

# Qualifications are Changing



A guide for **Parents/Carers** to the new **National Qualifications**

New qualifications will be introduced in Scotland between 2013 and 2016. Called **Nationals**, **Highers** and **Advanced Highers**, these will replace the existing Access, Standard Grade, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications.

# Why are new qualifications needed?



In 2010, Curriculum for Excellence introduced a new way of learning to secondary schools and colleges with the aim of equipping learners for life in the 21st century.

SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) has designed the new qualifications, with the interests of the learner at heart. They will help young people demonstrate the knowledge and skills they've acquired at school or college and enable them to prepare for further learning, training and employment.

The new, simplified format of the qualifications will also be easier for learners, parents and prospective employers to understand.

# What is changing?

This table shows which current qualifications the new National Qualifications will replace:

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) website. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)



# When will they be introduced?



The new qualifications will be introduced in phases in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

In August 2013, the new **National 1**, **National 2**, **National 3**, **National 4** and **National 5** will be introduced, with the new **Higher** available the following year and the new **Advanced Higher** from August 2015.

In most cases, school learners will be in S4, S5 and S6 when they are sitting the qualifications – college learners should ask their college about when the new qualifications will be available to them.

At each level, learners will continue to select their subjects. Your school or college can tell you when these choices have to be made.

# How will they be assessed?



From **National 1** to **National 4**, new Courses and Units are assessed by the teacher or lecturer to determine a pass or fail. SQA will check assessments to ensure they meet the national standard.

**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 the teacher or lecturer.

Assessments, such as assignments, case studies or question papers, will be appropriate to the subject and level of study. For example, a National 4 Geography assignment will set different demands from a Higher Geography assignment.

The value of the new qualifications is entirely down to robust quality control. We are working with schools and colleges to ensure that all assessments are fair, valid and consistent, according to national standards, and can be relied upon by colleges, universities and employers in the future.

## How will they be graded?



All Courses will continue to contain work that is marked throughout the year by teachers and lecturers as it is at present. These Units will be assessed as a Pass or a Fail as is currently the case.

Courses at **National 2**, **National 3** and **National 4** will not be graded, but assessed as a Pass or Fail.

Courses at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** will be graded A to D, or 'No Award'. If a Course assessment is failed, the learner will receive credit for the Units they have achieved at that level.

There are no automatic compensatory arrangements at any level.

# Studying for the new qualifications

Learners will not be disadvantaged compared to previous years because the qualifications are new. Specimen question papers and other resources are being prepared now, and will be available in plenty of time to help learners revise and prepare for the new qualifications.

## New Awards

As well as the new National Courses, SQA has developed a range of new Awards designed to give young people more ways to demonstrate their achievement at school or college.

These have been available since August 2012. They are marked and assessed by teachers and lecturers, according to national standards.

Some cover work from different subject areas, are shorter than traditional Courses and recognise success across different levels of difficulty.

Each Award is based on the values, purpose and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and is available at various levels:

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

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

You can see all existing qualifications and how they equate to the SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) at [www.scqf.org.uk/scqf](http://www.scqf.org.uk/scqf)



## Other National Qualifications



We continue to offer other types of National Qualification that support Wider Achievement. These include:

- Skills for Work Courses, which introduce learners to the demands and expectations of the world of work. [www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork](http://www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork)
- National Progression Awards and National Certificates, which assess skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and are designed to prepare learners for employment, career development or progression to further study at Higher National level. [www.sqa.org.uk/npa](http://www.sqa.org.uk/npa)

# Where can I find out more?

The SQA website, [www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents), is full of useful information to help you understand the changes to National Qualifications, including opportunities to download the final documents. There are also details on how we are working with teachers and lecturers to introduce the new National Qualifications and Awards.

Keep in touch with us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/scottishqualificationsauthority](http://www.facebook.com/scottishqualificationsauthority), follow the updates from [@sqanews](https://twitter.com/sqanews) on Twitter, or subscribe to our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline](http://www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline)

If you have any further questions at all about Curriculum for Excellence or how the new qualifications will be implemented, please speak to your school, college or local authority.

## Other useful links:



For information on how to support learning for young people – [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone)

Members of parent-teacher councils can visit the Scottish Parent Teacher Council website at [www.sptc.info](http://www.sptc.info)

Get in touch with the National Parent Forum of Scotland at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/>

Keep up to date with Scotland's education community at [www.engageforeducation.org](http://www.engageforeducation.org)

Find advice and information about additional support for learning at [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)



Which qualifications will be available?



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

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

Academic Year /Session	Learners in S1 in 2012-13	Learners in S2 in 2012-13	Learners in S3 in 2012-13
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 school about how the new qualifications will be introduced.





curriculum for excellence



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