

Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce SQA's eighth Annual Statistical Digest. The Digest provides statistical data on the full array of qualifications in SQA's portfolio, as well as looking into emerging trends in both qualifications and education.

I would particularly like to take this opportunity to wish all of SQA's learners every success in the future, and to congratulate them on their achievement and endeavour. We should also recognise that these achievements would not be possible without a huge amount of support from teachers and lecturers throughout Scotland, who have put in a great amount of effort to help their students to successfully complete their qualifications. SQA will continue to work with learners, teachers, lecturers and everyone else working in education and lifelong learning to support learning and qualifications.

You can find further details of SQA's activities either on our website at www.sqa.org.uk or by subscribing to the SQA e-zine. You can do this on the front page of our website.

The Digest offers extracts from the Annual Statistical Report 2009, which provides details of the results for all SQA qualifications in the academic year 2008–09. The articles in the Digest allow for a wider look at some of the main trends and developments in education and training in Scotland in the past year.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our learners every success in both their future educational endeavours and in the workplace, and I hope that you find this Digest to be both useful and interesting.

Dr Janet Brown

Chief Executive, SQA

1 Qualifications and context 2009

Many of the developments in the world of education, training, and lifelong learning in 2009 have been shaped by the economic downturn and its impact on Scotland's employers and individuals. Dealing with the effects and preparing for recovery has been a theme in the work of the UK Government, the Scottish Government, SQA, and many of our partner agencies and organisations. SQA continues to ensure that we are in a strong position to work with our customers, stakeholders, and partners to develop and lead initiatives that will help people across Scotland to re-skill and up-skill with qualifications that meet the needs of Scotland.

The economic climate has meant a renewed – or re-invigorated – focus on the skills agenda. This has included the UK Government publishing strategies such as: *New Industry, New Jobs*; *Jobs for the Future*; and *Skills for Growth*, the national skills strategy. The Scottish Government, meanwhile, has also been working on various initiatives, including: their *Economic Recovery Plan*; an updated skills strategy; *ScotAction*; *Partnership Action for Continuing Employment*; and a *National Conversation on Employability and Skills*.

All of these strategies and initiatives are intended to help move the UK and Scotland forward towards recovery by ensuring that employers and individuals can access the skills and learning to support them through recession and into growth. Along with the Government and other agencies, SQA has a central role to play here. For instance, through *ScotAction*, the Scottish Government has pledged support to increasing the availability of Modern Apprenticeships in several sectors, including Hospitality, Health and Social Care, the Creative Industries, and Life Sciences. At the core of every Modern Apprenticeship is a level 3 SVQ/NVQ qualification, and SQA continues to offer a wide range of SVQs suitable for Modern Apprentices.

Another example of our involvement is SQA's active membership of Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE). PACE is the Scottish Government's national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. It is intended to ensure that public sector agencies respond to potential and proposed large- and small-scale redundancies as quickly and effectively as possible. The partnership, led by the Scottish Government, comprises national agencies and colleges, with Skills Development Scotland co-ordinating the national- and local-level response teams to provide tailored help and support to individuals facing redundancy, and to identify training activities where appropriate.

As well as our work with partners on the skills agenda and employability, we are also continuing to work on the development of *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*. Curriculum for Excellence is about helping all young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy. It provides a framework that will enable children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. SQA is one of the four partner national organisations involved in Curriculum for Excellence. We work with partners on all strands of the development. Our principal role is to contribute to work on qualifications and assessment.

New National Qualifications will play a key role in helping to deliver the values and principles of the new curriculum. They will help raise standards of achievement, improve learning experiences, and develop skills for learning, life and work. Assessment for the qualifications will promote breadth and depth of understanding. It will motivate and challenge learners, and ensure that they can move smoothly from a broad, general education into learning that leads to qualifications and employment.

