Scottish Qualifications Authority Issues Results for National Courses 2007

EMBARGO: Not for publication under any circumstances before 00.01am Tuesday 7 August 2007

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) today (Tuesday 7 August 2007) announces the 2007 National Course results, which include Standard Grade and Access Courses.

This year's highlights are:

- **Certificates are being sent to 155,893 learners this year, up from 150,050 in 2006.**
- **Total entries for National Courses have increased on previous years at all levels apart from Standard Grade and Advanced Higher, with entries for Intermediates continuing to grow most strongly.**
- **Pass rates for Access 2 to Advanced Higher levels have shown a small improvement in attainment.**

National Courses usually consist of three subject-related National Units, which are assessed by the school/college, and are subject to verification by SQA, plus an external assessment (normally an exam but in some subjects, a performance, project work or folio). Generally, to gain a Course award, students must pass all the component National Units and achieve a grade in the external assessment.

This data is not simply a presentation of examination performance.

This year was the second year of the pilot of Skills for Work Courses which are intended to help learners develop skills and knowledge in broad vocational areas and an understanding of the workplace. A key feature is their emphasis on learning through practical experience. Courses are awarded upon successful completion of the Units which make up the Course. There is no additional Course assessment and the Courses are not graded. These Courses are typically taken over two years.

Speaking about this year's National Qualifications results, Dr Janet Brown, SQA's Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer, says:

"This has been another successful year for Scotland's learners and their teachers and I would like to congratulate them all and wish them continuing success in the future.

I am delighted and greatly encouraged to see the increase in numbers of learners taking National Qualifications and the steady growth in pass rates. Over 155,000 candidates will receive results today. The results show continuing strong achievements in a stable system, which is maintaining highly regarded standards year on year. We are delighted that the use of modern technology allowed 35,000 candidates to get their results early through our results online service.

I'd also like to thank everyone who has helped SQA with this year's exams and whose tireless commitment we very much appreciate."

The table below shows total entries for this year and previous years at each level of qualification.

Table 1: Entries at each level of qualification 2003 – 2007

	Entries					
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Change 2006-2007**
Access 2 (SCQF[1] Level 2)	2,243	2,343	2,102	2,162	2,785	+623
Access 3 (SCQF Level 3)	8,930	12,743	15,660	19,352	29,957	+10,605
Standard Grade (SCQF Levels 3 to 5)	453,413	433,828	411,144	415,845	404,638	-11,207
Intermediate 1 (SCQF Level 4)	24,611	31,216	36,645	44,849	53,863	+9,014
Intermediate 2(SCQF Level 5)	72,294	80,261	87,055	94,080	107,309	+13,229
Higher(SCQF Level 6)	166,795	165,459	164,053	158,053	160,988	+2,935
Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7)	16,996	17,184	17,141	18,258	17,825	-433
TOTAL	745,282	743,034	733,800	752,599	777,365	+24,766

[1] The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) helps people to understand and compare different qualifications in Scotland. The SCQF level is a measure of how demanding a qualification is.

Highlights

- The overall number of entries has increased (+3.3%) from 2006 to 2007. There has been a drop in Standard Grade uptake (-2.7%) and Advanced Higher uptake (-2.4%) while at all other qualification levels entries have increased, most significantly at Access 3 (+54.8%), Access 2 (+28.8%) and Intermediate 1 (+20.1%).

The table below lists attainment at each level of qualification.

Table 2: Overall attainment at each level of qualification 2003 – 2007

	Pass Rate					
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Percentage Point Change 2006-2007**
Access 2 (SCQF Level 2)	56.8%	66.5%	72.1%	66.0%	71.5%	+5.5
Access 3 (SCQF Level 3)	67.2%	70.4%	71.9%	78.4%	85.3%	+6.9
Standard Grade (SCQF Levels 3 to 5)	96.8%	97.2%	97.3%	97.7%	97.6%	-0.1
Intermediate 1 (SCQF Level 4)	64.6%	64.3%	67.6%	70.9%	71.1%	+0.2
Intermediate 2(SCQF Level 5)	69.6%	72.4%	73.8%	73.0%	75.4%	+2.4
Higher(SCQF Level 6)	69.6%	70.7%	71.2%	70.8%	71.7%	+0.9
Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7)	72.6%	73.6%	74.5%	74.3%	74.6%	+0.3

Highlights

- The percentage of Standard Grade entries resulting in a grade 1–6 has remained stable.

