

Qualifications are Changing



A guide for **Learners** to the new **National Qualifications**

The world in the 21st century promises to be an exciting place. For those with the right knowledge and the most up-to-date skills, it's a world full of possibilities. The new SQA qualifications are designed to give you the skills you will need to succeed.

New National Qualifications



New qualifications will be introduced in Scotland between 2013 and 2016. Called **Nationals**, **Highers** and **Advanced Highers**, they will replace the existing Access, Standard Grades, Intermediates, Highers and Advanced Highers.

These new qualifications have been developed by SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority), with the aim of securing a successful future for Scotland's young people.

Why change?

In a changing world, it's important that education changes to keep pace.

The new qualifications are designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge and understanding you will need to succeed now and in the future. The skills you are learning in the classroom today will be more applicable than ever when you go out beyond the classroom.

The new qualifications will help you demonstrate the knowledge and skills you develop at school or college and help you prepare for further learning, training and employment. The new qualifications are presented in a new, simplified format that is easier for learners, parents and prospective employers to understand.

The new qualifications have been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence, which introduced a new way of learning to secondary schools and colleges in 2010.



When will they start?

National 1, **National 2**, **National 3**, **National 4** and **National 5** will be available from August 2013, while the new Higher will be introduced in August 2014 and the new **Advanced Higher** in August 2015.

Most learners will study for these new qualifications at school in S4, S5 and S6, or at college. However, schools and colleges may introduce these changes at different times, so do ask your teachers and lecturers about their plans to introduce the qualifications.

You will continue to choose the subjects you want to study at each level and your school or college will tell you when these choices have to be made.

What is changing?

This table shows the new National Qualifications and how they compare to the qualifications your older friends and family may have studied:

SCQF level	Current National Qualifications	Replaced by	New National Qualifications
1 and 2	Access 1 and Access 2	▶	National 1 and National 2
3	Access 3 Standard Grade (Foundation level)	▶	National 3
4	Standard Grade (General level) Intermediate 1	▶	National 4
5	Standard Grade (Credit level) Intermediate 2	▶	National 5
6	Higher	▶	Higher (new)
7	Advanced Higher	▶	Advanced Higher (new)

You can find out more about the new qualifications and how they compare with existing qualifications on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Visit www.sqa.org.uk/scqf



How will they actually work?

National 1, National 2, National 3 and **National 4** will be marked and assessed by your school or college.

National 5, Higher and **Advanced Higher** will involve a Course assessment, which will normally be a question paper and/or coursework. Question papers are marked by SQA and coursework is either marked by SQA or by your teacher or lecturer.

Assessment will be appropriate to the subject and the level you're studying. So, if you're doing an assignment for National 4 Computing Science, it will have different demands from a Higher Computing Science assignment.

Of course, it is in everyone's interests to ensure that these qualifications are recognised as being fair and consistent. SQA is working with schools and colleges to ensure all assessments continue to meet national standards.

How will they be graded?

Courses at **National 2, National 3** and **National 4** will not be graded. You will either receive a Pass or a Fail.

Courses at **National 5, Higher** and **Advanced Higher** will be graded A to D or 'No Award'.

If you fail a Course assessment, you will receive credit for the Units you have achieved.



How do I prepare?

SQA is preparing a full set of sample questions and other resources for you, to help you revise and prepare. They will be available before the new qualifications are introduced.

New Awards

Of course everybody is different. That's why SQA has developed more new ways of recognising your achievements at school or college. These are in addition to the current awards and the new Nationals; they don't replace any existing qualifications.

Some of these new Awards cover work from a variety of subjects, some are shorter than traditional Courses, and some recognise success across different levels of difficulty.

Each Award supports Curriculum for Excellence and is available at different levels.

There are Awards in:

Personal Achievement	SCQF levels 1 and 2
Personal Development	SCQF levels 2 to 6
Modern Languages for Life and Work	SCQF levels 3 and 4
Wellbeing	SCQF levels 3 to 5
Religion, Belief and Values	SCQF levels 3 to 6

This means that there is now a qualification that recognises your abilities and achievements, whoever you are. These are available in schools and colleges now, and will be marked and assessed within the school or college.



Who can I talk to now?

Teachers, lecturers and parents/carers have also been sent information about all these changes, so they know what's happening too. Why not discuss it with them?

If you want to find out more for yourself, go to SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople. Or look out for **MYSQA_SAM** on Twitter, Facebook at www.facebook.com/mysqa.sam and **The Student Room**. SAM is there to answer any questions you may have about anything to do with exams, Curriculum for Excellence or any other SQA-related issue.

Other useful websites include www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone; www.scqf.org.uk and www.engageforeducation.org.

Meanwhile, we'll continue to provide information and support as the changes are put in place to ensure the qualifications are a success and that they help you in the future.



Which qualifications will be available?

This table shows when the new Nationals will typically be available to learners currently in S1, S2 and S3. Learners in S4 and above will continue to work towards the current qualifications.

Learners at college should speak to their college about when the new qualifications will be available.

Academic Year /Session	Learners in S1:	Learners in S2:	Learners in S3:
2012-13	Broad general education in S1	Broad general education in S2	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*
2013-14	Broad general education in S2	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available*
2014-15	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available*	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*
2015-16	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*
2016-17	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*	
2017-18	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*		

*Speak to your teacher about how the new qualifications will be introduced.

curriculum for excellence



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