The changes to National Qualifications are outlined in [Section 5 of this Digest](#). We are continuing to work on these qualifications, while ensuring that our partners and the teaching profession are fully involved in the qualification design teams, working groups, and review groups.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Baccalaureates in Science and Languages got underway in 2009. The initial take-up figures, although not high, are encouraging for the first year. We are also very encouraged by the enthusiastic feedback we have had from the pupils and staff across the country who are undertaking the Baccalaureates. One of the innovative new parts of the Baccalaureate is the Interdisciplinary Project, and successful links are being formed between schools and universities, colleges, employers and other organisations to help support pupils carrying out this task.

Of course, SQA's work covers more than we can mention here; we continue to work with partners, both nationally and internationally, on a variety of projects. For instance, work we have undertaken in 2009 includes that on: Cantonese and Mandarin qualifications; continuing development of National Qualifications Group Awards; new Professional Development Awards; the Safe Road User qualification; e-assessment; and work on the *More Choices, More Chances* agenda.

Some of the other work we are involved in is highlighted later in this Digest. You can keep up to date on our activities by subscribing to our monthly e-zine, *Connecting with SQA*.

2 National Units and Group Awards 2009

Entries and awards for National Units and high uptake Group Awards, 2008 and 2009

	Entries		Awards	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
National Units	1,984,020	2,008,197	1,553,593	1,579,943
National Certificates (NC)	4,679	6,772	2,633	3,866
National Progression Awards (NPA)	12,698	10,444	6,367	7,708

National Units

There has been a steady rise in National Unit entries since 2005. In 2009 there was a 1% increase in entries on the previous year. Awards have grown year-on-year since 2005 as well. In 2009 there was a 2% increase on the year before.

There were more entries from female learners (52%) than male (48%).

The most popular National Units are in the Science and Mathematics area. This accounts for 27% of entries.

National Unit entries from learners in centres outwith Scotland (1,168) were lower than in previous years, and constituted less than 1% of the total uptake.

For more information on National Unit Assessments click on this link.

National Certificates

From 2008 to 2009, the number of National Certificate entries increased by 45%. The number of awards increased by 47%.

There were more entries from male learners (55%) than females (45%).

The most popular National Certificates were Early Education and Childcare (SCQF Level 6) and Health and Social Care (SCQF Level 6).

For more information on National Certificates click on this link.

National Progression Awards (including SPAs)

Entries for National Progression Awards fell by 18% on last year. However, Awards increased by 21%, reflecting the upwards trend in entries until this year.

Overall, there were considerably more entries from male learners (61%) than female learners (39%).

The most popular courses were Beginner PC Passport (SCQF Level 3) and Construction (SCQF Level 4).

For more information on National Progression Awards click on this link.

Further information

There is more information on National Units and Group Awards in the Annual Statistical Report 2009, tables NU 1-6d, OS NU 1-3b, GA 1-6 and OS GA 1-5.

3 Standard Grade 2009

Entries and number of learners entered for Standard Grade, 2008 and 2009

	Entries		No. of learners	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Standard Grade	386,915	358,519	68,705	65,705

*Entries exclude the Writing option of Gaelic (Learners).

Entries from 2008 to 2009 decreased by 7% for Standard Grade. The number of learners sitting one or more subjects also decreased by 4%.

Looking at Standard Grade awards, 47% of entries achieved a Credit award (grades 1 and 2), 40% achieved a General award (grades 3 and 4), and 11% achieved a Foundation award (grades 5 and 6).

There was an even split in gender for entries.

Entries for Mathematics and English were lower than the previous year. English entries were down 7% and Mathematics was down 8%.

Entries in Spanish improved by 8%. This continues an upward trend in entries for the subject from 2007.

Further information

There is more information on Standard Grade in the Annual Statistical Report 2009, tables SG 1-8 and OS NQ 1.

4 National Courses 2009

Entries and number of learners entered for National Courses, 2008 and 2009

	Entries		No. of learners	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Access 2	3,063	2,462	2,251	1,533
Access 3	30,756	31,836	21,557	21,706
Intermediate 1	60,267	65,735	40,693	43,061
Intermediate 2	113,388	122,463	57,479	61,646
Higher	162,576	167,792	58,595	60,526
Advanced Higher	18,854	19,648	11,615	11,984

Access 2

Entries for Access 2 decreased by 20% in 2009.