- The pass rates have remained generally stable at Intermediate 1, Higher and Advanced Higher. The Access 2 pass rate has increased by 5.5 percentage points, the Access 3 pass rate has increased by 6.9 percentage points and the Intermediate 2 pass rate has increased by 2.4 percentage points.

The following section highlights aspects of the data at each level.

Standard Grade

Standard Grade is the main provision in schools for 15-16 year olds and is generally taken over two years of study in third and fourth year at secondary school. Learners typically study six or seven subjects including Mathematics and English. There are three levels of study: Credit, General and Foundation. Learners usually take exams at two levels – Credit and General, or General and Foundation. This makes sure that learners have the best chance of achieving as high a grade as possible. Learners who do not achieve a grade 1 – 6, but do complete the Course, are awarded a grade 7. Standard Grade is explicitly designed to offer assessment and certification for all and this is reflected in the high levels of attainment.

Table 3: Entries and attainment at Standard Grade 2003 - 2007

Standard Grade (SCQF Levels 3 – 5)	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Entries	453,413	433,828	411,144	415,845	404,638
Percentage gaining grades 1-6	96.8%	97.2%	97.3%	97.7%	97.6%

Highlights

- Entries were made in 36 Standard Grade subjects.
- Standard Grade entries this year numbered 404,638 – a decrease of 2.7% on last year's entries figure of 415,845.
- The percentage of entries leading to an award of grades 1-6 remains stable.

Access

Access Courses require the attainment of a number of internally-assessed Units in a particular subject.

Table 4: Entries and attainment at Access 2 and Access 3 2003 - 2007

	2003		**2004**		**2005**		**2006**		**2007**	
	Entries	Pass Rate	Entries	Pass Rate	Entries	Pass Rate	Entries	Pass Rate	Entries	Pass Rate
Access 2 (SCQF Level 2)	2,243	56.8%	2,343	66.5%	2,102	72.1%	2,162	66.0%	2,785	71.5%
Access 3 (SCQF Level 3)	8,930	67.2%	12,743	70.4%	15,660	71.9%	19,352	78.4%	29,957	85.3%

Highlights

- There has been significantly increased uptake at both levels of Access Courses.
- The pass rates at Access 2 and Access 3 levels have increased on last year.
- There were 59 entries in the Skills for Work Access 3 Course, 'Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering'. Learners entering this Course gained a pass rate of 93.2%.

Intermediates

Intermediate levels lie between Access and Higher levels. Intermediate 1 Courses are at the same level as Standard Grade General level. They are particularly suitable for learners who have attained Standard Grade Foundation or Access 3. Intermediate 2 Courses are at the same level as Standard Grade Credit level. They are particularly suitable for learners who have attained Standard Grade General. For some learners Intermediate 2 provides a stepping stone to taking a Higher. Both Intermediate 1 and 2 may be suitable for anyone wishing to take up a new subject that they have not previously studied. An increasing number of learners are taking Intermediate Courses and Units instead of, or as well as, Standard Grades.

Table 5: Entries and attainment at Intermediate 1 2003 - 2007

Intermediate 1 (SCQF Level 4)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Entries	24,611	31,216	36,645	44,849	53,863
Pass Rate	64.6%	64.3%	67.6%	70.9%	71.1%

Highlights

- Entries were made in 45 Intermediate 1 subjects.
- Entries numbered 53,863– an increase of 20.1% on last year's figure of 44,849.
- The pass rate was 71.1% – an increase (+0.2 percentage points) on last year's figure of 70.9%.
- There were 1,182 entries in Skills for Work Intermediate 1 Courses across 5 different subject areas. The average pass rate for these Courses was 76.2%.

