



Annual Statistical Digest 2007



Shining a spotlight on new trends and developments in our qualifications



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The information contained here and in the Annual Statistical Report 2007 is available on our website (www.sqa.org.uk) where the data can be downloaded as Excel spreadsheets. Further statistical information for the current and previous years can also be found on the website.

We welcome your views on the scope and content of the Annual Statistical Report 2007 and the Annual Statistical Digest 2007. You can comment by e-mail to ris.statistics@sqa.org.uk or in writing to: SQA, Research and Information Services, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, EH22 1LE.

INTRODUCTION



Dr Janet Brown
Chief Executive

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to introduce SQA's sixth Annual Statistical Digest. The Digest brings together data on the different qualifications in SQA's portfolio in 2007, and allows the organisation to shine a spotlight on new trends and developments in our qualifications.

2007 was another successful year for Scotland's learners. In August, we sent out more certificates than ever before. More than 350,000 learners have completed an SQA qualification over the academic year.

Pass rates for National Courses from Access 2 to Advanced Higher showed a small improvement in attainment. There have also been increases in entries in National Units, National Qualification Group Awards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, and Professional Development Awards.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work of both learners and those who supported them — teachers, lecturers, and everyone else involved in education and lifelong learning. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all Scotland's learners on their hard work and achievements, and to recognise the support that they have received from all those working with them in their studies.

We are continuing to work to support learners, teachers, lecturers, and others working in education and training. You can get more details of these activities on our

website or by subscribing to our e-zine — you can do this on the front page of our website.

SQA has recently increased the scale of its activities outside Scotland, and in some qualifications we now have a significant number of entries from overseas centres. The statistics in this Digest relate to the uptake of SQA qualifications regardless of the location of the centre. However, for 2006/07 we have introduced a full breakdown of entries and awards based on whether centres were within or outwith Scotland. These tables are available on our website: www.sqa.org.uk (prefixed with 'OS').

This Digest offers extracts from the Annual Statistical Report 2007, which contains the results for all SQA qualifications for the academic year 2006/07. The articles take a broader look at trends and developments to date in education and training in Scotland.

I would like to finish by wishing all of our learners success in all their educational activities, and I hope that you find this Digest both enjoyable and useful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Janet Brown'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Janet Brown

QUALIFICATIONS AND CONTEXT

2007 HAS SEEN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCOTTISH EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND LIFELONG LEARNING LANDSCAPE — FROM CONTINUING WORK ON CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE SKILLS STRATEGY.

As well as being another successful year for SQA and Scotland's learners, the year also saw Dr Janet Brown complete her first examination diet as Chief Executive, and SQA celebrate its tenth birthday.

The year has seen developments in the Scottish education and lifelong learning landscape, including the election of a new SNP Government. Since the election, the Government has published a new economic strategy and a skills strategy called Skills for Scotland. Its objective is the development of a lifelong learning system centred on the individual, but responsive to employers' needs. The strategy will have a significant impact on Scotland's learners, employers, the economy and stakeholders, and on SQA's work and future direction.

The strategy calls on SQA to continue to: involve employers and sector skills councils in the development of qualifications; place qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework; and ensure that essential skills are visible in all qualifications. We are committed to playing our part in the wider agenda, and we intend ensuring that all of our existing and planned activities, across all qualification types, support the skills strategy.

Meanwhile, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student

Assessment (PISA) study, and its Review of the Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland, confirmed that Scotland is a well-schooled nation. The OECD found that Scotland performs at a consistently high standard and that few countries outperform it in mathematics, reading, and science. However, they did identify areas of challenge where we must do better.

The Scottish Government and partners are continuing to work to create a curriculum which will meet the needs of — and identify aspirations for — all of Scotland's young people through Curriculum for Excellence. Skills for Work Courses are one of Curriculum for Excellence's most visible outcomes to date — 2007 was the second year of the pilot for Skills for Work Courses.

The second year of piloting went extremely smoothly, and Skills for Work Courses became available for mainstream delivery from August. We see these Courses making a major contribution to the skills agenda and the issues raised in the OECD's review by giving school pupils the opportunity to experience the world of work and gain practical experience of vocational areas. Learners' feedback has been very positive: the Courses have provided them with meaningful, enjoyable, and practical experiences. Many learners commented on a growth of personal confidence and understanding of employability skills.



As the national awarding and accreditation body for Scotland, and as an organisation that will have a significant role in delivering the goals and aspirations of the skills strategy, we are increasing our commitment to partnership working and to effectively meeting market demand. Here are some recent examples:

■ The Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Allied Health Professions is designed to equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, and skills required for success in current and future employment in NHS Scotland. It was developed primarily for assistant practitioners in Allied Health Professions in response to the need for qualifications to support the aims of workforce development in the NHS. NHS Education for Scotland has now commissioned us to develop more HNCs using this model, which will be extended according to demand.

