

4 February 2009

To: Head of centre

Cc: Directors of education, SCIS, Scottish Government,
key stakeholders, teaching associations and
SQA Co-ordinators (all centres)

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

Contact: Lesley Joyce at Glasgow
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E-mail: Lesley.joyce@sqa.org.uk

Dear Colleague

Update on National Qualifications developments

The purpose of this letter is to update you on current and planned developments of National Courses and National Qualification Group Awards. It contains information about:

- 1 New and Revised National Courses**
 - ◆ New National Courses for 2009/10
 - ◆ Revised National Courses for 2009/10 and 2010/11
 - ◆ Changes to Course Assessments for 2009 examination diet

- 2 Support for Centres**
 - ◆ Understanding Standards events and website
 - ◆ Quality Networks
 - ◆ Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities from SQA Academy and Scotland's Colleges

- 3 Scottish Baccalaureates**

- 4 National Qualification Group Awards**

- 5 Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses**

- 6 New Scottish Standard Web Pages**

1 New and Revised National Courses

New National Courses for 2009/10

New Courses will be available in the following areas will be available from August 2009:

Cantonese	Higher and Advanced Higher
Mandarin (Simplified)	Higher and Advanced Higher
Mandarin (Traditional)	Higher and Advanced Higher

New Skills for Work Courses will be available in the following areas from August 2009:

Beauty	Higher
Creative Digital Media	Intermediate 1
Health Sector	Intermediate 1

You can find more information about these and other Skills for Work Courses on our website at www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork.

A launch event for Health Sector has already taken place. There will be launch events for the other Courses listed above, as well as for new Units in Language for Work Purposes at Intermediate 2 and Higher, in spring 2009. Qualifications Managers will be sending information about these events in due course.

Revised National Courses for 2009/10

History (Access 3, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2) (C044 09, C044 10, and C044 11)

Course content and content of the Units *Historical Study – Scottish and British* and *Historical Study – Options* amended as the contexts *From the Cradle to the Grave? Social Welfare in Britain 1890s – 1951* and *Campaigning for Change: Social Change in Scotland 1900s -1979* are no longer mutually exclusive.

There will be no change to the Course or Unit codes.

Psychology (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher)

These Courses and their Units have been revised to streamline content as a result of centre feedback and will be given new codes.

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher)

These Courses and their Units have been revised as a result of centre feedback and will be given new codes.

Travel and Tourism (Higher) C217 12

The Outcomes and the mandatory content of the Unit *Structure of the Travel and Tourism Industry* (DM4P 12) have been amended to bring it into line with the industry as it is today and to providing it with a more future proofed form of wording. The revised Unit will be given a new code. It is a mandatory Unit in the Higher Course and will also be added to the new National Certificates in Travel and Tourism which are now available. The new Unit and Course content will be introduced from August 2009 and the existing Unit will be withdrawn in July 2009.

For further information, contact the Qualifications Manager, Keith Wright, at keith.wright@sqa.org.uk.

Revised National Course for 2010/11

History (Higher)

The revised Higher History Course will be available from August 2010. The Course and its Units will have new codes. A new Unit, *Scottish History* will replace the Unit *Historical Special Topic*. The other Units will be *Historical Study: British* and *Historical Study: European and World*, which are revised and updated versions of the existing Units. The Course assessment details will change in the following ways:

- ◆ Paper 1 topics may come from any combination of topics
- ◆ Structure of Paper 2 altered
- ◆ Scottish History compulsory in Paper 2
- ◆ Requirements for Extended Essay have been clarified.

Changes to Course Assessments for 2009 examination diet

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the following changes to Course assessment durations:

Courses	Detail of change
English (Intermediate 1) (C115 10)	Increase of 15 minutes in the duration of the <i>Close Reading</i> paper to 1 hour
English (Higher) (C115 12)	Increase of 15 minutes in the duration of the <i>Close Reading</i> paper to 1 hour 45 minutes.
French, German, Italian, Spanish (Advanced Higher) (C059 13, C060 13, C061 13, C063 13)	Increase of 10 minutes in the duration of <i>Paper 1: Reading and Translation</i> to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

2 Support for centres

Understanding Standards Events

Home Economics (Higher)

This event will aim to develop a better understanding of national standards, particularly in the Technological Project. The event will provide an opportunity for colleagues to look at and better understand assessment requirements. The event will encourage the sharing of good practice and enable discussion on approaches to successful Course delivery.

