

November 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)  
Directors of Education  
SCIS  
Business Development Managers

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the  
delivery of National Qualifications in Care**

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

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Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications in Care**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member(s) of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Care.

### **Diet 2009**

#### **Care Course assessment**

This was the second year of the revised NQ Care Course at Higher level, and candidate entries had increased slightly. Candidates appeared to be better prepared for the exam, however, overall results were disappointing, with a number of candidates still only achieving low marks for each section.

There was a slight decrease in the number of candidate entries at Intermediate 2 level but an overall improvement in candidate responses and candidates appeared to be entered at the correct level resulting in an increase in Grade As awarded.

Candidate entries for Intermediate 1 Care showed a significant increase including a number of new centres. The standard of candidate responses was very good with a significant increase in Grade As awarded.

#### **Project-based assessed Courses**

Candidate entries for *Care Issues for Society: Childcare*, *Care Issues for Society: Older People* and *Health and Safety in a Care Setting* showed a slight increase while *Mental Health*

Care showed a significant increase in 2009. There was a decrease in the number of resulted candidates for *Care Practice*.

Staff submitting project evidence for PBNs are asked to note that the EX6 forms are for use by **SQA markers only** and that centre estimates should **not** be entered on these forms. Marker checklists for each PBN are available from SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) and these should accompany the candidate evidence with the Internal Assessor's estimated marks.

The External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for diet 2009 can now be found on SQA's website. These include:

- ◆ External Assessment report Care Intermediate 1
- ◆ External Assessment report Care Intermediate 2
- ◆ External Assessment report Care Higher
- ◆ External Assessment report Care Issues for Society Intermediate 2
- ◆ External Assessment report Care Practice Higher
- ◆ External Assessment report Health and Safety in Care Settings Intermediate 2
- ◆ External Assessment report Mental Health Care Higher
- ◆ Internal Assessment report SfW: Health and Social Care Higher

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment reports for all NQ Care courses for diet 2009. These reports, formerly known as Principal Assessor reports, contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Care.

### **Appeals**

The procedures for Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals were completed in September and October 2009. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA5212 Nov 2009).

The above document has undergone revision and can be downloaded from SQA's website. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

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

- ◆ evidence did not sufficiently replicate the Course
- ◆ inappropriate marking schemes
- ◆ marking schemes leniently applied
- ◆ lack of use of evaluative and application questions in evidence

Some of the above issues have been reported in previous update letters and External Assessment reports; however, similar problems were replicated in 2009. It is also important to remind centres of the clarity required when identifying sources. Centres must ensure that details of the sources of each prelim question are included with appeals evidence. For example: Question 2 – SQA QP 2007 – Paper 1 or Section 1.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates and are encouraged to read the subject-specific information in the document *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA5212, Nov 2009).

### **Marking instructions**

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for diet 2009 Course assessments are now available for download on the NQ Care page of SQA's website.

### **National Certificate in Child, Health and Social Care (Intermediate 2)**

The National Certificate at Intermediate 2 has now entered its second year and is proving to be a popular choice for colleges. The NC covers Childcare, Health Care and Social Care with the opportunity for lecturers and/or candidates to choose either the Childcare or Health and Social Care route or to keep the award generic. It would appear this award meets the requirements of the Care sectors. Again, thanks must go to all those who assisted with this development and particularly to those colleges who released staff to form the Qualifications Development Team.

### **Skills for Work — Health and Social Care (Higher)**

Following a disappointing first year, there is a significant increase in uptake for the Skills for Work Health and Social Care Higher course. It is anticipated that a second Support Network day for delivering teachers/Lecturers will be held. Centres will be notified of the event in due course.

Please note that because this Course is assessed fully through internal assessment there are no cut-off scores in the NABs — all Outcomes and performance criteria must be met. It is important that the demand of internal assessment is equivalent to what is expected for a grade C pass in externally assessed Courses.

### **Health and Safety in Care Settings (Intermediate 2)**

Some centres are participating in the use of social software in the completion of the project for this Course. Despite a break in 2009, centres were very happy with the increased benefits that this gave. By using 'moodle' software the work of each group member can be more accurately measured and candidates receive the grade they deserve. Training sessions have taken place for participating centres in diet 2010.

Centres are not required to use the e-assessment version of this Course, however this would be in the best interests of candidates.

As was indicated in the bulk e-mail of 28 January 2009, it would be advantageous for centres to submit evidence of individual candidate participation. This could be achieved by collecting e-mail messages or by an electronic diary. Templates have been created for each Project Brief which will aid candidates in presenting their evidence.

The following link will take you to the templates for each Brief:

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/NQCarePBNCHHealthSafetyCareSettingProjectBrief.doc](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/NQCarePBNCHHealthSafetyCareSettingProjectBrief.doc)  
**Electronic Marks Capture**

The marking of the Intermediate 1 Care question paper was carried out using SQA's Electronic Marks Capture system (EMC) in 2009. This involved the Intermediate 1 question papers being scanned and Markers marking the papers electronically from their home. Electronic marking from image combines the advantages of central marking and traditional marking at home. Markers must complete practice papers and qualifications papers before going on to mark their actual allocation. The Principal Assessor is able to track the progress of Markers and is available online at specified times to assist Markers with queries. This has proved to be an efficient way to quality assure marking at the start of the marking procedure to agreed marking standards.

### **SQA Academy and Scotland's Colleges**

SQA and Scotland's Colleges have combined their knowledge, skills and experience to offer a staff development opportunity. The first of these events was held over two days with online activities beginning 11 November and face-to-face discussion on 26 November 2009. This gave teachers/lecturers the opportunity to increase their understanding of the content and internal assessment of the Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses.

The second of these events will be for all Project-based assessed courses and will give teachers/lecturers an opportunity to discuss the requirements of the courses, changes to Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher) and Care Practice (Higher), internal marking and estimates, and advice on submitting evidence for external assessment. This event will be held on 1 February 2010. Full details of all events can be found on the Scotland's Colleges website ([www.scotlandscolleges.ac.uk](http://www.scotlandscolleges.ac.uk))

### **Understanding Standards**

Materials for Higher Care are being developed and will soon be available on the Understanding Standards website ([www.understandingstandards.org.uk](http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk)). These materials will give centres an accessible, definitive and comprehensive resource which enables them to understand the standards used by SQA when assessing their candidates' work and allows them to develop their skills in working with these standards through a series of interactive exercises with feedback.

### **Assessment Panel**

The Assessment Panel continues to meet once a year to look at issues arising in the assessment of Care Units and Courses. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers.

### **Being an SQA Marker**

If you are interested in becoming a Marker for any of the Care or Early Education and Childcare Courses, please download an application from the Appointee Management section of SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk/am](http://www.sqa.org.uk/am)). To become a Marker, we normally ask that you are in your third year of teaching the Course or have been teaching it within the past three years — obviously this cannot be the case for the new Courses but experience in these areas will be considered. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for the current year. I would like to point out that all Care Courses are Centrally Marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one extended period in the same venue. We have had a number of examples recently where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the marking team.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502, or e-mail me at [mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully



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