



QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT

Letter Circular

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Information: X

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Action Required: X

Ref: QAD 18/2010

To: All Heads of State Schools

From: Quality Assurance Department

Subject: Internal Audit Procedures

Dear colleagues

I want to address and clarify misunderstandings that may have arisen regarding the work schools are presently undertaking with respect to the cycle of school internal audit and development planning. Please note the following:

1. The internal audit carried out by schools is a natural and intrinsic component of the School Development Plan, since the audit seeks to identify what is the next step in school development planning. The internal audit is therefore NOT a separate function or activity.
2. Subsidiary Legislation 327.190, which is the Legal Notice 132 of 2000 entitled 'National Curriculum Regulations', enshrined the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) in law. The NMC mandated that each school should have a School Development Plan that is regularly updated.
3. The school internal audit, as part of the School Development Planning process, is therefore a legal requirement for all schools. It is clear that the Director for Quality Assurance cannot tell schools to break the law, by telling them not to carry out the internal audit.
4. However, schools have a lot of flexibility in HOW to carry out the internal audit. The manual 'Knowing Our Schools' of 2004 gives examples of how to gather evidence that is part of the internal audit process, BUT does not give preference to one method of data-gathering over another. The relevant text is given as an attachment to this circular.
5. The need to gather evidence as part of the school's internal audit was also stressed in training sessions for all SMTs by senior staff of the Quality Assurance Department during 2009, but again no particular form of evidence-gathering was highlighted.
6. Given the pressure of work on school SMTs during the third term of the current scholastic year due to a number of factors, schools are advised to choose methods of gathering evidence

that have relatively smaller administrative impact. This does not mean that the evidence gathered will necessarily have less value. For example, one or more focus group meetings of randomly selected participants can be held instead of one or more questionnaires.

7. From a broader perspective, this issue has served to indicate that some schools may need assistance in understanding how different data-gathering tools can be used effectively and efficiently to be of greatest use to the school's self evaluation. It could be that some schools are expending a lot of energy on self-evaluation procedures that could be done more efficiently. This will be addressed next scholastic year.
8. In the meantime, schools are to conclude this year's self-evaluation process, which includes the SDP day, and to work to produce their next SDP as usual. Schools that would like advice on how to do so in the most efficient way possible given this year's constraints are invited to contact Ms Joan Micallef ADE on 2598 2483 but preferably on joan.micallef@gov.mt.

Sandro Spiteri
Director
Quality Assurance Department

APPENDIX A

From: Knowing Our Schools, Pg 9

“Collection of data

Various tools may be adopted to collect reliable information and evidence in order to be able to define the quality level of particular items related to any one of the seven Key Areas:

- Discussions/meetings for parents, students, staff and other stakeholders
- Brainstorming
- Class visits
- Observation
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Diary or log
- Analysis of documentation
- Analysis of examination results
- Seminars
- Feedback from external sources: visitors, Education Officers and others.”