More entries were for male learners than female learners (63% male, 37% female).

Mathematics was the most popular course, with 413 entries. English and Communication, the second highest, had 405 entries. Drama, which was the previous year's highest entry course, saw a significant decline from 628 to 189 entries.

Access 3

Entries and awards at Access 3 rose by 4%. This continues a year-on-year increase in entries.

There were more entries from male learners than female learners (56% male, 44% female).

Mathematics is the highest uptake subject, with 11,002 entries; this constitutes 35% of all entries.

Intermediate 1

There were 65,735 entries at Intermediate 1 in 2009; this was a 9% increase from 2008. The overall pass rate increased marginally to 76%.

There was an even split in entries by gender.

In Skills for Work courses, there were high uptakes in Construction Crafts (1,645), Early Education and Childcare (1,123) and Hairdressing (944).

Mathematics (12,082) and English (6,960) remained the highest uptake subjects at Intermediate 1. Biology (5,750) and Hospitality: Practical Cookery (5,684) also had large uptakes.

Intermediate 2

Entries for Intermediate 2 Courses continued to grow, rising by 8% in 2009. The overall pass rate for all Intermediate 2 subjects was 80%.

There were more entries for females (53%) than males (47%).

English (21,049) and Mathematics (21,487) continue to be the highest uptake subjects at this level and account for 345% of total entries. However, Biology (6,927) and Art and Design (6,264) also had high uptakes.

In Skills for Work courses, there were 1,226 entries in total, comprising 1% of all entries at Intermediate 2 level. The most popular course was Early Education and Childcare with 588 entries.

There were 100 entries at Intermediate 2 level from learners at centres outwith Scotland.

Higher

Entries at Higher level were 167,792, a 3% increase on the previous year. The overall pass rate also remained high at 76%.

There were more entries for females (56%) than males (44%).

English (28,439) and Mathematics (19,638) continued to be the most popular subjects. Combined, these two subjects account for 29% of all entries at Higher level.

Advanced Higher

Entries at Advanced Higher level were 19,648, an increase of 4% on the previous year. The overall pass rate was 80%, although for Mathematics it was significantly lower at 68%.

There were more entries for females (52%) than males (48%).

The highest uptake subjects were Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, English and Physics. Combined, these subjects accounted for 53% of entries.

Both Art and Design Courses showed an increase in entries. Combined, they had 1,547 entries and this continues an upward trend since 2007.

Further information

There is more information on National Courses in the Annual Statistical Report 2009, tables AC1-8, IA 1-9, IB 1-9, NH 1-9, AH 1-9, PR 1-4 and OS NQ 1-3b.

5 **Qualifications taken by S4 pupils and introduction of Curriculum for Excellence**

Introduction

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) will reform education from 3 to 18 years, and is due to be implemented in Scottish schools from August 2010 onwards. The aim of Curriculum for Excellence is to provide a general education up to S3, followed by a Senior Phase, when qualifications will be taken. Two new qualifications — National 4 and National 5 — will replace Standard Grade General and Credit, and Intermediate 1 and 2.

The changes to National Qualifications, which come into effect from 2013–14, will mean that:

- ◆ National 4 courses will be assessed by teaching staff and quality assured by SQA. The qualification will not be graded. National 5 courses will have Unit assessments assessed by teaching staff and quality assured by SQA, but will also have an external assessment. National 5 courses will be graded.
- ◆ The existing Access, Higher, and Advanced Higher qualifications will be reviewed and revised to reflect Curriculum for Excellence and to provide good progression to and from the new National 4 and 5 qualifications.

We are currently exploring approaches for formally recognising literacy and numeracy skills.

