

To: SQA Co-ordinator

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
3	Note and pass on
	None — update/information only

Our ref: NMcP/KW/BACS

13 August 2008

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**Dear Colleague**

### **Scottish Baccalaureates- An Update**

At the beginning of June 2008, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Fiona Hyslop, announced the introduction of a Scottish Science Baccalaureate and a Scottish Language Baccalaureate for pupils in the fifth and sixth years of secondary education. A copy of the Cabinet Secretary's news release on 5<sup>th</sup> June is attached as an appendix to this letter.

SQA is now working closely with colleagues in the Scottish Government and key stakeholders to take this important development forward. The Baccalaureate will be available to centres in August 2009 with first certification in August 2010.

The Scottish Baccalaureate will be based on a coherent group of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. This coherence will allow learners to build a significant body of knowledge, skills and qualifications in science or languages which will enhance progression opportunities in related disciplines to Further and Higher Education and to employment.

In addition, the Baccalaureate will offer added breadth and value through an interdisciplinary project which is intended to broaden the learner experience, extend subject knowledge and develop the generic skills, attitudes and confidence necessary to make the transition into Further and Higher Education and/or employment.

The specific aims of the Scottish Baccalaureate are to:

- ◆ promote sciences and languages as valued and important areas for study and employment
- ◆ raise the status and value of S6 and motivate learners in their last year of school
- ◆ provide qualifications which are valued for entry to higher education
- ◆ provide a bridge between school and higher education/employment
- ◆ encourage collaboration between schools and further/higher education institutions
- ◆ encourage greater coherence in study in fifth and sixth years
- ◆ allow learners to relate and apply learning to realistic contexts
- ◆ enable learners to compete in the international job market
- ◆ develop the generic skills needed for learning, employment and life

It should be noted that the Baccalaureates will not constitute an entire programme of study for S5 and S6 pupils. Those who take the Baccalaureates will have the opportunity to pursue other subjects.

Over the next few months, SQA will be developing the detailed Arrangements, the Project Specifications and the assessments support materials for the Baccalaureates. This work will be done in line with SQA's normal development processes and in collaboration with key stakeholders, including subject specialists, employers and representatives from Scotland's Colleges and Scottish Universities.

At a strategic level, a Key Partners Group has been set up to support and advise throughout the development and implementation process, and at a development level Qualification Design teams have been set up in Science and Languages to guide product development.

In addition to these groups, SQA has already begun a phase of engagement with representative focus groups and individuals to establish communication channels which will raise awareness of this important development and allow us to gather views and advice on implementation.

In November 2008, SQA will be in a position to carry out two important communication tasks:

1. Host a Baccalaureate Information event at a strategic level for invited representatives from the Scottish Government, Higher Education, Scotland's Colleges, Local Authorities and employers. The purpose of the event will be to present information on the development and planned implementation of the Scottish Baccalaureates.
2. Following this event, a full information pack will be sent to all centres and key stakeholders. This information will enable those centres who plan to enter candidates for the Baccalaureate in August 2009 to present clear information to candidates and parents early in the New Year when candidates are selecting options for session 2009/10.

To assist centres with their planning, the table below details important stages in the development and implementation process:

<b>What?</b>	<b>When?</b>
Engagement with representative stakeholder groups and initial development of the Baccalaureate Specifications	July – November 2008
Information Event on Scottish Baccalaureates - representatives at a strategic level	Mid -November 2008
Information pack on Scottish Baccalaureates to all centres and key stakeholders	End November 2008
Publication of Baccalaureate Arrangements and Specifications on SQA's website	End March 2009
Baccalaureate Launch Events – centre subject specialist delegates	End April 2009
Publication of Assessment Support materials on SQA's website	May 2009
Setting up of Subject Support networks to support delivery and assessment in the first year of implementation	August/September 2009

It is SQA's intention to set up a dedicated webpage on Scottish Baccalaureates to keep all centres and stakeholders informed of progress with this important development. Centres will be alerted by email when this section of the website is active.

In the meantime, if you wish further information on any aspect of the work in progress, please contact Nancy McPherson, on the details above.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gill Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gill Stewart  
Director  
Qualifications Directorate

## **Appendix: Cabinet Secretary's news release on Baccalaureates**

### **New Baccalaureates for Scotland**

05/06/2008

New qualifications in science and languages are to be introduced for S5 and S6 pupils in Scotland's schools.

Education Secretary Fiona Hyslop said that the Scottish Language Baccalaureate and Scottish Science Baccalaureate have been created to build on the success of Advanced Highers.

Announcing further details of the qualifications at a conference of science professionals gathered at Stirling University today, Ms Hyslop said:

"The new Baccalaureates are designed to stretch our most able young people and the first awards will be made in 2010. The Baccalaureates will contribute to the Government's principal purpose of creating a more successful Scotland with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth."

