

National Qualifications Support Team

Modern Languages



Action grid from meeting held on 3 November 2014

Ref.	Agenda/minute title	Notes of discussion/action agreed	Action	Date
1	Roles and remit of NQST confidentiality	<p>Qualifications Manager, Jim McDonald (JMcD) outlined the function and advisory role of the NQST. Members were encouraged to gather feedback from their own networks to inform the group.</p> <p>The focus is at present primarily on National 3, 4 and 5, with the addition of the new Higher next year.</p>	All	Ongoing
2	NQST Quickr place demonstration	<p>Qualifications Officer Quroum Beg (QB) demonstrated the NQST Quickr place — a dedicated secure online forum for this team.</p>		
3	Overview of introduction of new National Courses and Award, SCQF levels 3–5	<p>JMcD drew attention to the NQ Subject Update 2014.</p> <p>Members were encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Disseminate information regarding the new AH Specialist Study Unit (this Unit will continue to contribute to discussion in External Speaking Assessment) ◆ Make colleagues aware of structural changes to question and answer booklets for Reading and Writing (National 5) and Reading and Directed Writing (New Higher) ◆ Encourage colleagues to book on to Understanding Standards Events for National 5 Course Assessment. <p>Details can be found on SQA's website</p>	All	Nov 14

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		<p>National 3, 4 and 5 Statistics</p> <p>Concern was expressed regarding the decline in uptake in MLs across National 3, 4, and 5 compared with SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 in 2013.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the HMI Advice Note about English, Maths and Modern Languages to be compulsory until the end of S3. Members to disseminate.</p> <p>SQA officers to investigate whether other subjects (eg History, Geography, Music) have also seen a decline in 2014.</p> <p>Members highlighted the complexity of teaching bi-level/tri-level classes, with resultant drop in National 3 entries.</p> <p>The value of Languages for the Life and Work Award and the Languages for Work Units (across all levels – particularly at Higher and AH) was highlighted. Members to disseminate.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>SQA officers</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jan 15</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
4	Review of diet 2014 — Course Reports	<p>A number of common messages were noted across the N5 MLs Course Reports.</p> <p>Members made a number of observations and recommendations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Writing Task — unpredictable bullet points were challenging; in some instances candidates were over-prepared ◆ Candidates need to be introduced at earlier stages to listening to a dialogue ◆ Link between listening and talking needs to be highlighted as good practice ◆ It is recommended that practitioners use the target language as much as possible in classroom ◆ Candidates require training in exam techniques and dictionary skills ◆ Useful advice can be gleaned from reports for other languages, as well as those taught in one's own centre 		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Course Reports require to be as detailed as they are — many centres now have faculties rather than discrete MLs departments ◆ Reports need to be disseminated as widely as possible — how can this be best done? ◆ SCILT offered to provide a link on its website to SQA Course Reports 	All SCILT	Ongoing
5	2013–14 Quality Assurance Activities/Verification — Key Messages and proposals for 2014–15	<p>JMcD provided an update on 2014–15 verification activity. Members raised various concerns regarding verification, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Uncertainty on the part of practitioners and/or candidates regarding how much information is required to meet assessment standards for Unit assessment ◆ When is 'holistic' holistic enough? ◆ The challenge for candidates in doing formative assessments, marked holistically, and then summative assessments in which marks are based on discrete pieces of information ('State two things', etc) ◆ 'Natural element' in IACCA — forthcoming exemplification will be welcomed ◆ Spontaneity assessed at National 5 and the new Higher will make them more like AH ◆ Is it the case to keep 'natural element' mark as separate, or in time, might the 'natural element' be looked for as inherent right through the marks? 		
6	AOB	Members were encouraged to use the forum to discuss, raise concerns, etc.	All	Ongoing