

curriculum for excellence



New National Qualifications





About Curriculum for Excellence

You will know by now that Scotland is reforming its curriculum for young people. Curriculum for Excellence describes a set of outcomes and experiences that will help Scotland's young people take their place in modern society by becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

One aspect of the reform is that we are going to be making some changes to our National Qualifications — the qualifications that most young people do at school or in colleges. Some new qualifications will be introduced, and others will be revised to take account of Curriculum for Excellence.

We are working to develop the new qualifications in partnership with the teaching profession, the Scottish Government and national and local partners.

We are introducing new National Qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5. Called simply 'National 4' and 'National 5', these will replace the current level 4 and 5 National Qualifications — Standard Grade General and Credit, and Intermediate 1 and 2. Foundation level Standard Grades (SCQF level 3) will be replaced by the new Access 3.

National Qualifications at the other SCQF levels — Access 1 and Access 2 (SCQF 1 and 2), and Higher and Advanced Higher (SCQF 6 and 7) — will be revised.

These new qualifications will offer increased flexibility, a greater focus on skills and applying learning to real-life situations, and more time and scope for personalisation. They will meet the needs of learners as they progress from their broad, general education through the qualifications framework to other learning and eventually, employment.

Timetable — what's happening, and when

The new qualifications are being phased in between now and session 2015–16, as you can see from this timetable:

2010–11	New curriculum introduced
2012	Specifications for National 4 and National 5 and new Access and Higher qualifications published
2012–13	Last certification of Standard Grades Specifications for new Advanced Higher qualifications published
2013–14	National 4 and National 5 introduced ('dual run' with current Intermediate Courses)
2014–15	New Highers introduced ('dual run' with current Higher and Intermediate Courses)
2015–16	New Advanced Higher introduced

You can see a more detailed account of the project timeline at www.sqa.org.uk/cfetimeline.



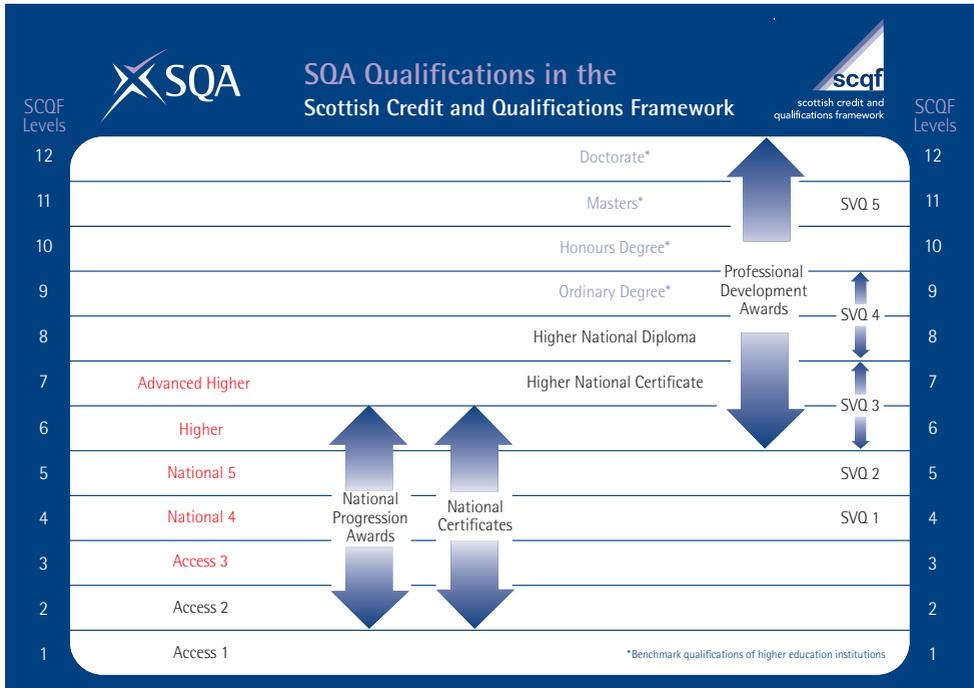
The new qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The new National Qualifications are at levels 1–7 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

The SCQF is a way of comparing the full range of Scottish qualifications and learning programmes.

The SCQF gives qualifications a level indicating how demanding each one is. Every qualification is also given a number of credit points to show how much learning must be done to achieve it. By making the level of qualifications easier to understand, the SCQF makes the progression or transfer between qualifications simpler.

Find out more about levels and credit points at www.sqa.org.uk/scqf.



Assessment

Assessment of the new qualifications will be appropriate to the subject and level. It will include a combination of practical work, case studies, examinations and projects.

All Unit assessment will be assessed on a pass/fail basis in centres. We will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

To be awarded a Course, learners will have to provide evidence they have met the requirements of all Units. They will also (for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) have to pass an external exam or, in some Courses, an external assessment based on coursework.

Where appropriate for the subject area, we will develop qualifications which combine assessments, reducing the number of assessments required.

For those learners who want to build up their achievements over time, Unit-by-Unit assessments will also be available.

Support for centres

We are committed to working with local authorities and individual schools and colleges to ensure the new qualifications and exams are successfully supported and implemented.

Our new Curriculum for Excellence Centre Liaison Team will provide a dedicated resource for every school and college throughout Scotland, delivering support and advice during the transition and implementation phases of the new qualifications.

The team will work with centres to confirm they are aware of the new qualifications so the teaching profession can ensure those pupils currently in S1 are well prepared for the new qualifications in 2013–2014.



