

Autumn 2011

To: SQA Co-ordinator
LEA
Directors of Education
Customer Accounts Managers
All Centres

Action by Recipient
Response required
Note and pass on
✓ None – update/information only

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Dear Colleague

National Qualifications Update — Craft & Design, Graphic Communication, Technological Studies, Practical Craft Skills (Woodworking and Engineering) and Construction Crafts Skills for Work

The contents of this update, which provides information and advice to centres in relation to National Qualifications in Craft & Design, Graphic Communication, Technological Studies, Practical Craft Skills (Woodworking and Engineering) and Construction Crafts Skills for Work Courses at all levels, should be passed to the members of staff responsible for these subjects.

SQA Appointees

We would like to express our gratitude and extend our thanks to all those who have undertaken duties in session 2010-11. We appreciate the work that all the teams carry out and look forward to session 2011-12.

Marking and Verification are extremely important and highly valued components of the education system in Scotland. Many teachers carry out these roles as part of their Continuous Professional Development or to further their own understanding of the assessment process. If you are interested in becoming a Marker or Verifier for next year's diet of examinations and have at least three years experience of teaching in the relevant subject and level, please complete an appointee application form, which can be downloaded from the Appointee Management page of SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk/am, and return it to am@sqa.org.uk.

Comment [d1]: Professional

Final Presentations - Standard Grade

As you will be aware, our Standard Grade Courses are ending and the final examinations will be in May/ June 2013 - this means that your final groups of learners on

these two-year Courses will have started in August 2011. No learner should begin a Standard Grade Course in August 2012.

External and Internal Assessment Reports

These reports will be available from the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk) in early November. It is essential that you take time to read through these reports as they contain pertinent feedback on Diet 2010-11. The reports contain advice for centres about the areas in which learners performed well and in which they found difficulties and one point that was referred to in many of the External Assessment Reports was the examination technique of the learners – the reports make specific reference to this but a common point was that learners were answering ‘Describe/ Explain’ questions with responses that were more appropriate for ‘State’ questions and, as such, were not attracting marks.

Verification

It is a condition of approval to offer SQA qualifications that robust internal verification procedures are in place, implemented and documented at your centre. Please ensure that these procedures are adhered to.

Digital Question Papers

As you will be aware, your centre can request additional support for learners with an additional assessment need (for example the provision of a scribe to assist writing). With these requests, there are often instances where learners wish to type their responses because of their additional assessment need, however you may not be aware that we are also able to provide many Question Papers in a digital format – a PDF file of the actual Question Paper where learners can type their responses directly into the spaces for the answers (this is then printed, it cannot be saved, by yourselves and submitted with the Question Papers of the other learners). If this is something that you think may be more appropriate for learners in this position than typing responses onto a blank word processor document, then please feel free to ask for it as part of the normal process for additional assessment/ support requests. Further information (including a list of all subjects/ levels where these are available and also examples of past digital papers) can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/30030.html>. Please note that Graphic Communication Question Papers are **not** available in this format because of the assessment of manual Drawing Abilities.

Construction Crafts (Skills for Work)

A new optional Unit has been developed for inclusion with the Intermediate 1 Construction Crafts Course – Stonemasonry FF33 10. This Unit is now available for use in centres.

Additionally, a new suite of Courses has been developed for the Building Services Engineering sector beginning with an Intermediate 1 Skills for Work Course – Building Services Engineering (SfW) C278 10. Full details on this Course can be found on the

Skills for Work area of our website and information relating to the other Courses in this suite, which are managed by Diane Anderson (diane.anderson@sqa.org.uk), can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/36204.html>.

Graphic Communication

Question Papers – Advanced Higher

As you'll be aware, we sometimes make minor alterations to the Advanced Higher Questions Paper (eg. some years, there may be an additional worksheet that the learners use or annotate). Could you please ensure that learners are advised to put their names on every sheet that they write upon and to submit an additional worksheet (should there be one) with the rest of their Question-Answer sheets.

Half Marks

Some years ago, we removed half marks from our Graphic Communication Question Papers. Please note, as advised in last year's Update Letter, that from diet 2010-11 onwards we will not be accepting half marks in centre evidence – this means that should these feature in a prelim it may be deemed not to be a comparable Instrument of Assessment or to have an inappropriate set of Marking Instructions. If this is the case, the evidence provided will not be able to support an appeal.