This event will be free of charge. Invitation letters have been issued to centres.

Hospitality Skills- training for teachers

This event is aimed at teachers and will focus on practical skills such as knife skills, finishing techniques, and on the practical requirements of hospitality Units.

This event will be free of charge. Invitation letters have been issued to centres.

Understanding Standards Website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk)

New and updated material is being added to the website regularly, expanding the range and depth of our coverage of national assessment standards. Recent additions include examples of the revised Higher English Critical Essay, a new section on Personal Development Courses, and the return of Higher Modern Studies. Details of all new content is posted on the website - select 'About this site' from the drop-down menu on the homepage.

Quality Networks

The purpose of Quality Networks is to share updates and best practice with experts and colleagues. Quality Networks are ideally suited to assessors and internal verifiers involved in the day to day provision and delivery of the subject. There is a charge for these events, which covers the workshops, speakers, event materials, lunch, refreshments and an attendance certificate.

In spring 2009, we will be holding Quality Networks for Mathematics and Standard Grade Home Economics. Further details will be issued in due course.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities from SQA Academy and Scotland's Colleges

CPD is being offered in the following areas. These events are free and aimed at all staff involved in these subject areas. Delegates must participate in online activity before attending the events.

Subject	Event date	Further information and register your interest	Register your interest by
Setting, Vetting and Marking External Assessment for Intermediate 2 Travel and Tourism	11/02/09	www.sfeu.ac.uk/events/show/2700	10/02/09
Business Management	25/02/09	www.sfeu.ac.uk/events/show/2691	24/02/09

3 Scottish Baccalaureates

A Scottish Science Baccalaureate and a Scottish Languages Baccalaureate for pupils in the fifth and sixth years of secondary education will be available to centres in August 2009 with first certification in August 2010. We issued a pack of information to all centres at the beginning of December 2008 which includes the final Baccalaureate Specifications, information on the Interdisciplinary Project which is a mandatory component of the Baccalaureates, details of planned implementation support for centres, and information for parents and learners. The pack and further information on the Scottish Baccalaureates can be accessed on the Baccalaureate web pages of SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk/baccalaureates. Full Baccalaureate Arrangements documents and the Interdisciplinary Project Specification will be published on SQA's website by the end of March and centre representatives will be invited to implementation support events in April 2009.

4 National Qualification Group Awards

Our work to develop National Qualification Group Awards (NQGAs) is well underway. Eighteen National Certificates and 88 National Progression Awards are now available for centres and candidates, and we are developing more. A detailed list of developments is available in the NQGA Development Schedule which is published on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk/nqga) and will be updated monthly to keep stakeholders fully informed of progress, as further qualifications needs are identified.

New and revised National Units will be developed as part of these NQGAs. These Units will be available for centres to offer as free-standing Units, as is the case with existing National Units.

SQA in partnership with Scotland's Colleges are also developing e-assessments and support materials for a range of new and revised NQGAs which will become available to centres during 2009. This development is being part-funded by the European Social Fund through the Transforming Scottish Education Through Technology (TranSETT) project. You can get further information by e-mailing esf@sqa.org.uk.

Appendix One to this letter shows the NQGAs which are available now. More NQGAs will become available throughout the year and you can check the NQGA Development Schedule for further details.

The following new NQGAs will be available from August 2009 and launch events will be held in spring 2009. The aim of these events is to provide information about the new qualifications and to support their implementation. All these events will be free of charge. Qualifications Managers will be sending information about these events in due course.