Qualifications currently taken by S4 pupils

Traditionally, fourth year students entered for a number of Standard Grades and progressed onto Highers in fifth and sixth year. Ten years ago, National Courses, including new levels at Access 2 and 3 and Intermediate 1 and 2, were introduced. In more recent years, the pattern of qualifications undertaken by fourth year students has changed. In this section, we evaluate the most recent evidence in order to gauge the extent of this change.

Entries from fourth year students to Intermediate 1 and 2 have increased significantly in recent years. Since 2006–07, Intermediate 2 entries, from S4 pupils, have grown from 32,529 to 40,958, while Intermediate 1 entries have grown from 29,908 to 36,818. Access 3 entries are also up, from 20,137 to 21,229. Fourth year Standard Grade entries are correspondingly lower, falling from 390,461 in 2006–07 to 334,860 in 2008–09.

However, Standard Grade still makes up the vast majority of fourth year provision. In 2008–09, 77% of all entries from fourth year students were in Standard Grade, albeit down from 83% in 2006–07. Although there is evidence that fourth year students are increasingly entering for Intermediate qualifications, it is still true that the vast majority of students sit Standard Grades in their fourth year at school.

Figure 1: Entries from S4 students, 2006–07

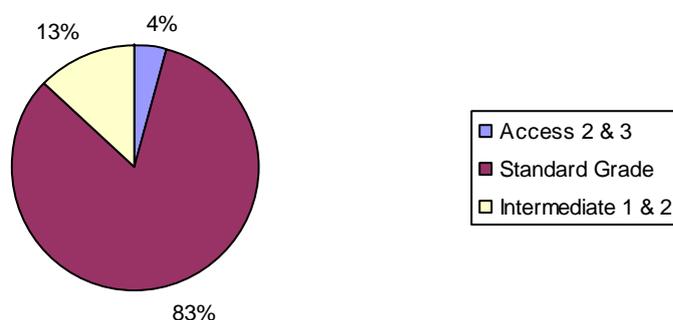
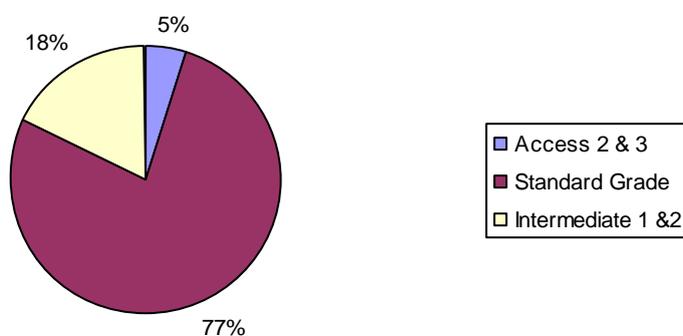


Figure 2: Entries from S4 students, 2008–09



Proportion of entries for each qualification from fourth year students

While the vast majority of S4 candidates are still entered for Standard Grade, it is interesting to consider the proportion of entries for each qualification that are by S4 candidates. A significant proportion of all entries to Access and Intermediate qualifications come from this group. The large proportion of entries in Access and Intermediate qualifications from this group suggests that these qualifications are being used instead of Standard Grades in some areas.

At Access 2, the majority of entries (75%) are from S4 students, while a substantial majority of entries at Access 3 (70%) and Intermediate 1 (61%) are also taken by S4 students. The proportion of entries at Access 3 from S4 students has remained unchanged since 2006–07. However, at Access 2, the proportion of S4 student entries has increased by almost 10% since 2006–07. Intermediate 1 and 2 have also both increased by 3% since 2006–07. This corresponds to a 3% reduction in S4 entries for Standard Grades.

Table 1: Proportion of entries in school qualifications coming from S4 students

Academic year	Access 2	Access 3	Standard Grade	Intermediate1	Intermediate2
2006–07	67%	70%	97%	58%	32%
2007–08	55%	68%	95%	59%	33%
2008–09	75%	70%	94%	61%	35%

6 New Awards

When SQA is mentioned, most people think automatically about Standard Grades and Highers, perhaps about Higher National Qualifications or SVQs. However, SQA's portfolio is much broader than that, and aims to meet the needs of learners in Scotland, and targeted needs in the rest of the UK. One example of how this works in practice is our new Safe Road User Award.

