officer, Accounting and Economics
(tel: 0845 213 5485, or e-mail: liz.sinclair@sqa.org.uk)

Yours faithfully



Alistair Wylie
Qualifications Manager
NQ Business Education

Appendix 1

Subject update — Accounting

Use of general reserve

In line with current modern accounting practice, we will no longer examine the use of a general reserve at any level of Accounting Course. This has been the case since the introduction of the new revised Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher, however, for further clarification this also now includes Standard Grade. Centres are reminded that it **will not** be examined in external assessment from diet 2008 onwards.

Electronic set-up files

Electronic files are now available to download to support the Standard Grade Practical Abilities Projects. These are available to download from the secure area of SQA's website.

Markers — Standard Grade

We are currently looking to recruit Markers for Standard Grade in advance of the diet 2009 examination. If you have current experience of delivering Standard Grade Accounting and Finance and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131 561 6825 or request by e-mail (markers@sqa.org.uk) or contact Liz Sinclair, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5485, or e-mail: liz.sinclair@sqa.org.uk) for further information.

Appendix 2

Subject update — Administration

Exam timetable 2009

You will be pleased to read that the 2009 exam timetable has been finalised and Intermediate 1 & 2 Administration will take place on the first day of the diet, 5 May 2009, followed by Higher Administration on 20 May 2009. This is the first day that Higher examinations can take place under current design rules of the timetable.

Provision of electronic files to support examinations — Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels

Electronic files were made available to support examinations at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for diet 2008. Files will also be made available for diet 2009 under the same arrangements: seven working days prior to the exam. Access details will be e-mailed to SQA Co-ordinators in early spring 2009. Due to the change in the timetable the files will be made available earlier than in previous years.

Electronic files for the specimen question papers, prelim papers and papers from diets 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 at Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher are available to download from the NQ Administration subject page of SQA's website:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14328.html>

Important update: centres should note that from diet 2009 onwards, electronic files will not be made available to support the use of Appleworks. Electronic files for diet 2009 examinations will be provided in the following formats:

PC users:

- ◆ Microsoft Office 2003 (Word, Excel, Access)

Apple users:

- ◆ Microsoft Office X for Mac (Word, Excel)
- ◆ Filemaker Pro (Version 7 file format)

National Qualifications Group Award developments — National Certificate in Administration

We are in the process of developing a National Certificate in Administration (level 5) aimed at school leavers and adult returners. This new award will be ready for implementation in session 2009/10. Further details can be found at:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/24067.html

The award comprises 12 credits of which 9 credits are mandatory. There is an extensive list of optional Units from which centres and students may choose. Centres may also wish to supplement the 12 credits by using the list of optional Units.

The award will be supported by Assessment Support Packs (ASPs) which mainly cover new and mandatory Units in the framework.

Appeals — Intermediate 1 and 2

Centres are reminded of the importance of following the requirements of the Course Assessment Specification when either making up or buying in prelim papers. There were many instances this year of evidence being submitted to support Appeals which did not meet the requirements as laid out in this document, eg questions with the wrong number of marks, the wrong number of sections, etc.

The Course Assessment Specification can be found on SQA's website in the NQ Administration pages and forms part of the Course Assessment Pack.

Markers — Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

We are currently looking to recruit Markers for Administration Intermediate 1 and 2 in advance of the diet 2009 examinations and in anticipation of continuing growth in presentation numbers. If you have current experience of delivering Administration and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131 561 6825 or request by e-mail (markers@sqa.org.uk) or contact Julie Scanlan, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5486, or e-mail: julie.scanlan@sqa.org.uk) for further information.

Appendix 3

Subject update — Business Management

Advanced Higher Business Management

Additional information on the production of the Business Report is now available to download from the Business Management subject area of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). This document is entitled: *Advanced Higher Business Management Report Guide*.

Please note that Business Reports must **not** be marked by centres prior to submission to SQA. The Business Report is treated as part of the Course Award and, as such, is subject to external marking by SQA.

Centres are also reminded that a copy of the associated NAB as completed by the candidate and marked by the teacher MUST be submitted with the report.

New exemplification material to support the Business Report, and based on actual candidate performance in diet 2007, is available to download from the NQ Business Management area of SQA's website. Centres delivering this qualification are advised to make use of this valuable resource.

Centres are asked to make sure that they are using the most up-to-date copy of the Advanced Higher Business Report Guide which is available to download from the subject page or by the following direct link:

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

Markers — Advanced Higher Business Management Examination

We are currently looking to recruit Markers to mark the Advanced Higher Business Management Report and examination. The Report will be centrally marked in early May.

If you have current experience of delivering Advanced Higher Business Management and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131-561 6825 or request by e-mail (markers@sqa.org.uk) or contact Shazia Anwar, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5487, or e-mail: shazia.anwar@sqa.org.uk) for further information.

Higher Business Management — Development points and marking

With reference to the marking of Higher Business Management and the provision of marking instructions for external examinations as provided by SQA, all centres are asked to note that development points should not be awarded in the marking of assessments designed to replicate the external assessment. The marking instructions provided are very comprehensive and cover all the points that the Principal Assessor, Examining Team and Marking Team would reasonably expect to find when marking candidate scripts. The awarding of development points introduces an unnecessary degree of subjectivity to the marking and should be

avoided. Fuller expansion and development will however continue to be expected at Advanced Higher level.

Where SQA past papers are used to construct a prelim for Higher Business Management, the questions should be selected to ensure they meet the current standard of the external paper. Particular attention should be given to use of the appropriate command words as detailed on SQA's website and exemplified on the Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org). In section one, the wording of the case study and the 10 mark question one do not require to be changed but the remaining questions (totaling 40 marks) must be selected from a minimum of three different papers or original source. Similarly section two questions should not be lifted en bloc. Each question in section two should be made up from different papers or original source.

National Qualifications Group Award developments — National Certificate in Business

We are in the process of developing a National Certificate in Business (level 4) aimed at school leavers and adult returners. The development of this new award is progressing well and is principally aimed at the further education sector. A launch event is scheduled to be held in March 2009 prior to first delivery of the award in session 2009/10.

Full details of the framework and progress to date are available from the following link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/24073.html>.

Markers — Higher

We are currently looking to recruit additional Markers for Higher Business Management in advance of the diet 2009 examination and in anticipation of continuing growth in presentation numbers.

If you have a minimum of three years experience of delivering Higher Business Management and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131-561 6825 or request by e-mail (markers@sqa.org.uk) or contact Shazia Anwar, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5487, or shazia.anwar@sqa.org.uk) for further information.

Appendix 4

Subject update — Economics

Guidance document

A new guidance document has been devised to support the Course Arrangements for Advanced Higher Economics. This document is now available to download from SQA's website (**www.sqa.org.uk**).

Markers — Higher

If you have current experience of delivering Economics at Higher level and would like to apply to join our team of Markers, please complete an application form available by calling 0131-561 6825 or request by e-mail (**markers@sqa.org.uk**) or contact Liz Sinclair, Qualifications Officer (tel: 0845 213 5485, or e-mail: **liz.sinclair@sqa.org.uk**) for further information.