Drawing Questions

There is no requirement for our Question Papers to have a specific number of drawing questions although we tend to have a similar number each year. Please note that in diet 2011-12 the Advanced Higher Question Paper will have four drawing questions (although the overall allocation of marks for Drawing Abilities will be consistent with previous Question Papers).

Courseworks

The Higher Coursework item is the Thematic Presentation and as part of this task the learners must note their theme on the front cover of the Student Record and the theme should be followed throughout – the theme must be clear and all work must directly relate to it. Work that is outwith the theme, tenuously linked or not directly related to the theme cannot be marked as correct and, as such, the theme should be carefully chosen. There is no requirement to work within a theme at Intermediate 1 or Intermediate 2 (Graphic Presentation Folio), however many centres have found that a thematic approach works very well and helps to prepare learners who will undertake the Higher Course in subsequent years.

Also, please ensure that you and your learners are using the current versions of the Guidance documents and Student Records as minor alterations are made annually following our verification exercise

British Standards

Throughout our Question Papers, we will only ask learners to identify British Standards symbols that we have noted on our guidance sheet (which can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/40314.html>). This guidance sheet was introduced as we felt that it was inappropriate for learners to memorise hundreds of symbols. Please ensure that your learners are familiar with this document as, in addition to having the only

symbols that we will ask about, it also contains the only answers that we will accept for the identification of the symbols.

PrintIT

The PrintIT competition, run by the Sector Skills Council ProsSkills has been mapped to our Standard Grade Course and many of the aspects of it can be used to meet the needs of the Illustration & Presentation Folio (it can also cover some of the requirements of the Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 Courses). Last years competition produced some superb work and the finalists (centres and learners) all received excellent prizes from the industry sponsors. If you are interested in this, please go to <http://www.printitScotland.proskills.co.uk/> for more information.

Technological Studies

Half Marks

As part of the ongoing exercise to remove half marks from our Question Papers there will be a change to the Higher and Advanced Higher Technological Studies Question Papers in session 2011-12 onwards. We conducted an exercise to determine the most appropriate way to remove half marks from these Courses (as we did with Graphic Communication some years ago) and determined that the most equitable solution would be to increase the mark allocations for these Question Papers from 100 to 200 marks. As such, Question Papers in session 2011-12 will consist of 200 marks and will have no half marks applied in the Marking Instructions.

Verification

Please ensure that you are using the revised National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials when undertaking your learners Unit assessments.

Practical Craft Skills

Verification

All Unit evidence must be retained for three weeks after the completion date to allow for Unit Verification if selected. Once three weeks have passed by the completion date, you can feel free to hand the work back to your learners.

Projects

As an alternative to the Projects available on the secure area of our website (which also include some new additions), centres can still use Projects of their own design but we strongly recommend that these are prior-verified. Prior-verification currently has no charge and is simply a case of forwarding your Project (drawing etc, not a physical artifact) along with the prior-verification form to us and we will pass it to our Senior Verifier to check. Full details, along with the prior verification form can be found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/21304.html>.

Online Exhibition

Work continues with our online exhibition of Practical Craft Skills and Craft & Design work and the first submissions are available to view at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45569.html>. This resource is only as good as the submissions that we receive and we are eager to add as many examples of work as we can. If you

would like to submit work for inclusion in the online exhibition, please go to the above link where you will find instructions related to this.

Craft & Design

We have been made aware of some instances where there is very little design evident in learners work (ie, all learners in a centre have produced the same item). Please ensure that the learners complete their own Project Folio before moving on to building their final Project based upon this.

Product Design

Product Design has been addressed in a separate Update Letter.

Curriculum for Excellence

Work is ongoing in the development of the new Curriculum for Excellence qualifications and the Curriculum Area Review Group (CARG) and the Qualification Design Teams (QDTs) have met several times. All information, including documentation in draft form, will be published on our website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42545.html>

Should you require any further information regarding the content of this letter or any other matter relating to our SG/ NQ Technical/ Technology/ Construction Courses, please contact us using the details provided below.

Comment [d2]: Uppercase "C"

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Yours faithfully



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