This award, which has been developed in collaboration with the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), and will be available throughout the UK, is a result of recent initiatives by the UK Government to bring about changes in safe road use. The award is primarily aimed at young people from 14 to 17 years of age, although it will be open to all potential candidates irrespective of age.

The aim of the Safe Road User Award is to build positive attitudes to road use and to help young people to take responsibility for using the roads safely. Young people who become proficient road users at an early stage will be able to carry these attitudes and behaviours throughout life. This, in turn, should result in fewer deaths and serious injuries among road users. Being a safe and proficient road user is a significant life skill which this award will contribute to developing.

Candidates who successfully complete the Safe Road User Award will be eligible to sit an abridged version of the DSA Driver Theory Test when they try to get a full driving licence.

Two other examples of awards that SQA has recently created are in Employability and Leadership.

The Employability Award is available at SCQF levels 3 and 4, and is designed to prepare candidates to enter the world of work. It aims to enable young people to be successful in making, and sustaining, the transition from non-work environments into employment. As a result, they will have the skills required to channel their aspirations to work into getting and maintaining actual employment.

The award is specifically targeted at young people who have aspirations to gain employment and are preparing to make the transition into work. Members of the target group could be in school, college or in other educational or training programmes.

The Leadership Award, which is offered at SCQF levels 5 and 6, aims to encourage learners to respect the cultures and beliefs of others through working cooperatively with them and through valuing their contribution. The award encourages learners to develop knowledge of leadership styles, skills and qualities and to understand the impact a leader can have on others and on the success of an activity.

The award is targeted at learners who are involved, or may become involved, in activities in which they have to take on a leading role. This award is designed to be

as flexible as possible, and is therefore suitable for learners from a wide range of backgrounds. Learners who choose to do this award could include S5 and S6 pupils, students participating in a More Choices More Chances programme, college students, trainees, employees or those working in the voluntary sector.

These new awards are part of SQA's commitment to providing learners with the knowledge and skills that they need to play a full part in the society that we live in, including helping them to develop the skills required to function effectively in the world of work.

7 Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications 2009

Entries and awards for Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, 2008 and 2009

	Entries		Awards	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Higher National Units (HN Unit)	441,895	469,637	358,512	305,275
Higher National Certificates (HNC)	17,879	17,819	11,679	12,057
Higher National Diplomas (HND)	14,056	15,821	7,948	8,316
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (awarded by SQA) (SVQ)	44,232	36,381	34,102	31,613
Professional Development Awards (PDA and New PDA)	3,939	4,772	2,105	3,426
Workplace Professional Development Awards (Workplace PDA)	7,035	6,235	6,462	5,311

HN Units

Total HN Unit entries increased by 6% in 2009. Awards decreased by 15% from 2008 to 2009.

There was an even split by gender in entries for HN Units.

It is clear that the most popular subjects are within the Business/Management/Office Studies area.

23% of all HN Unit entries were for learners in centres outwith Scotland.

HNCs

There was a small decrease in entries in 2009 compared to 2008. Entries of 17,819 means there was a return to the same level as 2007. Awards increased by 3%.

There were more entries for female (55%) than male learners (45%).

Social Care, Early Education and Childcare, and Administration and Information Technology had the most entries.

Almost all entries (99%) came from learners in centres located within Scotland.

HNDs

The number of HND entries in 2009 increased by 13%, and awards increased by 5%.

There were more entries from male (54%) than female learners (46%). However there were more awards for females (51%) than males (49%).

Financial Services and Business were the two qualifications with the highest uptake at HND level.

29% of the total uptake was from centres located outwith Scotland. This represents a 50% increase on entries from 2008.

SVQs (awarded by SQA)

SVQ entries have fallen from 44,232 in 2008 to 36,381 in 2009. This is an 18% decrease. Awards have also fallen from 34,102 to 31,613, which represents a 7% decrease.

