

30 June 2008

To: Head of centre
cc: SQA Co-ordinator
Secondary schools and FE colleges
Education Authorities
HMIE

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

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Dear Colleague

NQ Geography
NQ Travel and Tourism

This briefing note is intended to offer practical advice and support on the issues being raised by centre staff with SQA, and should be distributed to those staff responsible for Geography and also to those responsible for Travel and Tourism.

It contains information about the following:

1. Changes at Higher and Advanced Higher Geography
2. Additional Support at Higher and Advanced Higher Geography
3. Information about progression for Geography
4. *Tourist Destinations* at Intermediate 2
5. National Certificates in Travel and Tourism

1. Changes at Higher and Advanced Higher Geography

As previously indicated in earlier update letters (June 2007 and December 2007) there are changes to the Course specification for both Higher and Advanced Higher Geography from August 2008. Revised versions of the Courses specifications are now available to download from SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

At Higher level there are minor additions to the 'atmosphere' and 'hydrosphere' topics and candidates will have a free choice from all six topics in paper 2.

At Advanced Higher level the changes are greater. The question paper will be extended in length, the word counts are removed for both pieces of work in the Folio and the topics studied for the Geographical Issue need no longer relate to one of the environmental interactions at Higher. Centres are strongly recommended to replace any paper copies of Course specifications they have with those referred to above.

2. Additional support at Higher and Advanced Higher Geography

Centres are reminded of the exemplification of candidate responses available on the Understanding Standards website. This can be accessed from SQA's website, or directly at www.understandingstandards.org.uk. This site is currently underused and teachers who have used it have found it very useful as a tool for professional development. This is an excellent resource for any teacher or candidate who wishes to understand more fully the standards applied in assessment of work at these levels. Additional exemplification will be added for Advanced Higher level during the autumn term to show a wider range of responses for Folio work.

SQA is planning to hold a Professional Development Workshop for Higher level on Saturday 29 November 2008. This is a change from the original date which was published in the SAGT newsletter. This event will be held in Glasgow. Centres will receive further information about this in the new session when formal invitations to the event will be issued.

3. Progression data for Geography

At its most recent meeting the Geography Assessment Panel asked that data it had collated in relation to progression between levels be made available to centres. This is contained within the Appendix to this letter. Data is provided for progression from Standard Grade to Higher and from Higher to Advanced Higher at the 2007 diet. Data for progression from Intermediate 2 to Higher is not included. Data for this was also provided for the Assessment Panel but was very difficult to interpret due to the size and nature of the cohort which falls within this progression route. This cohort is a mix of S4, S5 and S6 candidates, and the data is also statistically less valid. There was some evidence however that candidates who did very well at Intermediate 2 also performed very well at Higher but that there was a rapid tail off in performance for those candidates only achieving a B Grade or less at Intermediate 2.

4. *Tourist Destinations* at Intermediate 2

This information refers to the *Tourist Destinations* Unit (DM4N 11 at SCQF level 5). It repeats information previously given to centres in the update letter dated 11 December 2007. From August 2008 a revised version of the Unit *Tourist Destinations* will replace the existing version of the Unit. The mandatory content which relates to the external assessment has been simplified. The revised version of the Unit can be downloaded from the Travel and Tourism page of SQA's website. All centres will have to use this revised Unit from August 2008. Specimen questions are provided on the Travel and Tourism page of SQA's website and revised NABs can be accessed from the password protected secure site. Current NABs will not be valid for this revised Unit and should be replaced.

5. National Certificates in Travel and Tourism (SCQF levels 5 and 6)

Two new National Certificates in Travel and Tourism, one at SCQF level 5 and one at level 6, have now been validated. These will be available for centres to use from August 2008. Details of these qualifications and the launch events for them will be sent separately to centres. These awards are intended for use in further education colleges and do not affect Units or Courses delivered in schools.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith H Wright', written in a cursive style.

Keith H Wright
Qualifications Manager — Social Subjects

Encs

Progression: Standard Grade to Higher

Progression from SG (1:1) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	975	56.1%
B	432	24.8%
C	245	14.1%
D	48	2.8%
Fail	39	2.2%
Total	1739	100.0%

Progression from SG (1:2) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	75	17.9%
B	121	28.8%
C	132	31.4%
D	47	11.2%
Fail	45	10.7%
Total	420	100.0%

Progression from SG (2:1) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	103	19.3%
B	160	30.0%
C	141	26.4%
D	72	13.5%
Fail	58	10.9%
Total	534	100.0%

Progression from SG (2:2) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	102	9.0%
B	222	19.6%
C	357	31.5%
D	179	15.8%
Fail	274	24.2%
Total	1134	100.0%

Progression from SG (2:3) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	4	3.4%
B	16	13.7%
C	37	31.6%
D	20	17.1%
Fail	40	34.2%
Total	117	100.0%

Progression from SG (3:2) to Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	5	1.9%
B	36	13.9%
C	76	29.3%
D	44	17.0%
Fail	98	37.8%
Total	259	100.0%

These progression tables show the numbers and percentages of candidates who achieved KU and ES grades at Standard Grade and the performance of the same group of candidates at Higher level. For example, of the candidates who achieved 1:1 at Standard Grade and who progressed to Higher 975 (56.1%) achieved a grade A at Higher. Candidates achieving 1:1 tend to perform well at Higher level but performance tails off sharply if a Grade 2 in either element has been awarded. There is no apparent correlation between performance in a specific element and achievement at Higher level.

Progression: Higher to Advanced Higher

Progression from Higher (A1) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	34	37.4%
B	35	38.5%
C	20	22.0%
D	2	2.2%
Fail	0	0.0%
Total	91	100.0%

Progression from Higher (B4) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	9	5.3%
B	37	21.6%
C	81	47.4%
D	32	18.7%
Fail	12	7.0%
Total	171	100.0%

A and B Grade candidates at Higher achieved good levels of success at Advanced Higher. Grade A candidates in particular did well and it was from this group that most Grade A candidates at Advanced Higher came. Over 60% of candidates gaining at C Grade at Higher achieved at C or better at Advanced Higher.

Progression from Higher (A2) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	51	13.7%
B	155	41.8%
C	125	33.7%
D	24	6.5%
Fail	16	4.3%
Total	371	100.0%

Progression from Higher (C5) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	2	3.2%
B	12	19.4%
C	23	37.1%
D	12	19.4%
Fail	13	21.0%
Total	62	100.0%

Progression from Higher (B3) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	4	4.6%
B	26	29.9%
C	42	48.3%
D	11	12.6%
Fail	4	4.6%
Total	87	100.0%

Progression from Higher (C6) to Adv Higher		
Result	Total	%
A	0	0.0%
B	8	13.6%
C	29	49.2%
D	9	15.3%
Fail	13	22.0%
Total	59	100.0%