■ The driver for the development of National Progression Awards (NPAs) for the security industry was the introduction of the Private Security Industry Act (2001) in Scotland, which came into effect on 1 November 2007. Many workers in the industry are now required to hold a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence to operate. To meet these requirements, we developed a suite of NPAs at SCQF level 5 covering Public Surveillance, Door Supervision, and Security Guarding. The awards were endorsed by the SIA and accredited by SQA's Accreditation

Committee. To support the awards, we developed a customised online assessment system, which also allows for the secure transfer of candidate information directly to the SIA for registration.

■ The new Professional Development Award (PDA) in Renewable Energy Systems at SCQF level 8 will provide learners with knowledge and understanding of current and future trends in energy production, sustainability, and energy conservation issues. The PDA will also allow learners to gain a broad understanding of the physics and engineering of many renewable energy technologies so that they can make accurate, valid comparisons between renewable energy technologies and solve energy-related problems.

■ Working with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE), and several Practice Learning Networks, we developed three PDAs in Practice Learning and three PDAs in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF levels 7, 9, and 10. The PDAs are designed to enable people who support or contribute to learning in the workforce to deliver high quality learner support. The PDAs are delivered by a combination of off-the-job and work-based learning.

■ SQA and the Scottish Paralegal Association entered into an agreement to provide new qualifications in legal services. The 10,000 people working in paralegal roles in Scotland now have an opportunity to work towards a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or a Higher National Diploma (HND), or smaller, specialised PDAs. In the future, paralegals will be able to register with the Law Society of Scotland, giving them a new professional status. The new qualifications will play a key role in the registration process.

■ 2007 saw the UK launch of the world's first Media Academy Network. The network is made up of 17 academies and was developed by Skillset, the UK sector skills council for the audiovisual industries. SQA is a partner in Creative Loop, a partnership of six colleges, Scottish Screen, and Skillset Scotland, and is funded by the Scottish Funding Council. Our direct involvement with Creative Loop is primarily centred on qualifications development and continuing professional development. Our PDAs have the potential to provide flexible packages of training to meet the demands of a sector which experiences rapid technological innovation and development.

NATIONAL UNITS AND GROUP AWARDS 2007

National Units

National Units can be taken in schools, colleges and other training centres. They can be taken as individual qualifications or built up into National Courses or Group Awards. Most Units are designed to take 40 hours of teaching time to complete, and learners are expected to do some additional work on their own. A Unit is achieved by passing an assessment – coursework, tests, or practical work marked by the teacher, lecturer or trainer. These assessments are checked by SQA.

National Units are internally assessed, subject to external verification (the procedure we use to make sure that centres' assessment decisions meet national standards), and awarded on the basis of evidence of attainment.

National Units are available at a range of levels – from SCQF level 1 (Access 1), to SCQF level 7 (Advanced Higher). Each Unit at level 1 to 6 has six SCQF credit points, and a Unit at level 7 has eight SCQF credit points.

Group Awards

We have recently introduced new National Certificates (NCs) and National Progression Awards (NPAs), and are phasing out National Certificate Group Awards (NCGAs), Scottish Group Awards (SGAs) and Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs).

National Certificates are vocational qualifications made up of National Units. They are designed to meet the specific needs of employment sectors. Currently the majority of entries in NCs are in Engineering qualifications, but they also cover Childcare and Skillstart Courses.

National Progression Awards (NPAs), previously known as Scottish Progression Awards, are designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas. They are predominantly made up of National Units, but can include SVQ or HN Units. They can be taken in schools, colleges, and in other training centres. These qualifications cover a variety of different areas including Care, ICT, and Machinery Operations.

Entries and awards for National Units and high uptake Group Awards, 2006 and 2007

	Entries		Awards	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
National Units	1,805,107	1,932,803	1,392,585	1,430,046
National Certificates (NC)¹	3,213	3,872	1,852	2,199
National Progression Awards (NPA)²	5,809	8,444	3,165	4,581

¹Includes NCGAs ²Includes SPAs

National Units (2007)

There has been a continued increase in National Unit entries since 2005. In 2007 there was a 7% increase in entries on the previous year. Awards have grown by 3%, continuing the trend of increases since 2004.

There were more entries from female learners (53%) than male (47%).

The most popular National Units were in Science and Mathematics subject areas, where entries have increased by 8%.

National Unit entries from learners in centres outwith Scotland (3,374) made up less than 0.2% of the total uptake.

National Certificates (2007)

In 2007 the number of National Certificate entries rose by 21% and the number of awards by 19%.

There were also considerably more entries from male learners (66%) than females (34%).

However, the most popular National Certificate continues to be Early Education and Childcare (Higher) with 1,065 entries, 28% of the total entries.

All National Certificate entries were from learners in centres within Scotland.

National Progression Awards (including SPAs) (2007)

There were considerably more entries and awards in 2007, both increasing by 45%.

Overall, there were more entries from male learners than female (66% male, 34% female).

The most popular Courses were Beginner PC Passport (Intermediate 1) with 2,914 entries and Intermediate PC Passport (Intermediate 2) with 1,799 entries.