19,691 of entries were at Level 2, which represents 54%. 13,215 entries were at Level 3, which represents 36% of all entries.

There were more entries from female learners (52%) than from males (48%).

14,654 entries were from learners under 20 years of age. This represents 40% of all entries.

The most popular SVQs were in Health and Social Care (Level 2), and Health and Social Care for Adults (Level 3).

Almost all SVQ entries (98%) were from centres within Scotland.

Professional Development Awards (PDA and New PDA)

From 2008 to 2009, there was an increase in PDA entries of 21%, and an increase in awards of 63%.

Of the original PDAs, the Advanced Certificate in Carpentry and Joinery, and the Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management were the most popular. Entries for new PDAs are lower, but popular courses were Housing Law Advice, Book-keeping, and Introduction to Tutoring in Adult Literacies Learning.

Almost all entries (98%) came from learners in centres located within Scotland.

Workplace PDAs

Entries for workplace PDAs decreased by 11% from 2008 to 2009. Awards also decreased by 18%.

There were considerably more entries from male learners (66%) than from females (34%).

The two workplace PDAs entitled Classroom Assistant, and Assessing Candidates Using a Range of Methods continue to be the most popular.

9% of total entries were from centres outwith Scotland.

Further information

There is more information on all of these qualifications in the Annual Statistical Report 2009, tables HN1-16, OS HN 1-9b, SVQ1-6, OS SVQ1-3b, PDA 1-8 and OS PDA 1-14.

8 Sector Skills Councils and SQA

Introduction

Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) are independent, employer-led, UK-wide organisations designed to build a skills system that is driven by employer demand. There are currently 25 SSCs. They cover over 90% of the economy, and work towards the following four key goals:

- ◆ Reduced skills gaps and shortages
- ◆ Improved productivity, business and public service performance
- ◆ Increased opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce
- ◆ Improved learning supply through National Occupational Standards (NOS), apprenticeships, and further and higher education

The Alliance of SSCs is an organisation comprising all 25 licensed UK SSCs. The organisation established the Alliance's Scottish Council, of which SQA is a member, to help stakeholders better engage with the Alliance. The Alliance Director Jacqui Hepburn said, 'The network ensures that it engages with employers and employees to enable it to meet the needs of the individual, and supports equal access. This informs the labour market information presented on a sectoral basis, the input to the design of qualifications, and the consultation on national occupational standards and modern apprenticeships.'

One important area of work is ensuring the views of employers are taken into account in the design and development of qualifications and learning. To that end, the Alliance has developed an agreement with SQA that ensures that SSCs and employers are involved at all stages of the development of qualifications. SQA has a strong and consistent track record of work with employers, Sector Skills Councils and professional bodies.

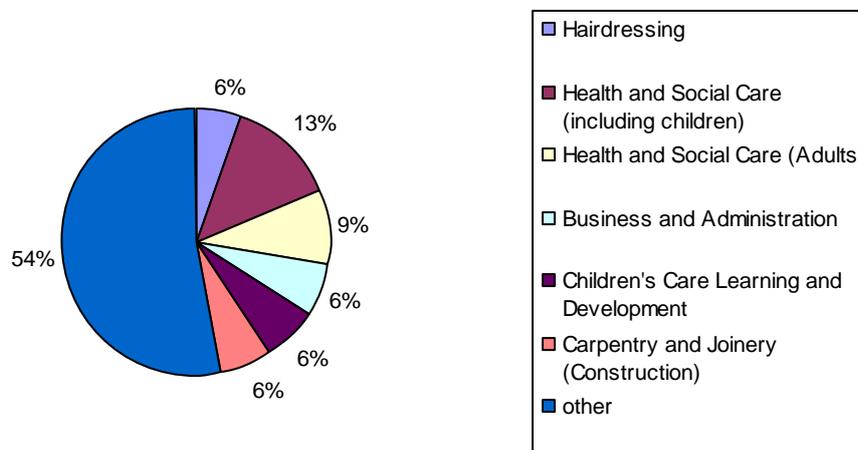
This includes:

- ◆ Direct involvement of employers, Sector Skills Councils and professional bodies in all aspects of qualification development and maintenance. The main mechanisms for this are through representation on Qualification Design Teams, Validation Panels and Qualification Support Teams, and SQA has a formal protocol with Sector Skills Councils to encourage partnership. We also carry out extensive consultations with employers during qualification review and development.
- ◆ SSC and employer representation on key committees and groups to provide a strategic overview of qualification design, development and implementation.
- ◆ Working through partnerships with colleges and training providers to develop closer links with local employers.

