

21 October 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools,
special schools and further education colleges)
Scottish Executive
HMIE
Directors of Education
Mathematics Assessment Panel members
Higher Education Institutions — Department of Education

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

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications update — Mathematics

This letter provides an update on National Qualifications and should be passed to the member of staff responsible for Mathematics.

The following items are included:

- 1 Foundation Certificate in Personal Finance (FCPF)
- 2 Assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs – use of calculators in paper I Mathematics question papers
- 3 Revised National Assessment Bank items
- 4 Advanced Higher Applied Mathematics: Mechanics and Statistics
- 5 Advanced Higher Mathematics Arrangements document
- 6 Statistics on progression

1 Foundation Certificate in Personal Finance (FCPF)

All secondary schools and further education colleges are now automatically approved to deliver this Customised Award for session 2009/10. The FCPF is offered in partnership with the *ifs School of Finance* and benchmarked against Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4).

If you are interested in this award, further information including Unit descriptors can be found on the Personal Finance subject page of SQA's website:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/36556.html

This page can also be navigated to via the NQ subjects drop-down menu.

2 Assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs — use of calculators in paper 1 Mathematics question papers

It is possible under certain circumstances for candidates with specific learning needs to use a calculator in examinations which normally prohibit the use of calculators. The aim of SQA's Assessment Arrangements policy is to make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage.

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act, candidates who have been clearly identified as having a disability which means that they are unable to do simple arithmetic calculations (sometimes referred to as dyscalculia) may have the use of a basic, non-scientific calculator in paper 1 of the Mathematics examination.

This is deemed to be a reasonable adjustment to make for these candidates to allow them access to the assessment and to demonstrate their ability/attainment in the more advanced aspects/concepts of mathematics being assessed.

SQA would wish to ensure that the provision of this assessment arrangement does not compromise the credibility of the award but also that individual candidates are provided with equal and fair opportunities to demonstrate their ability to achieve the set standard. To this end, a request for this arrangement will only be considered on the basis of clear evidence of the candidates' identified (dyscalculic) difficulties and their current need for such an arrangement.

Guidance on the evidence required by SQA to support a request for an assessment arrangement can be found on the following webpage:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

3 Revised National Assessment Bank items

Revisions have been drafted for all Mathematics NABs from Access 3 to Advanced Higher. It was not possible to publish all of these in time for the start of session 2009/10. The revised NABs will instead be released one level at a time, starting with Higher. Centres will be notified as and when the NABs for each level are published.

We appreciate that this publishing timescale may not accommodate the timing of centres' assessments, so it will not be mandatory to make use of any of the revised NABs during this session. If, however, your centre is subject to verification this session, it must be clearly indicated in all submitted materials which version of each NAB has been used.

4 Advanced Higher Applied Mathematics: Mechanics and Statistics

Centres are reminded that candidates undertaking Applied Mathematics at Advanced Higher must be entered into **either** the Mechanics version of the Course (C204 13) **or** the Statistics version (C202 13).

Entering candidates into both versions of the Course within a single session is not a valid option. If any such parallel entries are submitted, SQA Data Management staff will contact the submitting centre to rectify this situation.

5 Advanced Higher Mathematics Arrangements document

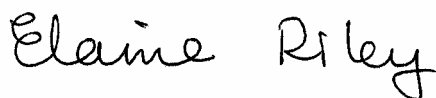
The Advanced Higher Mathematics Arrangements document has been amended to provide further exemplification of the depth of treatment appropriate to grades A and B. This latest (sixth) edition of the Arrangements document will be available to download from the Mathematics subject page of SQA's website from December 2009.

6 Statistics on progression

The Mathematics update letter traditionally includes an appendix detailing progression data across different levels. As this letter has been published prior to the conclusion of the appeals process for diet 2009, finalised data is not yet available. This data will therefore be published at a later date.

I hope you find the information in this letter helpful. Should you require any further information or wish to submit comments or suggestions regarding Mathematics qualifications please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Elaine Riley
Qualifications Manager
Science & Technology