



Media briefing paper

Publication of Draft Course Rationales & Summaries for New National 4 & National 5 Qualifications

As part of Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish qualifications are changing. The new qualifications and assessments are being designed and developed by SQA. As part of the development process, each qualification goes through a number of different stages.

The next stage of the development is the publication of the Course Rationale and Summary documents for National 4 and National 5. These draft documents will be made available on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk/rationales) from Monday 31 January 2011 and feedback is being sought from interested parties by Thursday 31 March 2011.

Course Rationales and Summaries will be available for 43 National 4s and 48 National 5s.

The draft Course Rationales and Summaries outline the proposed content for the new National 4 and National 5 qualifications and their aims and purposes.

The Course Rationales will identify the skills and knowledge learners will develop.

The Course Summaries detail how Courses will be structured. They provide a brief description of each Unit in the Course and what is required to pass the Course.

This extensive project has only been possible with the support and contributions of over 1,000 people. These include sector professionals, subject experts and nominated representatives from partner organisations, stakeholders, teaching associations and parent groups from across Scotland who have been involved in the development process.

The publishing of draft documents throughout the development is a new way of working for SQA and mirrors the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This transparent approach allows everyone to see behind the scenes of the development and to make comments on key documents, giving individuals the opportunity to help shape the future of Scotland's national qualifications.

These draft Course Rationales and Summaries are being published now to let everyone, but most importantly, the teaching profession, stakeholders from the education sector, including parents, see the information in each Course for National 4 and National 5 and to give them the opportunity to feed back comments. We welcome all feedback on these draft documents by the end of March 2011.

Responses will be fed into the development process and will help inform the next stage of the development, the draft Course Specifications, from April 2011 to April 2012.

The Course Rationales and Summaries follow the Overview of Qualifications Reports which outlined the Suites of Courses – the subjects, levels and types of qualifications – which we are developing.

Course Rationales and Summaries for the other qualifications being developed will follow – for the new Higher in May 2011; for the new Advanced Higher in March 2012 and for Access in August 2011.

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Background notes:

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is one of four partner organisations leading the Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) programme. SQA's principal role is to design and develop the new qualifications and assessment.

Our partners – the Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) – and other organisations including the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), teaching unions and parents' groups are involved in overseeing and monitoring the qualifications development.

New national qualifications called **National 4** and **National 5** will be introduced.

They will replace a number of current national qualifications – Standard Grade General, Standard Grade Credit, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2. Standard Grade Foundation will be replaced by the updated **Access 3**.

Revisions will also be made to the current **Access 1**, **Access 2**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** qualifications.

The new **National 4** and **National 5** qualifications will be introduced in 2013/14 as will the new **Access** qualifications. The new **Higher** will follow in 2014/15 while schools will deliver the new **Advanced Higher** from 2015/16 onwards.

To take the development process forward, we have set up a number of working groups:

Curriculum Area Review Groups provide advice and guidance in each curriculum area. Each group is made up of nominated representatives from partner organisations, stakeholders, teaching associations

and parent groups.

Qualifications Design Teams work on the design of qualifications within individual subjects such as Physics, History, English, Music etc. They are made up of nominated subject experts.

Subject Working Groups carry out specific pieces of work as designated by the Qualifications Design Teams. Teachers can nominate themselves to join these groups.

More Information

Keep up to date with the latest on the development of the new National Qualifications - www.sqa.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence.

We want your feedback on the development of the new qualifications - let us know what you think at www.sqa.org.uk/haveyoursay

Sign up to our 'MyAlerts' service to receive e-mail alerts direct to your inbox - www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts

Course Rationales and Summaries

Expressive Arts

Health & Wellbeing

Languages

Mathematics

Religious and Moral Education

Sciences

Social Studies

Technologies