There were five entries from centres outwith Scotland.

There's more information on National Units and Group Awards in the Annual Statistical Report 2007, tables NU 1-6, OS NU 1-3, GA 1-6 and OS GA 1-6.



STANDARD

GRADE 2007

Standard Grade

Standard Grade is the main type of qualification in schools for 15–16 year olds, and is generally taken over two years in third and fourth year at secondary school. Learners typically study six or seven subjects including Mathematics and English. There are three levels: Credit (SCQF level 5), General (SCQF level 4), and Foundation (SCQF level 3). Learners usually take exams at two levels – Credit and General, or General and Foundation to make sure they have the best chance of

achieving as high a grade as possible. Learners who do not achieve a grade 1–6, but do complete the Course, are awarded a grade 7. Standard Grade is explicitly designed to offer assessment and certification for all, and this is reflected in the high levels of attainment.

Entries and number of learners entered for Standard Grade, 2006 and 2007

	Entries		Learners	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
Standard Grade*	415,874	404,693	66,365	68,384

*Entries exclude the Writing option of Gaelic (Learners).

- Entries in 2007 for Standard Grade decreased by 3% from the previous year. This comes after a 1% rise in entries in 2006.
- Over all subjects, 43% of entries resulted in a Credit award (grade 1–2), 42% in a General award (grade 3–4), and 13% in a Foundation award (grade 5–6).
- There was an even split by gender in entries for Standard Grade.
- The largest rise in entry numbers in high uptake subjects was in Drama, up by 4%. The largest drop in entries was in Standard Grade Science.

There's more information on Standard Grade in the Annual Statistical Report 2007, tables SG 1–8 and OS NQ 1–3.

SKILLS FOR WORK:

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK

SKILLS FOR WORK COURSES ARE A NEW QUALIFICATION, FOCUSED ON THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR EMPLOYMENT, AND AIMED AT HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROGRESS EITHER ON TO FURTHER QUALIFICATIONS OR INTO THE WORKING WORLD.

In November 2004, the Scottish Executive report, *A Curriculum for Excellence* called for 'more skills-for-work options for young people, robustly assessed, to help them to progress into further qualifications and work'. Following a successful two-year pilot from 2005 to 2007, we have made a range of Skills for Work Courses available. These Courses are for pupils in third and fourth year of secondary school and above, and they focus on the world of work.

Skills for Work Courses are different from other vocational qualifications because they focus on the generic employability skills

needed for success in the workplace. The Courses offer opportunities for learners to acquire these critical skills through practical experiences that are linked to a vocational area, such as construction, hairdressing, or hospitality. They require schools to work in partnership with further education colleges or other training providers.

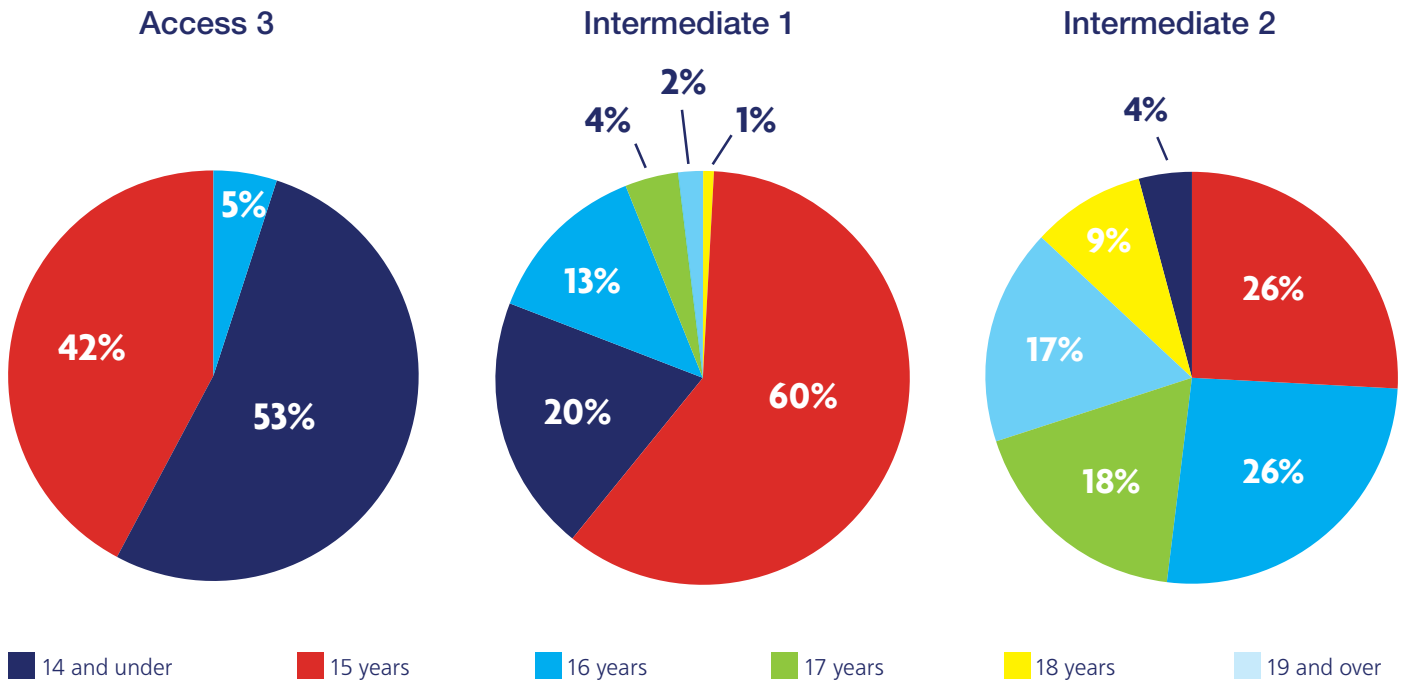
The table below shows the overall numbers of entries and Courses at each level in the past two years.

