

Our ref: TS/EE&C

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 Early Education and Childcare**

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Early Education and Childcare

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Early Education and Childcare.

Diet 2008

The External Assessment reports for diet 2008 can now be found on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk). These include:

- ◆ External Assessment report Higher Early Education and Childcare
- ◆ External Assessment report Higher Play in Early Education and Childcare

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September. 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 generating evidence* (BA0992, June 2007)

The last named document is the most recent update and is now available on our website. A hard-copy is being issued to every centre. In particular, the document clarifies subject-specific requirements as well as guidance on the general principles for generating estimates and submitting appeals.

When generating estimates and compiling evidence for absentee consideration and appeals, you should also refer to:

- ◆ Course Arrangements documents, which include Course grade descriptions
- ◆ Course Assessment specifications
- ◆ SQA question papers, including specimen question papers
- ◆ SQA marking instructions
- ◆ External Assessment report (formerly known as Principal Assessor report), which include information on grade boundaries
- ◆ exemplification materials
- ◆ any other relevant information (eg Course reports, subject update letters).

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.

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

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.

Intermediate 2 Group Award in Child, Health and Social Care

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

Since the start of session 2007/08, all Skills for Work Courses are now mainstream. The Early Education and Childcare Courses, as with all others, have been greatly received and have been highly successful. Full details on these Courses can be found on the Skills for Work pages of SQA's website.

Support network

A support network meeting was hosted by Langside College on 5 November 2008. Karen Sharp, the Senior Verifier for the Skills for Work Courses, spoke about Langside College's experience of delivering them and Mhairi McAlpine, from SQA's Computer-assisted Assessment Team, gave an outline of those elements of the Courses which can be assessed using e-assessment. Delegate feedback indicated that this was a very worthwhile event and expressed a wish to hold these support events twice annually. The next event will be hosted by Cardonald College in February 2009. Details will be sent to all centres in due course.

Our grateful thanks to Langside College and to the Childcare section in particular for their very warm welcome and hospitality.

External verification

All subject specialist Units in the National Certificate at SCQF level 6 will be included in verification visits and in central verification this session. When External Verifiers are arranging visits for Higher National Awards, free-standing Units and placement Units will be included in the materials they will look at. External Verifiers will arrange with staff precisely which Units will be included in the visit. Phase two will include a central verification event. Units considered for verification will be those theory Units that lead to Course assessment in the mandatory section. This will include: *Child Development: Birth to 12 Years* (DM3X 12), *Developmental Theory in Education and Childcare* (DM3Y 12); *Holistic Approaches to Child Health* (DM40 12) and *Play in Early Education and Childcare* (DM41 12). All centres delivering these Units will be included in the verification event.

Classroom Assistant and Support for Learning Assistants Professional Development Awards

A Qualifications Design Team was set up in October 2007 to revise the above awards. The findings of an earlier SQA questionnaire (2005) and the Equal Opportunities Commission consultation (2006) were taken into consideration and the Team developed their thinking from those results. A Consultation paper proposing a

combined award at SCQF level 6 was distributed to all centres and all Local Authorities in mid August with a return date of 20 September 2008. The response to this consultation has been extremely disappointing with few responses from either local authorities, colleges, training providers or other interested organisations. It had been hoped to hold a launch event in November but this was not possible. This means yet another delay in revising these awards; given the importance of this award and the constant requests for this revision this delay is regrettable.

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.

Becoming a Marker

The number of entries for the Early Education and Childcare Course has increased every year since its inception and the marking team is finding it harder to complete marking on time. If you are interested in becoming a Marker for this Course or for the PBNC Play in Early Education and Childcare, please e-mail markers@sqa.org.uk or call our Marker Helpline (0131-561 6825) and a form will be sent 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 these new Courses, but your experience in this subject area will be relevant.

We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. These 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. The experience provides excellent personal and professional development.

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