

Our ref: Geog/AH

12 February 2009

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

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Dear Colleague

Advanced Higher Geography: Removal of word count in Folio

I would be grateful if you would pass this information to the members of staff responsible for this area.

It has come to the attention of SQA that the removal of the word count in both the Geographical Study and the Geographical Issue Essay is being interpreted by some centres and candidates as implying that longer pieces of work than in previous years are now required. **This is not the case.** It remains perfectly likely that a candidate who writes between 1,500 and 2,000 words for the Essay and 3,000 words for the Study could obtain a very high mark. The removal of the word count was introduced to deal with difficulties Markers had encountered in its application. **There was no intention to suggest longer pieces of work are now necessary.** Candidates who significantly exceed the maximum limit of previous years will not be penalised but centres should reinforce to them that very lengthy Studies and Essays are neither expected or required. Markers are looking for well presented, analytical pieces or work which have a sound geographical basis. The marking instructions make no reference to the word count and candidates do not require to write any more than around 1,500 – 2,000 words for the Essay or 3,000 words for the Study.

Should you require further clarification please contact either myself as detailed above or the Qualifications Officer responsible for Geography, Tahir Mohammed (tel: 0845 213 5499).

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform Geography teachers that I have now moved to another section in SQA and will no longer have day to day responsibility for Geography. A new Qualifications Manager with similar responsibilities will be appointed very shortly. It has been a privilege to represent Scottish Geography and its qualifications in SQA over the past few years and I

wish you every success in the times ahead as Scottish education enters yet another challenging era.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith H Wright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'K'.

Keith H Wright
Qualifications Development Manager
Curriculum for Excellence