Administration	National Certificate at SCQF level 5
Business	National Certificate at SCQF level 4
Art and Design	National Certificate at SCQF level 6
Art and Design: Digital Media	National Progression Awards at SCQF levels 5 and 6
Enterprise and Employability	National Progression Awards at SCQF levels 4 and 5
Hospitality	National Certificate at SCQF level 5
Music	National Certificate at SCQF level 6
Sound Production	National Certificate at SCQF level 6
Technical Theatre	National Certificate at SCQF level 6
Theatre Performance	National Certificate at SCQF level 6

5 Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

SQA's low uptake policy was endorsed by the National Qualifications Steering Group (NQSG) in October 2003. This policy states that *existing National Courses will have a minimum life of five years. Courses at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher which have failed to attract 100 candidates a year after five years and 50 candidates a year at Advanced Higher will be reviewed to determine whether they continue to be offered.*

As a result of these considerations, we have decided that, of the National Courses in this category:

- ◆ some will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2010. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the catalogue
- ◆ some will be retained in the NQ Catalogue, but may be reconsidered in line with the policy at a later date if they remain in the low uptake category

Details of decisions are shown in Appendix Two. If the withdrawal of any of these Courses will cause your centre any difficulties, please contact Linda Murray, Project Manager, at linda.murray@sqa.org.uk, as soon as possible, outlining your concerns. Details of additional Courses which may be considered under the policy next year are also given in Appendix Two.

I would take this opportunity to remind you that, as stated in the *Update on National Qualifications developments* issued in December 2007, the following Courses will be withdrawn from the NQ Catalogue after the 2009 examination diet:

Higher	Design
Higher	Early Years Curriculum
Higher	Visual Arts

We previously advised you that the Advanced Higher Home Economics - Health and Food Technology would be withdrawn after 2009, however, following feedback from stakeholders and given that the other Advanced Higher Home Economics contexts were only recently removed the Course is to be retained until at least diet 2011 to allow the Course the opportunity to better establish itself. In common with other Courses, uptake will be monitored under the policy on low uptake National Courses on an annual basis.

6 New Scottish Standard Web Pages

We want you to have confidence in our qualifications. For this reason, we are bringing everything we do to set, maintain and monitor qualification and assessment standards under the label of the *Scottish Standard*. These new pages provide you with a lot more information about our qualification and assessment processes. You can access the Scottish Standard on our website at **[www.sqa.org.uk\scottishstandard](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scottishstandard)**.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this letter, please contact my colleague Lesley Joyce at **lesley.joyce@sqa.org.uk**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gill Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gill Stewart
Director, Qualifications Development

Appendix One

National Qualification Group Awards available to centres now

Title	Type of NQGA	Level	For further information, contact the Qualifications Manager	
Applied Sciences	National Certificate	5	Pat Robb at pat.robb@sqa.org.uk	
Applied Sciences	National Certificate	6		
Business Improvement Techniques	National Progression Award	5		
Business	National Certificate	5	Alistair Wylie at alistair.wylie@sqa.org.uk	
Building Services Engineering	National Certificate	6	Diane Anderson at diane.anderson@sqa.org.uk	
Built Environment	National Certificate	6		
Civil Engineering	National Certificate	6		
Construction	National Progression Award	5		
Conservation of Masonry	National Progression Award	6		
Dealing with Solvent Emissions in Dry Cleaning	National Progression Award	6		
Roads Maintenance	National Progression Award	5		
Safe Operation of Continuous Batch Washers	National Progression Award	6		
Digital Media Computing	National Certificate	4		Bobby Elliott at bobby.elliott@sqa.org.uk
Digital Media Computing	National Certificate	5		
Digital Media Computing	National Certificate	6		
Digital Literacy	National Progression Award	3		
Internet Technology	National Progression Award	4		
Internet Technology	National Progression Award	5		