Courses and entries for Skills for Work 2006–07

Year	2006		2007	
	Courses	Entries	Courses	Entries
Access 3			1	59
Intermediate 1	3	226	5	1,129
Intermediate 2	1	118	4	274

Courses not available at this level in 2006.

Skills for Work entries by age



The numbers of entries in 2006 were relatively small. This was expected as entries comprised learners who had managed to complete the Courses over one year. However, in 2007, learners completed the original Intermediate Courses in substantial numbers. A new Access 3 Course was introduced, as well as an additional two Courses at Intermediate 1 and three at Intermediate 2.

The vast majority of those sitting Skills for Work Courses at Access 3 were aged 14 and 15. At Intermediate 1, the majority of learners are aged between 14 and 16, and at Intermediate 2 they are aged between 15 and 17. However, as can be seen from the above charts, there is great variety in the age range of learners, especially at Intermediate 2, confirming that these Courses are being used outside the school environment.

Course	Access 3	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2
Construction Crafts		517	38
Early Education and Childcare		391	212
Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering	59		
Financial Services			17
Hairdressing		139	
Rural Skills		19	
Sport and Recreation		63	7

In 2007, learners were offered a choice of 10 Skills for Work Courses – one at Access 3, five at Intermediate 1, and four at Intermediate 2. The entry numbers by Course are shown in the table to the left. What is noticeable from the table is that there are already significant numbers of entries across a range of subjects. A variety of new Courses are also being launched, with the first Higher Course being made available for learners in 2007–08. A further six new Skills for Work Courses are being launched in 2008, with the first learners completing the Courses in 2009. By the end of April 2008, a total of 19 Skills for Work Courses will be available.

■ Courses not available at this level in 2007.

NATIONAL COURSES 2007

National Courses

National Courses, with the exception of Access 2 and 3, and Skills for Work, are normally made up of three National Units plus an external assessment – usually an examination and/or coursework which is marked and checked by professional Examiners appointed by SQA.

For a Course award, learners must pass all the Units as well as attempting the external assessment. Grades A to D are awarded, depending on how the learner does in the external assessment.

Access 2, 3 and Skills for Work Courses are Unit-based, with no external examination. Learners must pass all the Units to be awarded the complete Course. These Courses are assessed by the teacher or lecturer and verified by SQA.

National Courses are available at SCQF levels: 2 (Access 2), 3 (Access 3), 4 (Intermediate 1), 5 (Intermediate 2), 6 (Higher), and 7 (Advanced Higher).

Entries and number of learners entered for National Courses, 2006 and 2007

	Entries		Learners	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
Access 2	2,196	2,769	1,557	1,866
Access 3	19,444	30,196	14,585	21,469
Intermediate 1	45,174	53,840	32,352	37,490
Intermediate 2	94,686	107,340	49,627	54,684
Higher	159,140	161,081	57,016	57,745
Advanced Higher	18,264	17,831	11,490	10,953

Access 2 (2007)

Entries increased significantly in 2007, by 26%. There was a corresponding increase in awards of 36% on 2006.

Overall most entries were for male learners, (63% male, 37% female).

Mathematics and English continued to be the most popular Courses, with over 500 entries each. Entries for Science have more than doubled from 109 to 242.

Access 3 (2007)

Entries and awards at Access 3 rose substantially, by 55% and 64% respectively.

Overall there were more entries from male learners than female learners (57% male, 43% female).

A Skills for Work Course was introduced for the first time at this level, Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering. It had 59 entries.

The subjects with large increases in entries were Media Studies (up 326%), Music (up 179%) and English (up 118%). Geography, History and Modern Studies were offered for the first time at this level and had a total of 1,213 entries.

Intermediate 2 (2007)

Entries for Intermediate 2 Courses continued to grow, rising by 13% in 2007. The overall pass rate for all Intermediate 2 subjects was 77%, a rise of three percentage points on the previous year.

