

October 2010

To: SQA Coordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS

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

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None — 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 2010

The External Assessment and Internal Assessment reports for diet 2010 can now be found on the SQA 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
- ◆ Internal Assessment report SfW: Health and Social Care Higher

Centres are advised to access the External and Internal Assessment Reports for all NQ Care courses for diet 2010. These reports, formerly known as Principal Assessor reports and Senior Verifier reports, contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Care.

Appeals

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

◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements*

The document – *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* has undergone revision and has been posted on the SQA website. The revised version clarifies what subject specific 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 2010. 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*.

Marking Instructions

The Question Papers and finalised marking instructions for Diet 2010 Course assessments are now available for download from the subject specific web pages.

Care Higher

Feedback from centres, and written feedback from markers at central marking, was that this years Higher Care was a fair and balanced paper. Despite this the pass rate for Care Higher remains low and in an effort to improve candidates results in the 2011, the examining team have looked at ways of widening access to improved marks for candidates and have tried to ensure that as wide a range of the course is covered, and that course content is not sampled as specifically as it has been in the past.

In addition to this, three resources have been developed which will provide additional opportunities for teachers and learners to prepare for, and improve performance in, Higher Care internal and external assessment.

- SQA Understanding Standards Website: Materials from the 2009 paper will be available on the SQA Understanding Standards Website by the end of 2010. This will enable teachers to read real scripts and to mark them. They can then compare their marks to the official guidance and read the rationales behind the marking decisions.
- SQA TranSETT Solar Open Assessment: formative assessment materials for the Higher Care units will be available in 2010. This will enable centres to provide mini

e-assessments on some of the course content and provides a novel way of revising course content and preparing for assessments.

- Scotland's Colleges Repository: Online learning materials for all three Higher Care Units, as well as other NC Health and Social Care Units for centres from this repository. The packages offer an opportunity for centres to provide an extended range of Blended learning for their students. A password is required to access these materials. This can be provided by your college or by contacting Scotland's Colleges.

For more information please refer to the External Assessment report.

Mental Health Care

The pass rate for Mental Health Care decreased again this year as it has for the last four examination diets. SQA are disappointed at the significant fall in pass rate for Mental Health Care in 2010, and it was raised in discussion with the Principal Assessor and Team Members at Central Marking. This confirmed that there has been no change this year in the Course Specification, Marking Instructions, standard of marking applied or any significant changes within the marking team (which is made up of representatives of a number of Scottish Colleges) to provide any explanation.

Markers did express concern during marking procedures, that generally the performance of candidates over the 3 stages, planning, developing and evaluating, was not as good as in previous years, and in particular the performance in the developing stage was weaker, although this may not relate specifically to your centre

An independent Qualifications Committee has been convened to review this year's Mental Health Care results. The purpose of the committee is to gain an understanding of how standards were applied at procedures. The results of this Qualifications Committee will be published in November.

Health and Safety in Care Settings (Intermediate 2)

Submissions this year were both paper based and electronic as a number of centres used the Class project pilot scheme. The Class project pilot scheme allowed candidates to create an electronic portfolio which were then available on – line to the markers on the Class website.

One of the main benefits of Class is that it allows candidates to provide better examples of their individual contributions to the group project which were highlighted to markers on the wikis and blogs. This resulted in the work of each group member being accurately measured and therefore candidates achieved the grades they deserved.

Despite SQA's best efforts unfortunately all aspects of the Course will not be in an electronic format this year however we are in the process of creating online training material for the wiki and blog. This will be available for lecturers/teachers to use with their students during November, in advance of them having access to the system to generate 'real' content.

No formal training event is arranged for Class this year however the forum area for tutors still exists and we are also planning to introduce a buddy system for tutors to offer support when it's needed.

Finally I would like to thank everybody who has been involved in this Pilot scheme. If you were not involved last year but are interested in finding out more about the benefits of the Class project pilot scheme please contact Veronica Harris – 0845 213 5406 or alternatively email veronica.harris@sqa.org.uk

Skills for Work – Health and Social Care (Higher)

SQA are holding a Support Network Event on 4 November 2010 for Skills for Work Early Education and Childcare and Health and Social Care. This intended target audience for this event is both centres who currently deliver these Courses along with any centres who are interested in applying for approval. The aim of this event is to provide centre staff with an opportunity to share ideas on teaching/learning approaches to the delivery of SfW Courses in Care along with good practice. Full details of all events can be found on the SQA's events website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2961.html>)

SQA provides an e- portfolio SQA Deskspace for all candidates undertaking a Skills for Work Course. Training and Support for tutors wishing to use Deskspace with their classes is available. For more details and registration please access the Deskspace website: - <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/36536.html>

SQA Academy and Scotland's Colleges

An SQA Academy Event is being held on 15 November 2010 and will be for all Project Based assessed courses. This 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. Full details of all events can be found on the Scotland's Colleges website (www.scotlandscollages.ac.uk)

Electronic Marks Capture

The marking of the Intermediate 1 Care question paper was carried out using SQA's Electronic Marks Capture system (EMC) in 2010. 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 on-line 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.

Understanding Standards

Materials for Higher Care are being developed and will soon be available on the Understanding Standards website. 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


Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers. Please note that SQA is looking for new members to join the Assessment Panel. If you think you may be interested and you would like further information please email me.

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 the SQA website. 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

Yours faithfully



Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager
NQ Social Sciences and Care