This close partnership with employers and SSCs ensures that SQA designs and develops qualifications that are fit-for-purpose and reflect the needs of the industries and sectors they support. This is reflected in the high uptake of SQA's Scottish Vocational Occupations (SVQs). The top six SVQ entries, over the past three years, have remained remarkably stable, again a reflection of SQA's good relations with SSCs. Figures 1–3 illustrate the top six SVQ entries, by subject, for years 2006–07 to 2008–09.

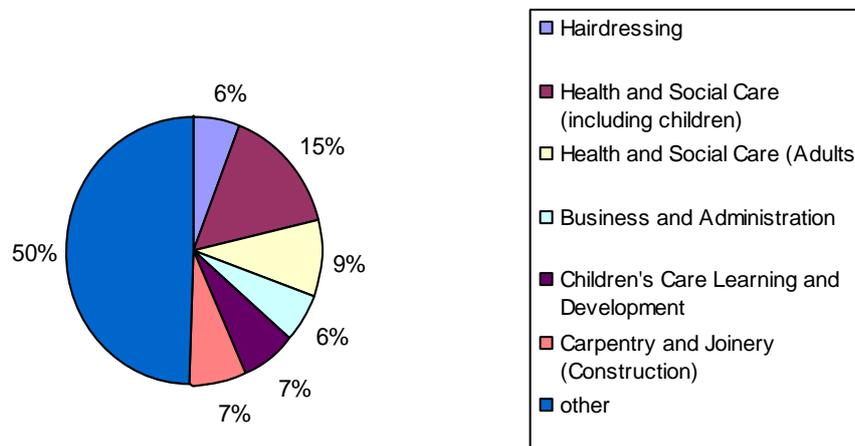
In 2006–07, Health and Social Care, including children and adults, accounted for the largest share of all SVQ entries by a single subject (22%). This was followed by Carpentry and Joinery, Hairdressing, Children's Care Learning and Development, and Business and Administration, all with 6% respectively. The majority of SVQ entries (54%) were across a wide range of other subjects.

Figure 3: SVQ entries for 2006–07



The pattern continues in 2008–09, with 24% of entries from Health and Social Care, 7% from Carpentry and Joinery, and 7% from Children's Care Learning and Development, and 6% for Hairdressing and Business Administration. The proportion of entries from 'others' has dropped slightly (down 4%), which is offset by the rise in entries from Health and Social Care.

Figure 4: SVQ entries for 2008–09



9 Working with Scotland's Colleges

Scotland's 43 colleges are at the forefront of lifelong learning, education, training, and skills development. They play a central part in supporting individuals, communities, and businesses to realise their potential, development, and growth. Scotland's colleges contribute to economic growth by providing training in skills and preparing for work — meeting both local and national skills needs. Colleges offer courses across a range of SCQF levels and in a wide range of subjects, and in doing so facilitate lifelong learning for Scotland.

SQA and Scotland's colleges work in partnership to meet students' and employers' requirements and society's needs. We share the goal of a fully trained and skilled workforce equipped with the knowledge and application to make Scotland an economic force.

Colleges offer courses in a range of areas — from National Qualifications through to further and higher education. School-college partnerships, for example, facilitate *Skills for Work* courses for young people. Colleges also have a role in preparing students for further study and progression. The vocational and occupational learning offered by colleges prepares students for future jobs, and is supported by employers.