Overall, there were more entries for females (53%) than males (47%).

There were four Skills for Work Courses at this level in 2007.

As at Intermediate 1, the largest percentage increase in entry numbers for high uptake subjects was for a Skills for Work Course, Early Education and Childcare (up 80%).

There were 315 entries in three subjects for learners from centres located outwith Scotland.

Intermediate 1 (2007)

There were 53,840 entries at Intermediate 1 in 2007, a 19% increase on 2006. The overall pass rate increased by 1 percentage point to 73%.

Overall, there was an almost even split in entries by gender (49% male, 51% female).

There were five Skills for Work Courses at this level in 2007.

The largest percentage rises in entry numbers for subjects with over 100 entries were seen in two of the Skills for Work Courses, Construction Crafts (up by 433%), and Early Education and Childcare (up 252%).

Higher (2007)

Entries at Higher level rose by 1% in 2007. The overall pass rate remained steady at 73%.

Overall, there were more entries for females (56%) than males (44%).

The largest increases in high uptake subjects were in the Project-based National Courses, Photography for the Media (up 53%) and Mental Health Care (up 34%).

There were 237 entries in five subjects for learners from centres located outwith Scotland.

Advanced Higher (2007)

There was a decrease in entries at Advanced Higher of 2%. The pass rate across all subjects was 77%, up by one percentage point on 2006.

Overall, there were more entries for females (52%) than males (48%).

The largest percentage increases in entries were in Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies (up by 30%), and Drama (up 29%). The largest decrease was in Business Management (down 27%).

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

WE HAVE AN UPGRADED PORTFOLIO OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEARNERS WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH AS A FIRST LANGUAGE. THERE IS LIKELY TO BE GROWING DEMAND FOR THESE QUALIFICATIONS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTWITH SCOTLAND.

SQA has long offered National Units in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), which are aimed at learners whose first language is not English. These Units are available at every level from Access 2 through to Higher, and last year 4,624 learners took one or more Units. For the first time SQA also offered complete ESOL Courses at Intermediate 2 and Higher level, with the first learners sitting exams at both levels in 2007. This article focuses primarily on these new National Courses.

We believe that there is likely to be increased demand for these qualifications in the near future, because of both increased immigration into Scotland, and greater demand for SQA qualifications from other countries. All of Scotland's higher education institutions (HEIs) have indicated that they will accept Higher ESOL as being a valid qualification for university entrance, and a number of HEIs have said that they will accept Higher ESOL as being equivalent to Higher English for learners whose first language is not English.

These qualifications assess the four skills of Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading.

The topics and tasks covered are relevant to learners and are related to everyday work, study, community, and social situations. The qualifications also offer people an introduction to various aspects of everyday life in the UK.

Our ESOL portfolio sits well with the priorities the Scottish Government set out in Skills for Scotland and its Adult ESOL Strategy (published in March 2007). The Adult ESOL Strategy aims to help to improve the language skills of both new immigrants to Scotland, and, where appropriate, members of the settled minority ethnic communities. The ESOL qualifications that SQA has produced will play a significant part in this process.

It is important to note, however, that ESOL qualifications are not only targeted at adults – with increasing numbers of school pupils who do not have English as their first language, it is likely that these qualifications will be used in schools as well.

In 2007, 193 learners sat the Higher ESOL qualification, with a further 393 entries at Intermediate 2. These entries were almost



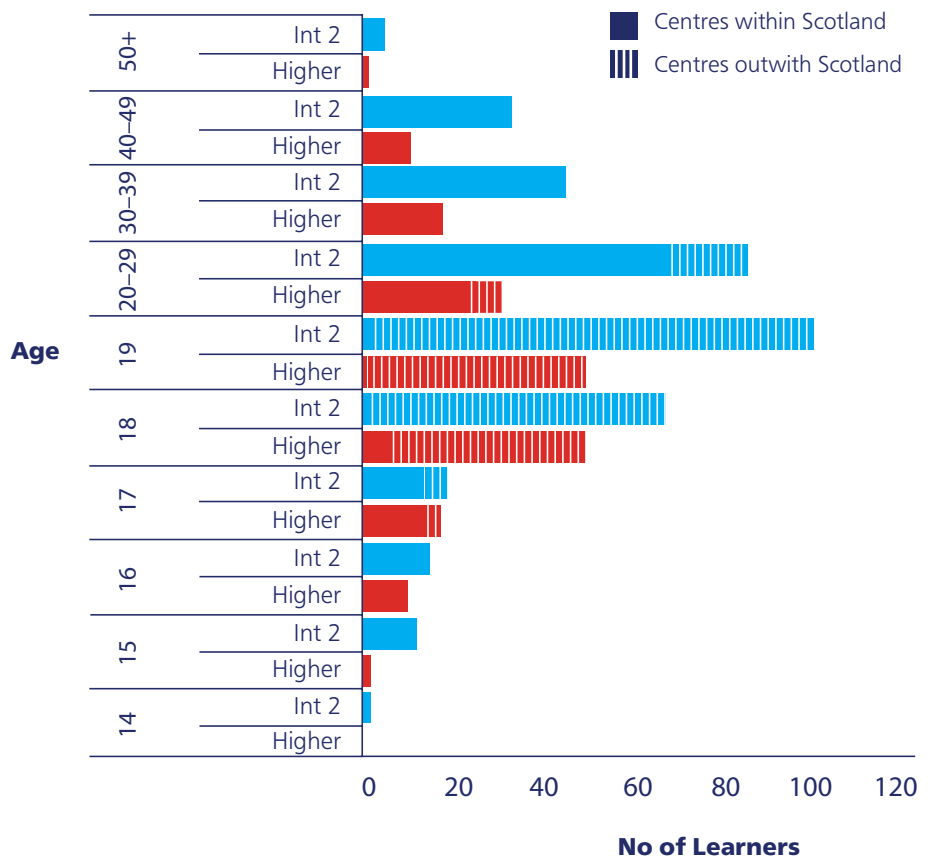
ESOL learners by age, level and centre location

