

17 November 2008

To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary schools and further education colleges
Principal Teachers and Teachers of Physical Education

Cc: HMIE
LEA contacts
SQA Customer Support Managers

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

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications — Physical Education update

The contents of this letter should be passed to the teachers/lecturers responsible for Physical Education.

The newsletter updates staff on issues from last session (2007/08) and highlights important information for the current session (2008/09) for National Qualifications in Physical Education.

I hope the contents of this letter are helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact either Lee McHugh (tel: 0845 213 5481, e-mail: lee.mchugh@sqa.org.uk) or myself at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Jennifer di Folco

Jennifer di Folco
Qualifications Manager
National Qualifications — Physical Education

National Qualifications — Physical Education

1. Standard Grade DVD

The following is information and clarification about the DVDs used in the Standard Grade Evaluating element of the examination at Foundation, General and Credit levels.

Teachers are reminded that the DVD for each level will run for one hour **approximately** and candidates will have a minimum of 20 minutes break between levels. Centres are advised to ensure that the Foundation examination starts on time.

A digital clock has been added to the Knowledge and Understanding section for each level of the standard time DVD. This should be allowed to run its full time to indicate to the candidates the time allocated for the KU section.

We continue to advise teachers to check DVD equipment and to make use of the 20 minutes available for checking the DVDs prior to the examination. Evidence has shown that the DVDs play best on DVD equipment and that difficulties can arise when centres attempt to play them on computers. It is worth noting that the quality of the picture can also be reduced when the DVD is played through a data projector.

In agreement with our Assessment Material team, we would advise all centres to request a minimum of two examination DVDs. This would ensure a back-up was available if there were problems with the first DVD and would also avoid delays to the examination while alternative assessment arrangements were being made.

2. Internal and External Assessment reports

Principal Assessors and Senior Verifiers and their examining teams are thanked for their efforts in delivering a successful diet. The Internal and External Assessment reports, which will be published on our website (www.sqa.org.uk), are an invaluable source of advice and good practice. Centres are urged most strongly to access this material.

3. Exemplification

A further set of exemplification of Advanced Higher materials from diet 2008 will be available shortly. Centres are reminded that these will be in electronic form and can only be downloaded by SQA Co-ordinators.

4. National Assessment Bank (NAB)

Additional NABs for Fitness and Exercise PBNC have been published on the Sport and Leisure page.

These NABs are for *Human Physiology in the Development of Performance: An Introduction* and are available for Intermediate 2 and Higher levels.

This material is published in electronic form and can be downloaded only by the SQA Co-ordinator in your centre.

5. Understanding Standards event

SQA's Understanding Standards programme has been a great success since its inception in terms of bringing teaching colleagues together to learn about SQA's standards and how they are applied to specific subject areas and levels.

This year saw the first Understanding Standards Event for Physical Education Advanced Higher level. This was held at Stirling Management Centre and was a very successful day.

The main focus of the day was dedicated to the promotion of understanding standards in the NABs and the external component of the Advanced Higher Physical Education Course: the Project Report. These aims were achieved through presentations and workshops where delegates had the opportunity to mark candidates' NABs and Project Reports from the 2008 diet of examinations. There was also the opportunity for delegates to discuss the rationale and detail of the assessments with the presenters.

In addition, all delegates received a pack of material which they can share with staff in their centres.

6. Support materials

Support documentation is now available, on the Physical Education page of SQA's website, for the following levels:

Standard Grade

A Marking Guide to Evaluating — these guidelines have been produced to support the assessment of Standard Grade Physical Education at all levels. Criteria have been designed to clarify acceptable candidate responses to questions in the Evaluating section where they are asked to describe actions or performances. Guidance on marking the Evaluation section is also given.

Knowledge and Understanding Content — this document details areas and concepts which centres should expect to be tested in the external examination.

Higher

Detailed Marking Instructions for Centres — this document gives the detailed marking instructions for all the key concepts within the Higher Physical Education Course. It can be used when compiling marking instructions for use in prelims where SQA question papers questions have been selected.

Detailed Marking Instructions Pro Forma — this is a template for use when compiling marking instructions. The relevant sections from the above document can simply be cut and pasted into this pro forma.

Advanced Higher

General Advice notes — the advice given in this document is intended to aid staff by providing possible approaches in the implementation of the Advanced Higher Physical Education Course.

Managing the Project Report — this document is intended to support staff in their understanding of the discrete sections of the Project Report and gives advice on how to guide candidates to integrate the work already completed in the internal Units.

7. Advanced Higher Project Report word count

As detailed in the Arrangements documents, ‘the Project Report should normally be of 2,000 and not exceeding 3,500 words in length, excluding any explanatory text relating to supporting materials, for example video and other appendices.’

Candidates will not be penalised if they should exceed these guidelines, within reason. However, centres are advised to assist candidates to ensure that they stay as close to these guidelines as possible

8. Central Verification

Verification of Analysis and Development of Performance

In order to support centres with the quality assurance demands of the Course it is recommended that centres enter the Analysis and Development of Performance Unit with a completion date of March. Many centres choose the Performance Unit for this completion date, but given this Unit has visiting Verification, the Analysis and Development of Performance Unit would be more appropriate.

Centres will continue to be verified centrally in April of each session. The number of centres verified in 2009 will be increased to support centres in the delivery of the Unit.

Verification of Performance

The Performance element for all Physical Education Courses continues to be a major strength for the majority of candidates. Centres are reminded that they should use the Performance Criteria, as set out in SQA’s Performance NAB, in conjunction with the case study videos which exemplify the national performance standards across all levels over a range of activities.

9. A Curriculum for Excellence update

Consultation on the next generation of national qualifications

As colleagues will know the Scottish Government is currently finalising its consultation on the next generation of National Qualifications for Scotland as part of its Curriculum for Excellence programme. The consultation period ended on 31 October 2008. Thereafter responses will be analysed by Ipsos Mori and a report

will be made to the Government. It is anticipated that the Government's formal response will be published in the spring of 2009. SQA is currently establishing a new 'Curriculum for Excellence' Qualifications Development Team to lead the development of new and revised qualifications emerging from the consultation.

Action research projects

Following the success of last year's projects and their showcase at the Scottish Learning Festival in September, SQA are delighted to announce that six new projects have recently been commissioned. The six — at Bathgate Academy, Brannock Academy, Cumnock Academy, Kersland School, North Lanarkshire Council and St Roch's Secondary— involve participant led exploration of assessment, attainment and achievement through existing SQA qualifications with a view to informing innovation and change within Curriculum for Excellence. Projects include developments in online assessment; Supply Chain Management and Core Skills; vocational approaches to modern languages; and personal development.

For further detail on any of this work please contact John Allan, Policy and New Products team (e-mail: john.allan@sqa.org.uk).