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To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges
Cc: LEA Contacts, SQA Business Development Managers, CfE Liaison Team

National Qualifications — Drama

Please pass this to the member of staff responsible for Drama.

This is an update on new National Qualifications in Drama and contains important information for session 2013-2014 to help you prepare for the 2014 examination of both the current Drama qualifications (Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher) and the new National 5 Drama qualification. The focus of this update is key dates and external assessment (Visiting Assessment).

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Please pass on this information to your Drama teaching staff. If you would like to discuss any of the contents of this update with us, please contact Manuela De Freitas (contact details above) or myself on 0345 213 6811 or email mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk



Mary McDonald
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**1. 2013-2014 Drama External Assessment
Timetable and Year Planner**

February 2014 – May 2014	The Visiting Examination period (Practical exams) starts on 17 February 2014 for Intermediate 1 and 2, National 5 and Higher. The Visiting Examination period ends on 2 May 2014 .
May 2014	<u>Thursday 15 May 2014 (morning)</u> Question Paper Examinations for : <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Intermediate 1 Drama◆ Intermediate 2 Drama◆ National 5 Drama◆ Higher Drama◆ Advanced Higher Drama

September 2013	2013 Marking Instructions published on www.sqa.org.uk
October 2013	1 October: centres receive notification of National 3–5 Drama selections for Verification for Round 1 2013 Internal Assessment (Senior Verifier) Reports published
November 2013	4 November: uplift date for National 3–5 Drama Round 1 Verification materials 2013 External Assessment (Principal Assessor) Reports published
December 2013	2 December: centres receive notification of National 3–5 Drama selections for Verification for Round 2
January 2014	15 January uplift date for National 3–5 Drama Round 2 Verification materials 2014 Visiting Examination preparation starts: <i>Instructions to Centres</i> document and Candidate Mark Sheets are issued to centres
February 2014	Visiting Assessors contact centres to arrange visits for Practical exams 2014 Visiting Examination period starts for Intermediate 1 and 2, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Drama
March 2014	3 March: centres receive notification of National 3–5 Drama selections for Verification for Round 3 Verification of Drama Units (Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher, Advanced Higher). 25 March: uplift date for materials from centres selected for Verification. (Centres are informed in advance if they have been selected.)
April 2014	Verification of Drama Units
May 2014	2014 Visiting Examination ends

2. National 5 Drama — Visiting Assessment of Performance

There is a new assessment model for the external assessment of Performance in N5 Drama, and the following questions and answers have been compiled to provide a guide to this.

What is the new assessment model for the N5 Drama Performance exam?

This is a Visiting Assessment model like Higher and Advanced Higher Drama, but the main difference for N5 is that the Visiting Assessor (VA) will assess a sample of 12 candidates (or in centres where there are less than 12 candidates, the VA will assess all candidates). This is an assessment model where SQA's VA and the centre assessor* mark live performances simultaneously and collaboratively.

* the Drama teacher who acts as the centre assessor (it is up to centres to decide on which member of staff carries out this role).

How much time is allocated to this assessment visit and when will it take place?

The N5 Drama Visiting Assessment period is from 17 February 2014 to 2 May 2014 and one day is allocated to each centre. This is a very wide window and you will be able to negotiate your one-day visit with your VA, at a time which suits you and your candidates best.

Is this is same as Verification?

No, this assessment model is quite different from Verification. Verification is about Units and confirming the internal assessment decisions made by centres: in common with all subjects, Verification for N5 Drama now takes place in three rounds during the year. Visiting Assessment is for the external components of a Course; in the case of N5 Drama, the Performance. Marks are assigned to this and this counts towards the overall mark and grade for a Course.

Who selects the sample of 12 candidates?

The centre selects the sample. The VA is looking for a range of candidates and a possible range of production roles. Being in control of the sample selection means that you can plan in a practical way and it means that you have up until the day of the Visiting Assessment to finalise the sample and substitute other candidates in the run-up to the day.

How does the process work?

An SQA-appointed Visiting Assessor (VA) will be allocated to your school for one day (regardless of how many candidates you have). The process starts with the initial phone conversation with your VA to set up the assessment date. You can discuss the potential sample with the VA then and planning can start. On the day, the VA and the centre assessor will mark the sample of 12 collaboratively and the VA will guide the centre staff to the national standard. The agreed marks will stand for the sample of 12, and these marks are final.

Please note that the **Preparation for Performance** is also part of the assessment day. Candidates in the sample will complete their Preparation for Performance in advance of the VA visit and then the VA and the centre assessor will mark these collaboratively and marks will be agreed.

What happens to the candidates who are not in the sample?

As soon as possible after the VA visit, the centre assessor will assess all the other candidates in the group according to the national standards endorsed by the VA and in line with the assessment decisions made and the marks allocated to the sample of 12. The timing of this is up to each centre, but best practice would be to do this as soon as possible after the VA visit while it is fresh in your mind and so that no candidate is either advantaged or disadvantaged by time passing, eg you could choose to assess the rest of the group the following day or within the week. However, all assessments for all candidates must take place within two weeks of the VA visit (and no later than two weeks after the visit).

What if a candidate is absent during that two week period?

If the candidate has continued to be absent because of, for example, a medical condition and your two-week period for assessment has passed, you would enter into the new Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service. This new service will run before results are published and you would submit evidence for that candidate. For full details see the document *Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Guidance for Centres* (published October 2013), publication code: FA6673.

When will there be more information about this?

In preparation for annual Visiting Assessment, SQA publishes the document *Instructions to Centres* which contains comprehensive instructions and guidance about documentation, processes and timescales. You will receive this in early 2014.

In summary, what are the advantages of this new way of working in external assessment for N5 Drama?

- ◆ The model of assessing a sample of 12 candidates has operated successfully in Dance and in some other subjects for years. Teachers find this supportive and developmental; national standards are shared and understood. It is a collaborative marking model where SQA works with and supports teachers.
- ◆ This type of Visiting Assessment means that for N5 Drama every centre is visited each year: this is different from Verification which samples centres from year to year.
- ◆ The timing of the Visiting Assessment visit can be negotiated to suit each centre (February-May).
- ◆ The centre selects the candidates for the sample and this will give additional flexibility in terms of what is most practicable.