The current economic climate, perhaps, makes the role of colleges even more meaningful. 2009 saw the Scottish Funding Council allocate £7 million to Scotland's colleges to support individuals and colleges affected by the economic downturn as part of the PACE initiative (see the [Qualifications and Context section of this Digest](#)). John McClelland, Chair of the Scottish Funding Council, said, 'Colleges are a vital part of giving people the skills to get into work or get back into work. This...will mean that colleges are better placed to respond quickly and effectively. We will continue to work with colleges to make sure their activities are focused on the economy.'

Similarly, Scotland's Colleges published *Skills for a Successful Scotland*, which emphasised the importance of colleges in helping Scotland's economy out of recession by:

- ◆ Providing skills and training to equip individuals to enter or re-enter the job market
- ◆ Working with businesses to enhance the skills of existing employees, making staff more productive and companies more competitive
- ◆ Providing training in the six key sectors identified by the Scottish Government as significant in the Scottish economy (creative industries, energy, financial business services, food and drink, life sciences, and tourism).

Colleges play a critical role in SQA's work, across many of our qualification types, including National Certificates, National Progression Awards, Professional Development Awards, and Higher Nationals. College colleagues are an integral part of SQA qualifications development and support teams. Work undertaken by college staff on SQA's behalf includes writing units, consulting with employers, and reviewing qualifications. The contribution of colleges and the involvement of practitioners mean that we can ensure our qualifications are up to date and fit for purpose. Ensuring that our qualifications meet Scotland's needs is an important factor in ensuring that Scotland recovers from the economic downturn in as strong a position as possible.

10 SQA – Not just about qualifications

For many people, their understanding of what SQA does is limited to our development of school- and work-based qualifications.

These qualifications form a large part of our work, but this is not all that we do. In addition to being responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment, and certification of qualifications other than degrees in Scotland, we also offer several specialist services designed to offer solutions to businesses within Scotland, the rest of the UK, and internationally.

By 'businesses' we mean everyone. Anyone who has in-house training, who delivers their own qualifications or assessed training programmes, or who requires registration or licensing functions can come to SQA and benefit from our extensive experience as an internationally recognised awarding body. This would include schools, colleges, employers, professional bodies, awarding bodies, charities, training providers, government agencies and departments, public sector bodies, and council authorities.

The services we offer are:

Customised Awards Service

This service offers businesses the opportunity to develop a qualification that is tailored to meet the needs of its own staff. SQA will then validate the award, provide quality assurance, and issue commemorative certificates. Customised Awards can assist employers and employees in recognising and increasing skills levels, and provide recognition and development opportunities for individuals. They can also help a company to meet regulatory requirements and to demonstrate the competence of its employees to external parties.

Endorsement Service

This service can endorse qualifications/assessed training programmes or resources. Endorsement by SQA demonstrates that a customer's qualification/programme or resource consistently delivers its stated aims and objectives, is continuously reviewed and kept up to date, underpins good practice, and encourages a culture of learning.

Credit Rating Service

Our Credit Rating service offers the opportunity to have provision credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The process ensures that provision meets the SCQF guidelines and confirms an official SCQF credit rating for a qualification or learning programme. Having qualifications or learning programmes credit rated demonstrates that they have been confirmed, by a recognised credit-rating body, as meeting the required standards, as set by SCQF, in order to be recognised on a national framework of learning. By credit rating a training course or qualification, businesses will also be able to show alignment to other national and European frameworks.

Contract Assessment and Licensing Services

The Contract Assessment services allow organisations to have typical awarding body functions managed on their behalf, where they do not have the resources or skills to do so, by an internationally recognised awarding body. The Contract Assessment services provided cover the design, development, quality assurance, assessment, and certification of qualifications, including delivery of e-assessment. Meanwhile, the Licensing services allow organisations to have registration and licensing functions managed on their behalf, where they do not have the resources or skills to do so, by a Government-approved agency.

If you require any more information on one or more of these services, please contact our Customer Contact Centre:

0845 279 1000

customer@sqa.org.uk