Table 6: Entries and attainment at Intermediate 2 2003 - 2007

Intermediate 2 (SCQF Level 5)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Entries	72,294	80,261	87,055	94,080	107,309
Pass Rate	69.6%	72.4%	73.8%	73.0%	75.4%

Highlights

- Entries were made in 67 Intermediate 2 subjects.
- Entries numbered 107,309– an increase of 14.1% on last year's figure of 94,080.
- The pass rate was 75.4% – an increase (+2.4 percentage points) on last year's figure of 73.0%.
- There were 276 entries in Skills for Work Intermediate 2 Courses across 4 different subject areas. The average pass rate for these Courses was 83.3%.

Higher

Higher Courses are aimed particularly at learners who have achieved Standard Grade Credit level, or who have passed the subject at Intermediate 2.

Table 7: Entries and attainment at Higher 2003 - 2007

Higher (SCQF Level 6)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Entries	166,795	165,459	164,053	158,053	160,988
Pass Rate	69.6%	70.7%	71.2%	70.8%	71.7%

Highlights

- Entries were made in 67 Higher subjects.
- Entries numbered 160,988 – an increase of 1.9% on last year's figure of 158,053.
- The pass rate was 71.7%, an increase (+0.9 percentage points) on last year's figure of 70.8%.

Advanced Higher

Advanced Higher Courses are aimed at learners who have passed Highers. They extend the skills and knowledge gained at Higher and are useful qualifications for entry into further and higher education or the workplace.

Table 8: Entries and attainment at Advanced Higher 2003 - 2007

Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Entries	16,996	17,184	17,141	18,258	17,825
Pass Rate	72.6%	73.6%	74.5%	74.3%	74.6%

Highlights

- Entries were made in 39 Advanced Higher subjects.
- Entries numbered 17,825 – a decrease of 2.4% on last year's figure of 18,258.
- The pass rate was 74.6% – a slight increase on last year's figure which was 74.3%.

Below is a further set of tables showing entries and awards for all subjects in each qualification.

The tables for Access Courses at SCQF Levels 2 and 3 show:

- The subject (in alphabetical order)
- The total number of entries for 2006
- The total number of awards for 2006
- The pass rate as a percentage of total entries for 2006
- The total number of entries for 2007
- The total number of awards for 2007
- The pass rate as a percentage of total entries for 2007

The tables for Standard Grade Courses at SCQF Levels 3 to 5 show:

- The subject (in alphabetical order)
- The total number of entries for 2006
- The total number of entries for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 1 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 2 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 3 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 4 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 5 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 6 for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade 7 for 2007
- The total number of No Awards for 2007
- The total number of awards made at Grades 1 to 6 as a percentage of total entries for 2006
- The total number of awards made at Grades 1 to 6 as a percentage of total entries for 2007

The tables for National Courses at SCQF Levels 4 to 7 show:

- The subject (in alphabetical order)
- The total number of entries for 2006
- The total number of entries for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade A for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade B for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade C for 2007
- The total number of passes in ungraded Courses for 2007
- The total number of Course awards (passes) for 2007
- The total number of awards at Grade D for 2007
- The pass rate as a percentage of total entries for 2006
- The pass rate as a percentage of total entries for 2007

Included in some tables, where appropriate, is a breakdown of entries and awards for 2007 for certain courses (identified by an asterisk), into two categories: a) learners from centres in Scotland; b) learners from centres outwith Scotland.

Grade D, like grades A to C, is reported on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate as a Course award in its own right. Grade D indicates that the learner has achieved all the National Units for the Course at that level and has achieved a band 7 in the external assessment.

All statistics presented in this paper relate to pre-appeal information and are therefore subject to change later in the year.

NOTES:

(a) The SQA Candidate Advice Line will open on Monday 6 August and operate between 8am – 6pm until Friday 10 August.

- 0845 278 8080

(b) The Careers Scotland One Life Helpline will operate between 7 – 24 August. Lines will be open as follows: Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 August 2007 from 8am to 8pm, Thursday 9 to Friday 24 August 2007 from 10am to 6pm.

- 0808 100 8000

(c) Further information is available from SQA Communications Team:

- 0845 213 5288
- 07900 678 426
- Out of Hours - 0141 952 7332
- E-mail – mike.haggerty@sqa.org.uk