

Our ref: TS/Care

19 December 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Customer Account 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

Contact: Tom Stannage
Direct line: 0845 213 5502
E-mail: tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Care

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

Diet 2008

Care Question Paper examinations

This was the first year of the revised Courses and results, as expected, were somewhat mixed. Very pleasing was the pass rate for Intermediate 2. Results for Higher were more or less as expected but gave hope for the future as the new section — Section 4 — was very well done. There is still evidence that candidate results would improve if more time was spent on learning examination technique.

Project assessed Courses

Mental Health Care and Care Practice results remain stable. Uptake for *Care Issues for Society: Childcare* showed a drastic decrease in numbers whereas *Health and Safety in Care Settings* and *Care Issues for Society: Older People* showed a slight increase. **Centres are requested to note that only the revised Units and briefs will be acceptable for diet 2009.**

The External Assessment reports (formerly known as Principal Assessor reports) for diet 2008 can now be found on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). 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

Appeals

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

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA0992, June 2007)

Both documents can be downloaded from SQA's website.

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

- ◆ Wrong or incomplete evidence.
- ◆ Prelims which do not replicate the format of the final exam.
- ◆ Inconsistencies in marking.
- ◆ Leniency in applying marks and grades.
- ◆ Lack of evaluative evidence.

All of the above issues have been reported in previous update letters and Principal Assessor reports, however, similar problems were replicated in 2008. We would also take this opportunity to remind staff that ½ marks are not acceptable.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the various External Assessment reports for Care.

The document noted above — *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* — has undergone revision and has been posted on SQA's website. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper-based Courses.

Marking instructions

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for diet 2008 Course assessments are posted on the NQ Care pages of SQA's website.

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

A National Certificate at Intermediate 2 has been developed and is available this session. This covers Childcare and Health and Social Care with the opportunity to go down either route or to keep the award generic. From the interest shown by colleges to date this new award is meeting 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)

Uptake of the new Skills for Work Health and Social Care at Higher didn't quite fulfil its promise due mainly, it would appear, to all the other new developments introduced last session.

It is hoped that External Verifiers will be able to collect strong evidence to show that the demands of this Course are equivalent to externally-assessed Courses. 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.

Centres delivering the Course this year will receive a verification visit and visiting External Verifiers have been asked to ensure that assessments are on a par with what is expected at SCQF level 6. Reports from External Verifiers last session indicated that some of the projects accepted as valid were at Intermediate 2 level and that 'lists' were accepted as correct where the question had asked for 'descriptions'.

Support network

The support network meeting held on Thursday 30 October 2008 and hosted by South Lanarkshire College was a great success with all attendees indicating that the event was extremely helpful. Our grateful thanks to the college and to the Care section in particular for their very warm welcome and excellent hospitality.

Project-based National Courses

Ex6 Forms

Staff submitting project evidence for PBNCs 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 PBNC are available from SQA's website and these should accompany the candidate evidence with the Internal Assessor's estimated marks.

Health and Safety in Care Settings (Intermediate 2)

Two colleges participated in a pilot using social software in the completion of the project for this Course. Despite a number of teething problems the staff and students in both centres were very happy with the increased benefits that this gave. By using 'wikis' and 'blogs' the work of each group member can be more accurately measured and candidates receive the grade they deserve. Marking was also much more straightforward with Markers able to see what each group member had contributed. This is now being rolled out to all centres delivering this Course in session 2008/09 and a number of training sessions will be arranged. In session 2009/10 only the e-assessment version of the Course will be available.

Prevention of Infection (Intermediate 2)

The Evidence Requirements of the above Unit have been amended to clarify the assessment arrangements. This change has also been reflected within the NAB items. The amended Unit is available to download from the NQ Search facility of SQA's website and centres should destroy previous versions.

Electronic marks capture

The Intermediate 1 Care question paper is being considered for inclusion in the growing number of papers that use some form of electronic marking. The paper would be included in the marking from image project in 2009. All question papers are scanned and Markers mark the papers from their computers at 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 form of marking increases the up-front quality assurance and ensures that Markers are adhering to agreed marking standards.

SQA Academy and SFEU

SQA and SFEU have combined their knowledge, skills and experience to offer a staff development opportunity. The first event, held on 18 November 2008, gave lecturers the opportunity to increase their understanding of the content and internal assessment of the revised Higher Course, and how to use to advantage the principles of the Assessment is for Learning initiative. Day two will be held in February and will deal with external assessment and appeals. Full details can be found on the SFEU website (www.sfeu.ac.uk).

Materials for Care are being developed and will soon be available on the Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org). This is a blended learning course with some tasks to be completed online prior to the events.

Assessment Panel

The Assessment Panel continues to meet twice 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 e-mail markers@sqa.org.uk or call our Marker Helpline (0131-561 6825) and we will send a form to you. 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 this 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 tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Tom Stannage
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care