evenly split between learners at Scottish schools and colleges and learners at centres outside Scotland – 47% of entries at Higher and 53% of entries at Intermediate 2 came from Scottish-based centres. At both Higher and Intermediate 2, around 60% of learners were female.

Most of the Scottish-based learners studied for their qualifications at further education colleges – school-based learners were outnumbered by around 4:1 by their college-based counterparts.

ESOL learners span a wide range of ages, with peaks at 18 and 19, and a considerable number of older learners. The learners in centres within Scotland have the widest age range from 14 to over 50. Those from centres outwith Scotland are aged between 17 and 22.

Following on from the successful launch of Courses at Higher and Intermediate 2 in 2006/07, we introduced 11 new Units from Access 2 to Intermediate 1 in August 2007. This completes the framework, providing certification for all levels, from complete beginners to advanced level.



HIGHER NATIONAL UNITS: LEARNING TO FIT YOUR NEEDS

ENTRIES FOR HN UNITS WERE OVER 430,000 IN EACH OF THE LAST TWO YEARS. AS WELL AS WORKING TOWARDS HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS, THESE LEARNERS CAN BE WORKING IN COLLEGE-DESIGNED PROGRAMMES, OR IN AREAS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

Over recent years, we have worked to ensure that our Higher National (HN) provision is current and fit for purpose through the HN Modernisation Project. This ambitious five-year plan is now in its final year and on target to complete in December 2008. It has been delivered through a strong partnership between SQA, Scotland's colleges, sector skills councils, Scottish industry and other stakeholders.

We will soon be evaluating the new design of HNs to determine whether introducing the new design principles has resulted in a better learning experience. We have rationalised the number of HN Units from 10,000 to 6,000, and the number of Group Awards from 800 to 260.

Previous editions of the Annual Statistical Digest have frequently focused on complete qualifications – Higher National Courses (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), for example. While these are obviously important, they do not make up the full picture. We have a large number of learners who enter for one or more Units. As you can see from the graph over the page, overall entries for HN Units have

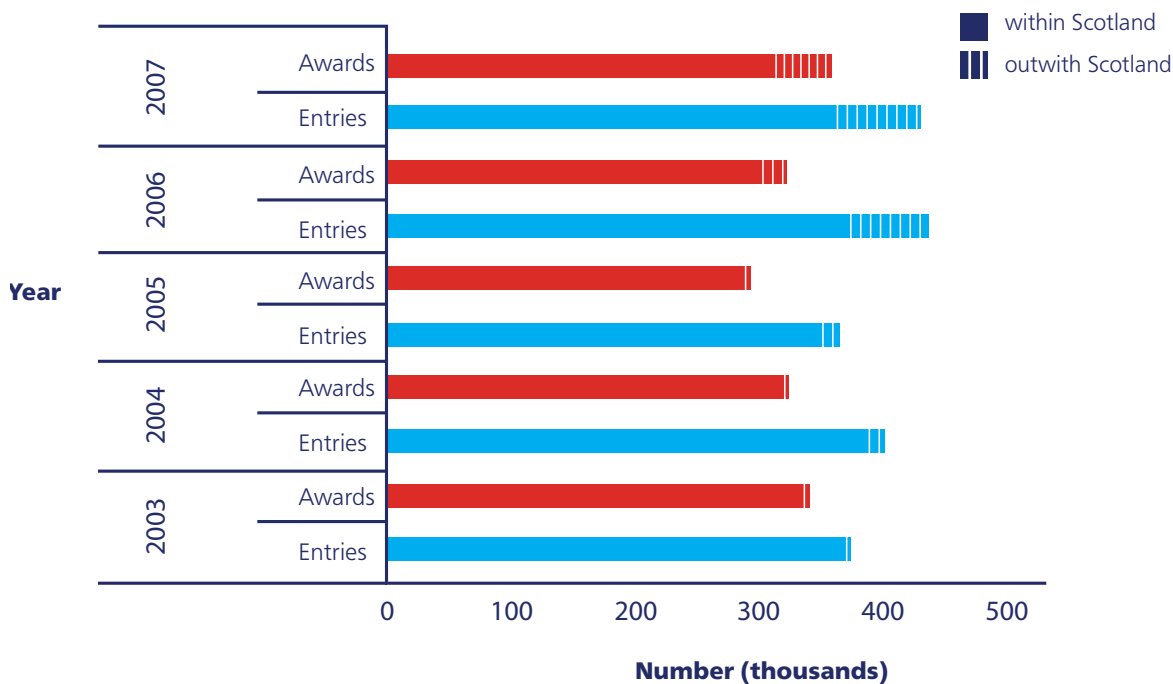
grown from just under 380,000 in 2003 to over 430,000 in each of the last two years.