They will also work with schools, colleges and local authorities to develop quality assurance approaches for the new qualifications at SCQF levels 3 and 4 (which are all internally assessed and externally quality assured by SQA).

We will support centres by helping to implement thorough quality assurance procedures — including external verification — to ensure assessment judgements made by schools and colleges are consistent and meet national standards.

The team will be working in partnership with your Business Development Team to ensure that you will continue to receive excellent customer service focused on your needs.

Find out more about the team and how to get in touch with them at www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam.

Adding value

Each National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Course will include a 40-hour added value element.

National 4 Courses will include an added value Unit. This will require the learner to demonstrate depth of understanding and/or application of skills. It will not be graded.

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses will include an external assessment. This will sample breadth, depth and/or application from across the Course. The external assessment will be graded.

Literacy and numeracy

The new National Qualifications will support the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, helping to raise overall standards.

At SCQF levels 3 and 4, the Units will be designed to form part of English and Mathematics Courses.

At SCQF level 5 some, but not all, literacy and numeracy skills will be included within English and Mathematics Courses. As a result, these skills will not be separately certificated by SQA, based on these Courses. Freestanding Units at SCQF level 5 will be available for those who require full certification in literacy and numeracy.

The Literacy and Numeracy Units will also be available to adult learners.

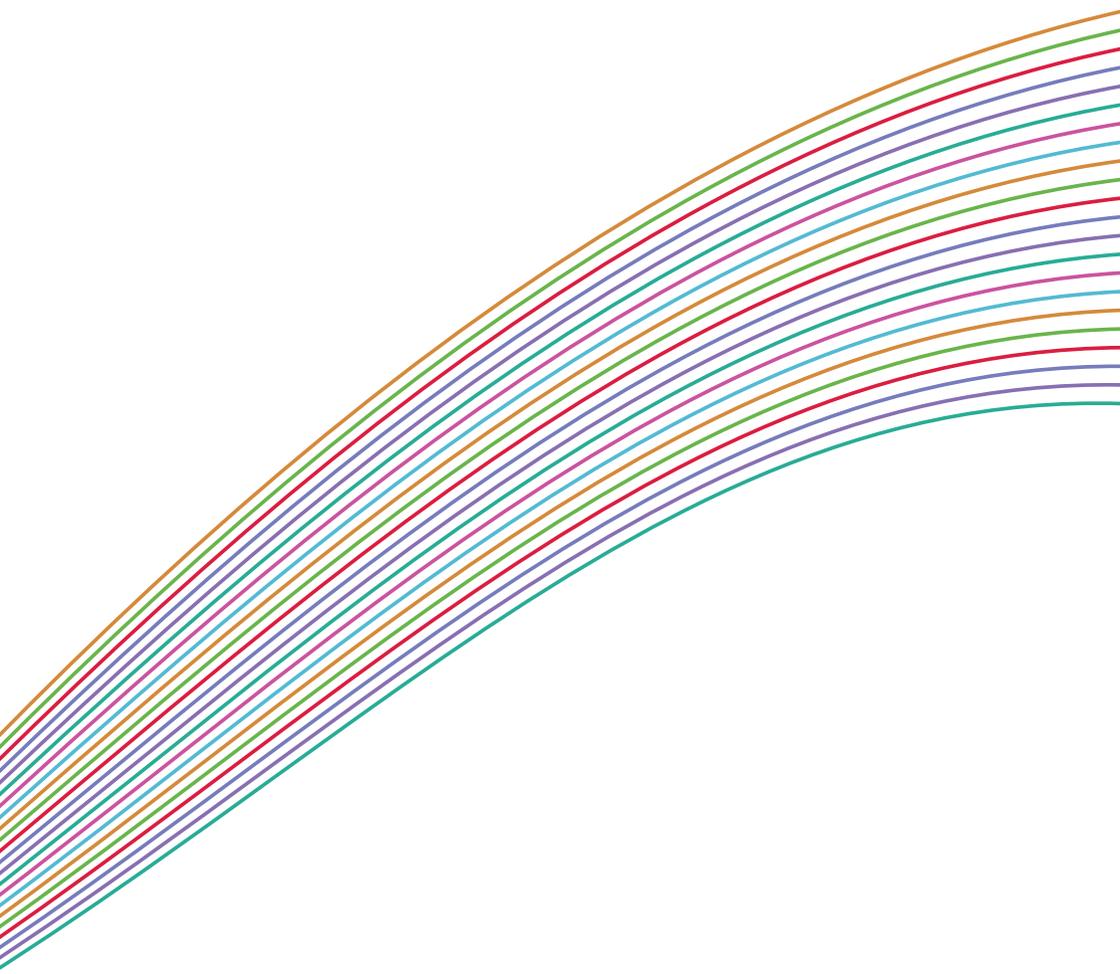
Keeping in touch and getting involved

If you'd like to track our progress and keep up to date with the latest on the development of the new National Qualifications, you can check for updates at www.sqa.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence.

We are working closely with practitioners and other colleagues in education and training to make sure that all new qualifications take forward the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and meet the needs of schools, colleges, higher education, learners and employers. We want your feedback on the development of the next generation of qualifications as we reach milestones. Let us know what you think at www.sqa.org.uk/haveyoursay.

You can also sign up to our 'MyAlerts' service to receive e-mail alerts of the latest CfE news from SQA direct to your in-box — read more and sign up at www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts.

We are looking for teaching staff to volunteer for our Subject Working Groups and support the development of the new National Qualifications. You can read more about this, and get involved, at www.sqa.org.uk/subjectworkinggroups.



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