Ms Hyslop told the 150 biology teachers, corporate supporters and community partners attending the Institute of Biology Scotland Conference **Taking Biology Forward** that the Baccalaureates would serve as a vital bridge taking students from secondary education into further and higher education and on to industry.

She said:

"The awards aim to encourage more of our young people to study science and language courses in the later stages of secondary school, raise the status of S6 and assist our young people in making the transition from school to higher and further education and employment."

The Baccalaureates will include existing qualifications in science and languages at Higher and Advanced Higher level. The new element of the awards will be an interdisciplinary project to be taken in S6.

Professor Jack Jackson, visiting Professor of Curricular Studies at the University of Strathclyde, who is chairing today's conference, said:

"The interdisciplinary project which will form part of the Science Baccalaureate should give S6 pupils an opportunity to further develop independent learning skills and to take greater responsibility for aspects of their work.

"Spending some of their time engaging with the applications of the sciences in further or higher education or in science-related businesses or industries should give pupils a greater appreciation of the importance of the sciences to future employment and to economic growth. It will be important for pupils to ensure that they choose projects which are related to areas of interest and to future career aspirations. Hopefully, higher education will recognise the added value of the interdisciplinary project and the more rounded qualification provided by the Baccalaureate."

David Cameron, Director of Children's Services at Stirling Council and chairman of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), said:

"ADES is delighted that the Scottish Government is taking such a positive approach to ensure high level provision in, and hopefully, take-up for Sciences and Languages. We would be very interested in working with SQA and the Scottish Government to consider these proposals particularly as part of the wider discussions around Curriculum for Excellence."

Lesley Sawers, Chief Executive, Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), said:

"SCDI has long stressed the importance of ensuring that young people have good quality skills in mathematics, science and engineering to help boost Scotland's economy, particularly in fast-developing areas such as hi-tech manufacturing, renewable energy industry and carbon capture technology. We also need more young people to develop foreign language skills to help hone our competitive edge internationally. Aligning skills and education to the needs of the economy are essential steps if the Scottish Government is to meet its economic growth targets over the coming years."

Professor Emeritus Richard Johnstone OBE, The University of Stirling, said:

"The Baccalaureates will be a great boost primarily for students in the upper secondary school but there is a good chance that students at earlier stages in their secondary education will also find the prospect attractive. The proposal gives students a great opportunity not just to enhance their learning of particular languages but also to integrate their language-learning with the learning of other things which they have chosen to study. As such it will enhance their future study and career prospects considerably."

Dr Tom Shepherd, Chairman, Scottish Life Sciences Alliance, said:

"The new Baccalaureate in Science is an exciting development that will raise the profile of science in schools, reflecting the key role of science in the future economic development of Scotland. This initiative will motivate and recognise the achievements of science students; it will foster the connections between different scientific disciplines, a key factor of modern applied science; and will ease the transition of students to the international opportunities that a science career can provide.

"The Language Baccalaureate is also a very positive step as, despite comments that the international language of business is English, I can say from my own experience of managing a French company for six years that being fluent in the local language is an absolute necessity. The inception of the Language Baccalaureate announces to the world that Scotland's education is globally facing and not insular."

## Proposed structure of the Scottish Language and Science Baccalaureates

### Science Baccalaureate

- Interdisciplinary project at Advanced Higher
- Maths at Higher
- 2 sciences at Higher
- 1 science at Advanced Higher

### Language Baccalaureate:

- Interdisciplinary project at Advanced Higher
- English or Gàidhlig at Higher
- 2 modern or classical language courses at Higher (one of the Higher courses could be replaced by the equivalent in modern language units).
- 1 modern or classical language course at Advanced Higher

### Grading

Pass: Passes in all courses

Distinction: A grade in Advanced Higher; At least B in all other courses

Course options to be included in the Scottish Language and Science Baccalaureates

### Eligible courses

Biology\*  
Biotechnology  
French\*  
Chemistry\*  
German\*  
Computing\*  
Italian\*  
Geology  
Russian  
Human Biology  
Spanish\*  
Information Systems\*  
Classical Greek\*  
Managing Environmental Resources  
Latin\*  
Mechatronics  
Gaelic (Learners)\*  
Physics\*  
Urdu  
Technological Studies\*  
Building Construction  
Mandarin\*\*  
Fabrication and Welding Engineering  
Cantonese\*\*  
Graphic Communication  
Product Design\*\*

\* Currently available at Advanced Higher level

\*\* Will become available at Advanced Higher level from session 2009-10.

SQA's course catalogue is kept under constant review. New courses may be added, or existing courses may be deleted or replaced

An example of a topic that could be studied within the interdisciplinary element of the Science Baccalaureate is how the life sciences are used in industry, the engineering industry and ethical issues in science. An example of a topic in the Languages Baccalaureate is how Scotland's tourism and cultural provision is perceived by speakers of other languages and Scotland and global citizenship issues.

The first Baccalaureates will be awarded in August 2010.