Historically, there has always been a relatively small number of entries for HN Units from centres outwith Scotland. Since the start of our work in China, which was featured in last year's Annual Statistical Digest, this number has increased significantly – around 15% of total entries for HN Units came from outside Scotland last year.

Over time, there have been significant changes in the subject areas that learners are studying. HN Units are split into 'superclasses', which represent different sectors of the economy. The table opposite shows the areas with the highest percentage growth since 2003. It shows significant areas of growth in a range of different sectors, including some of the larger superclasses, such as Business/Management/Office Studies and Politics/Economics/Law/Social Science.



HN Unit entries and awards 2003 to 2007



HN Unit entries by superclass, top 5 by percentage growth 2003–2007

Superclass	2003 Entries	2007 Entries	Change in entries
Environment Protection/ Energy/Cleansing/Security	904	1,771	95.9%
Sales, Marketing and Distribution	12,339	20,332	64.8%
Business/Management/ Office Studies	42,742	68,784	60.9%
Politics/Economics/Law/ Social Science	21,071	33,325	58.2%
Transport Services	1,793	2,687	49.9%

In some areas entries declined. The most significant numerical declines were in Information Technology and Information; Science and Mathematics; and Engineering.

PLAYING OUR PART IN THE SKILLS STRATEGY

THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S SKILLS STRATEGY FOCUSES ON THE SKILLS THAT SCOTLAND NEEDS, FROM EARLY YEARS THROUGH TO WORKPLACE LEARNING.

In September 2007, we welcomed the Scottish Government's skills strategy, Skills for Scotland, and its emphasis on a lifelong learning system that is centred on individuals and is responsive to the needs of the economy.

Given the work we already do, we especially welcomed the Scottish Government's commitments to:

- develop and embed essential skills in learning to underpin individuals' personal, social, and economic futures
- promote parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications
- continue to develop a qualifications system that recognises a broader range of skills and achievements than at present
- ensure that individuals receive appropriate credit for their achievements and see clear routes to other learning opportunities
- have a learning and qualifications system that supports the needs of the individual and the needs of employers

While the UK Government issued its plan to implement Leitch's Review of Skills recommendations (World Class Skills) in England, the Scottish Government's skills strategy is a response to, rather than an implementation of, that review. Leitch laid out objectives to create a highly-skilled society that compares well with our Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) competitors

and said that skills at all levels need to improve.

Skills for Scotland focuses on skills from early years through to workplace learning. In terms of higher-level skills, it recognises that 'our modern knowledge economy will be ever-increasingly reliant upon a steady supply of skilled scientists, technologists and engineers.' Scotland's economy needs a steady supply of workers skilled to higher levels so we can continue to compete in a global economy.

We believe that the availability of SVQs and PDAs can help to meet Scotland's need for higher-level skills and the vision set out in Skills for Scotland. Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Diplomas (HNDs) also have a contribution to make to higher-level skills development.

SVQs are designed to certificate successful learners who can meet the National Occupational Standards (NOS). They are designed to improve people's skills with a focus on the job-related skills and knowledge people need in a competitive workforce. SQA works in partnership with other organisations (such as sector skills councils) to ensure that the NOS are relevant to the current and future needs of Scotland's industry.

Traditionally, awards at SVQ levels 4 and 5 (that is, SCQF levels 8 and 11, respectively) have been small compared to at lower levels; however, their numbers have been growing in recent years. The table across illustrates this trend.



Trend in SVQ awards, 2003 to 2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Percent change 2006/07
Level 1	1,092	943	900	1,120	1,311	17%
Level 2	11,191	11,835	12,526	13,430	17,012	27%
Level 3	8,402	9,486	11,577	12,683	14,835	17%
Level 4	457	508	949	1,678	2,004	19%
Level 5	22	15	14	31	50	61%
All levels	21,164	22,787	25,966	28,942	35,212	22%

In 2003, level 4 and 5 SVQs made up 2.3% of all SVQ awards. In 2007, they made up 5.8%. Two SVQs dominated higher-level awards in 2007: Registered Manager in Health and Social Care; and Management.

