**Education Children & Young People Committee – 25 September 2024**

**NQ 24: Higher History**

**Lines to take:**

**Standardisation and Quality Assurance of Marking:**

* Draft Marking Instructions are produced by the Sr Marking Team in advance of assessments.
* Draft Marking Instructions are discussed and altered (where necessary at a Standardisation Meeting (Principal Assessor, Deputy Principal Assessor, Sr Team Leaders and Team Leaders in attendance.
  + Live Candidate scripts are used to inform discussions.
  + Marking Instructions are as detailed as possible to inform Markers and ensure consistency.
  + Briefing (Exemplification), Practice and Qualification scripts are produced for the Markers’ Briefing and Marker qualification.
  + The Briefing, Practice and Qualification scripts and Marking Instructions are discussed and checked by additional Team Leaders (non-core) during the second part of the Standardisation event.
* Senior Team begins marking to provide further insight prior to the Markers’ Briefing.
* Markers’ Briefings: Assignment – face to face, Question Paper 1 – online, Question Paper 2 – face to face.
* Markers’ Briefing delivered by Principal Assessor to all Markers.
  + Marking Instructions are presented and clarified.
  + Briefing and Practice scripts are discussed in Marking Teams led by a Team Leader.
  + Senior Team Leaders are on hand to answer additional questions and clarification.
* Markers complete Practice scripts and enter marks into e-marking system. Practice scripts provide markers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the question papers and Marking Instructions. Feedback is available through comments at item level to allow markers to self-assess and to refine their marking.
* Markers complete Qualification scripts and must successfully mark to become a “live marker”. Qualification scripts are discussed with their Team Leader who provides feedback.
* Marker Check process is completed prior to Awarding.
  + A sample of each Markers allocation is checked. Complete remarks can be a result when a Marker is found to be out with tolerance. Each Marker is given a provisional grading. Team leaders may mark any unmarked scripts returned to SQA after the script return date.
* A Finalisation process is completed post Grade Boundaries. This is a final review of selected scripts before certification.
* Appeals process is a final check to ensure that candidates were marked fairly, to national standards

**Feedback from Markers and Senior Marking Team (Question Paper 2 – Scottish History):**

* Question Paper 2 – Scottish History
  + Some comments re answers being at National 5 level
  + Vague answers
  + Explain questions not done well
  + Candidates lacked Scottish knowledge
  + Poor interpretation of sources
  + Source interpretation was incredibly weak
  + Understanding of provenance of sources poor
  + Standard of responses disappointing
  + Lack of evaluation
  + Lost marks by not answering in Scottish context
  + Answers of insufficient depth for H
  + Candidates struggled to show understanding of sources and to give detailed recall of relevant knowledge at Higher standard
* ~80% of Markers felt that the Assignment was a lower standard than 2019.
* ~75% of Markers felt that Question Paper 1 (British, European & World History) was a lower standard than last year.
* ~85% of Markers felt that Question Paper 2 (Scottish History) was a lower standard than last year.

**Awarding and Grade Boundaries**

* Principal Assessor and Qualifications Manager were scrutinised by SQA Senior Leaders at the Awarding Meeting.
* Thorough discussions around the standard of Candidate responses, especially in Question Paper 2 took place. The return of the assignment was discussed
* A small number of Markers (8%) felt that the Marking Instructions were too restrictive or more difficult, however the same number felt the Marking Instructions were more helpful, supportive and easier to use.
* No issues with any of the three Assessment Components were identified, so not mark adjustments were made on this basis.
* After a period of reflection, the meeting was readjourned and Grade Boundaries were lowered by two marks at the Upper A, A and C (all) boundaries on account of the reintroduction of the Assignment. Although the Assignment reinforces the skills assessed in Paper 1, it was recognised that preparation for the assignment may have led to a loss of some teaching time. This was in accordance with the Awarding Policy for 2024.

**General Comments:**

* “Moving the Goalposts”: More detail was included in 2024 Marking Instructions, particularly for Question Paper 2. This was to provide more detail to assist Markers, not to require more detail from Candidates.
* Clarification and exemplification of standards were conveyed at Understanding Standards events in the autumn. Materials were published on the Understanding Standards website.
* Members of the Senior Marking Team have received numerous emails from colleagues supporting them as their results were in line with expectations.
* There was no change to any process in 2024. All processes were sound with no issues or concerns raised by the Senior Team or Markers throughout.
* Early feedback from the Senior Team to the Principal Assessor was that quality of responses, especially in Question Paper 2 was very poor.

I Morrison – Head of Humanities, Care & Services

13 September 2024