

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NATIONAL 4

National 4 replaces Standard Grade (General level) and Intermediate 1. It is assessed as pass or fail and there are no exams.

Instead, learners are assessed through coursework, which is marked internally by the school.

The new qualifications recognise that all young people are different, and there are many different options available to them.

National 4 is well-suited to those who want to develop their practical knowledge and skills, and can lead to Modern Apprenticeships, employment opportunities and training.

Those who achieve National 4 can also go on to study for National 5 and Higher.

In addition to the practical skills developed at National 4, learners also have the opportunity to have their life and work skills recognised through SQA's new range of Wider Achievement Awards.

These Awards recognise success across various levels of difficulty and are suitable for learners of all abilities.

There are also a number of SQA qualifications available that help learners prepare for the world of work, including: Skills for Work Courses, National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates (NCs).



# Changes for a brighter future

The introduction of Curriculum for Excellence has brought a lot of developments for the Scottish qualifications system. But, say the SQA, the new system will equip young people for life and work in the 21st century

**C**urriculum for Excellence (CfE) – the national curriculum for ages three to 18 – was introduced in 2010, and a lot of changes have since been happening to the Scottish Qualification Authority's (SQA) national qualifications to bring them in line with the new system.

Last year saw the end of Standard Grades and the introduction of the new National 1 to National 5 qualifications. This year the new Highers, which follow on from National 5, go live.

They were last revised 15 years ago and in that time, some significant changes have taken place.

The world young people now enter when they leave school is very different – and far more challenging.

But for those with the right skills and know-how, it is a world of fantastic opportunities.

SQA believe the new qualifications will help to equip young people for learning, life and work in the 21st century.

Dr Janet Brown, chief executive at SQA, says: "The new qualifications have been designed to broaden the quality of learning and enable young people to take what they have learned at school and apply it beyond the classroom."

"We want to ensure continued success for our young people – whether they plan on moving into the workplace or a training scheme, or taking up a place at college or university."

There have also been some changes to the way the new qualifications are assessed.

There will now be more focus on assessment through coursework, such as assignments, practical activities and performances.

There is also lots of support available

for teachers for the coming session, as well as for learners.

Dr Gill Stewart, director of qualifications development at SQA, says: "Teachers have been working very hard to implement the new qualifications and ensure learners are fully prepared for their assessments."

"We know teachers want the best for their pupils, and our number-one priority is to make sure they have the support required to help Scotland's young people benefit from the new qualifications."

"SQA are listening carefully to teachers and continue to take on-board their comments and feedback."

"As we progress into the next academic year, we will work with

schools and provide subject-specific materials to help teachers with understanding national standards."

A range of support materials for the new national qualifications, including specimen question papers, information on coursework, assessment support for teachers and lecturers and past paper guidance, is available from SQA's website.



## SAM'S FAQ

**Q: What's the best way to revise?**  
A: Everyone's different. You may be the type who can memorise, or maybe you make summary notes. Or perhaps you use key words or diagrams. Try a few approaches and see what works best for you.

**Q: What support materials can I use to prepare for my qualifications?**

A: SQA's website has got past papers for existing Intermediate and Higher courses, and there are now past papers from this year's National 5 exams. There are also specimen question papers for National 5 and the new Higher.

If you're studying for the new qualifications, you could also try past papers from existing qualifications – just check with your teacher or lecturer about which questions to use.

**Q: Where can I find information on coursework in the new qualifications?**

A: If you're doing National 5 or the new Higher, SQA have published coursework information on their website. This covers any coursework you'll do as part of the final assessment and can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects)

## Ask Sam!

Studying national qualifications this year? Got a burning question? I'm SAM and I'm always on hand to provide support and answer any questions you have, so please feel free to give me a shout! Contact me at:  
Twitter @MYSQA\_SAM or  
Facebook/MYSQA.SAM



**Q: I've been told I should make myself a study plan – where do I start?**

A: SQA's MyStudyPlan is a really handy wee app that can help you plan your revision timetable. You'll get it on iTunes for use on iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. It will also soon be available on Google Play for Android users.

## SAM'S TOP TIPS FOR COURSEWORK

- 1. Revise** your work as soon as you learn it – this helps reinforce it better than leaving it all to the last minute.
- 2. Make sure** it's all your own work, and if you use any sources to help you – such as books or even info you've found online – make sure you reference them.
- 3. Try** to give yourself plenty of time to get your coursework done and handed in on time, but don't panic if you're struggling with a deadline – have a chat with your teacher to see what can be done to help.
- 4. Never underestimate** the importance of a good proof read – check and double check your work to make sure you've covered everything.
- 5. Get clued up** on SQA's rules for submitting coursework.



## Timeline

### August 2014

- New Higher and all remaining National 1 Units go live
- Existing Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher still available

### August 2015

- New Advanced Higher goes live
- Existing Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher removed



For more information, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/brighterfuture](http://www.sqa.org.uk/brighterfuture)