PDAs are specialised flexible qualifications that allow learners to build on their existing qualifications or experience, and facilitate career development. Recently, we have done work to establish a framework for the development of vocationally-focused Group Awards linked at SCQF level 9 and above to NOS. Employers are strongly involved in this.

The aim of the qualifications is to address current and projected skills shortages at intermediate professional and technical levels by providing high-quality education and training that is aligned to NOS and/or professional body requirements. The principles that underpin the approach include: strong partnership between SQA, colleges, employers, and professional bodies in the design and delivery of these qualifications; an emphasis on incorporating work-based learning; and meeting the needs of industry through the alignment to NOS.

We recognise the demand for higher-level skills, and the awards we offer at SCQF levels 6 to 11 provide a route to greater productivity and can act as a licence to practise, in some sectors. We plan to extend this approach and model, and work with other sectors and sector skills councils to add value for Scotland and contribute to the broader skills agenda.

HIGHER NATIONAL AND SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2007

Higher National Units

Higher National Units are mainly taken at college, and are the building blocks for HNCs and HNDs, although they are also qualifications in their own right.

HN Units can sit at various SCQF levels, but are normally between levels 6 and 8. Colleges are closely involved in the development of these Units, which have to conform to rigorous, published quality criteria. The Units are given an official 'seal of quality' by SQA (we call this 'validation').

Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas

Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas are well respected qualifications that were introduced in the mid-1920s. For over 80 years, these qualifications have provided the skills and knowledge needed for training towards jobs at middle management and technician level across a huge range of occupations. Many HNDs allow the holder entry to the second or third year of degree courses. HNCs are at SCQF level 7, and HNDs are at SCQF level 8.

Professional Development Awards

Professional Development Awards (PDAs) are qualifications for people who are already in a career or vocation and who wish to extend or broaden their skills. People often take a PDA after completing a degree or vocational qualification. PDAs are available at SCQF levels 6–12, and can be taken in the workplace or at college. Workplace Professional Development Awards (PDA-Ws) consist wholly or mainly of Workplace Assessed Units.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are based on job competence, and recognise the skills and knowledge people need in employment. There are SVQs for most occupations and for all types and level of job. They are primarily delivered to learners in full-time employment and in the workplace, and are at SCQF levels 4–12.

Entries and awards for Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, 2006 and 2007

	Entries		Awards	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
Higher National Units (HN Unit)	437,076	430,198	323,519	359,905
Higher National Certificates (HNC)	18,524	17,819	11,852	12,631
Higher National Diplomas (HND)	14,109	13,638	6,931	7,998
Professional Development Awards (PDA)	3,044	3,091	2,075	2,273
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) (awarded by SQA)	44,801	45,356	28,942	35,212
Workplace Professional Development Awards (PDA-W)	7,124	7,142	6,037	6,362

HN Units (2007)

Total HN Unit entries dropped by 2% in 2007. Awards, however, increased by 11%.

There was an even split by gender in entries for HN Units.

Most HN Units entries were in Business/Management/Office Studies, and Information Technology and Information.

The proportion of HN Unit entries for learners in centres outwith Scotland was 16%.

HNCs (2007)

There was a decrease in entries in 2007 of 4% compared to 2006. However, awards increased by 7%.

There were more entries for female learners (55%).

Social Care; Early Education and Childcare; and Administration and Information Technology had the most entries.

Almost all entries (98%) came from learners in centres located within Scotland.

HNDs (2007)

HND entries in 2007 fell by 3%, following a rise of 23% in the previous year. The number of awards continued to rise, by 15%.

There were more entries from male (52%) than female learners (48%).

Business and Beauty Therapy had the highest number of entries at HND level.

There were 2,775 entries (20% of the total uptake) from centres located outwith Scotland.

PDAs (2007)

From 2006 to 2007, there was a small increase in PDA entries (2%) and a larger increase in awards (10%).

Overall, there were more entries for males (58%) than females (42%).

Carpentry and Joinery was the PDA with most entries.

Almost all entries (99%) came from learners in centres located within Scotland.

SVQs (awarded by SQA) (2007)

The number of SVQ entries increased slightly (by 1%) in 2007, but awards rose considerably (by 22%).

For both entries and awards, 48% of SVQs were at level 2 and a further 42% were at level 3.

There were more entries from female learners (52%) than from males (48%).

The level 2 SVQs in Health and Social Care; and Health and Social Care (Adults) had most entries.

Almost all SVQ entries (99%) were from centres within Scotland.

Workplace PDA (2007)

Entries in PDA-Ws in 2007 increased only slightly, but awards increased by 5%.

There were considerably more entries from male learners (66%) than from females (34%).

The most popular PDA-Ws were Classroom Assistant and Assessing Candidates Using a Range of Methods.

There were 946 entries (13% of the total) from centres outwith Scotland.

There's more information on all of these qualifications in the Annual Statistical Report 2007, tables HN1–HN18, OS HN 1–11, VQ1–9 and tables OS VQ1–6.



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