National Qualification Group Awards available to centres now

Title	Type of NQGA	Level	For further information, contact the Qualifications Manager
PC Passport: Beginner	National Progression Award	4	Bobby Elliott at bobby.elliott@sqa.org.uk
PC Passport: Intermediate	National Progression Award	5	
PC Passport: Advanced	National Progression Award	6	
Web Design Fundamentals	National Progression Award	5	
Child, Health and Social Care	National Certificate	5	Mary Hainey at mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk
Early Education and Childcare	National Certificate	6	
Health and Social Care	National Certificate	6	
Financial Services	National Progression Award	6	Sharon O'Neil at sharon.o'neil@sqa.org.uk
Hospitality	National Certificate	4	Graeme Findlay at graeme.findlay@sqa.org.uk
Beauty Care and Make-Up	National Certificate	5	Paul Gallacher at paul.gallacher@sqa.org.uk
Cosmetology	National Progression Award	4	
Hairdressing	National Certificate	5	
Playwork and Childcare	National Progression Award	5	
Sport and Fitness	National Certificate	5	
Sports Coaching: available in a range of 25 different sports	National Progression Award	4	
Sports Coaching: available in a range of 25 different sports	National Progression Award	5	
Sports Coaching: available in a range of 17 different sports	National Progression Award	6	

Appendix One

National Qualification Group Awards available to centres now

Title	Type of NQGA	Level	For further information, contact the Qualifications Manager
Security Operations: Door Supervision	National Progression Award	5	Anne Boyd at anne.boyd@sqa.org.uk
Security Operations: Security Guarding	National Progression Award	5	
Security Operations: CCTV (Public Space Surveillance)	National Progression Award	5	
Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees	National Progression Award	5	
Supply Chain Operations	National Progression Award	5	Christine Keenan at christine.keenan@sqa.org.uk
Travel and Tourism	National Certificate	5	
Travel and Tourism	National Certificate	6	

Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

The following Courses have been considered under the agreed policy on low uptake National Courses. They do not meet the criteria for retention and will be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2010. The Units making up these Courses will be retained in the NQ Catalogue. You can see a summary of the policy on our website at www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/lowuptake.doc.

National Courses with low uptake to be removed from the NQ Catalogue after diet 2010 (last examination diet 2010)	
Course	Course
Economics (Intermediate 1)	Plant Propagation (Intermediate 2)
Amenity Horticulture (Intermediate 2)	Fitness and Exercise (Higher)
Design (Intermediate 2)	Professional Patisserie (Higher)
Fitness and Exercise (Intermediate 2)	Russian (Standard Grade)*
Leading Sports Activities (Intermediate 2)	Sports Coaching Studies (Higher)

* Standard Grade Russian is being withdrawn due to very low uptake, however Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Russian are being retained as shown in the table on the following page.

If the withdrawal of any of these Courses will cause your centre any difficulties, please contact Linda Murray, Project Manager, at linda.murray@sqa.org.uk, as soon as possible, outlining your concerns.

I would take this opportunity to remind you that, as stated in the *Update on National Qualifications developments* issued in December 2007, the following Courses will be withdrawn from the NQ Catalogue after the 2009 examination diet:

Design (Higher)

Early Years Curriculum (Higher)

Visual Arts (Higher)

Implementation of policy on low uptake National Courses

The following Courses were also considered under the policy and will be retained in the NQ Catalogue as they meet one or more of the criteria for retention. They may be reconsidered in line with the policy at a later date if they remain in the low uptake category.

National Courses with low uptake to be retained in the NQ Catalogue	
Course	Course
Biotechnology (Intermediate 2, Higher)	Home Economics: Lifestyle and Consumer Technology (Intermediate 2)
Classical Greek (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher, Advanced Higher)	Hospitality – Professional Cookery (Higher)
Classical Studies (Intermediate 1)	Italian (Advanced Higher)
Fabrication and Welding Engineering (Higher)	Latin (Advanced Higher)
Electrical Installation Fundamentals (Intermediate 2)	Managing Environmental Resources (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2)
Geology (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher)	Mechatronics (Higher)
Home Economics: Fashion and Textile Technology (Intermediate 2)	Selling Overseas Tourist Destinations (Intermediate 2)
Russian (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher)	

In addition to the Courses listed above, the following Courses may be considered under the policy next year if they fail to attract 100 candidates:

- Care Issues for Society: Child Care (Intermediate 2)
- Care Issues for Society: Older People (Intermediate 2)
- Selling Scheduled Air Travel (Higher)