

December 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinator (secondary schools, FE colleges)
Directors of Education
SCIS
Business Development Managers

For the attention of all staff responsible for the delivery of Sociology

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

Contact: Mary Hainey at Glasgow
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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications in Sociology

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member(s) of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Sociology.

Diet 2009

Centres are advised to access the External Assessment reports for Sociology at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels for diet 2009. These reports which were formerly known as Principal Assessor reports, contain essential advice and feedback for all teachers/lecturers delivering National Qualifications in Sociology.

The following reports can be found on the Sociology pages of SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk):

- ◆ External Assessment Report Intermediate 2 Sociology
- ◆ External Assessment Report Higher Sociology

Overall results were good in 2009 indicating that staff and candidates have settled well into the examination structure at both Higher and Intermediate 2. There was, however, a slight drop in candidate numbers for 2009.

Marking instructions

The question papers and finalised marking instructions for the 2009 Course assessments at Higher and Intermediate 2 levels are now available on the NQ Sociology page of SQA's website. It is hoped that these will be of benefit to staff when preparing a prelim paper or when submitting evidence for appeals.

Appeals

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. There were still a number of problems found in evidence submitted for appeals. The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ evidence submitted did not match the estimate made
- ◆ marking in evidence submitted was leniently applied

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates. It is also important to remind centres of the clarity required when identifying sources. Centres must ensure that details of the sources of each prelim question are included with appeals evidence. For example: Question 2 – SQA QP 2007 – Paper 1 or Section 1.

Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following document prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* (BA5212, November 2009)

The document — *Estimates, Absentees and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on Evidence Requirements* has undergone revision and has been posted on SQA's website. The revised version clarifies what subject specific evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper based Courses.

Understanding Standards

Work is currently being undertaken on exemplar materials for Intermediate 2 and Higher Sociology for the Understanding Standards website (www.understandingstandards.org.uk). These materials will give centres an accessible, definitive and comprehensive resource which enables them to understand the standards used by SQA when assessing their candidates' work and allows them to develop their skills in working with these standards through a series of interactive exercises with feedback.

Assessment Panel

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet annually to look at issues arising in Sociology as well as the other social sciences subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel via SQA officers.

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 contact me either by telephone on 0845 213 5502 or by e-mail to mary.hainey@sqa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



Mary Hainey
Qualifications Manager

NQ Humanities and Social Sciences