



The design of new National Qualifications

There will be new qualifications called National 4 and National 5. They will replace the qualifications that currently sit at SCQF levels 4 and 5 (Standard Grade, and Intermediate 1 and 2).

The new courses will use a new type of unit — more skills-based, less prescriptive, and more user-friendly. These units will require knowledge and understanding as well as skills. Their specifications will be more flexible and open. They will have fewer, broader outcomes that encourage holistic assessment, and will rely on assessors to exercise professional judgement instead of having to satisfy long lists of criteria.

Both National 4 and National 5 will be based on a nominal 160 hours of study, and in both there will be flexibility in the number of units.

Assessment

Assessment will be appropriate to the subject and level, and will include practical work, performance, case studies, examinations and projects. All Unit assessment will be assessed pass/fail within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

To be awarded the Course, learners would have to provide evidence which meets the requirements of all of the units and (for National 5) pass an external assessment.

Where it is appropriate for the subject area, qualification designers will develop a combined assessment that will provide evidence that the learner has achieved the requirements of the units, reducing the amount of assessment required. Unit by unit assessments will be also available for learners who need to build up their achievement over time.

Adding value

Each course will include a 40-hour added value element.

For National 4, the course will include an added value unit. This will require the learner to demonstrate depth of understanding and/or application of skills. This will not be graded.

For National 5, the course will include an external assessment. This will sample breadth, depth and application from across the Course. The external assessment will be graded.

Further information available at www.sqa.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence