



INSIDE

National Units and Group Awards	2
Success for NQ: high achievers	4
Access Clusters	5
National Courses and Standard Grade	5
HN courses make the grade	8
Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications	9

As Director of Qualifications I am delighted to introduce to you the third Annual Statistical Digest to be provided by SQA.

The Digest allows some aspects of the data in the *Annual Statistical Report* to be highlighted, as well as giving an overview of uptake and attainment. It also gives us the opportunity, by including candidate profiles, to draw attention to some good news stories.

2003/04 was a successful year for SQA and our candidates. We saw increased uptake and attainment in Access 2 and 3 Clusters, a continued increase in uptake at both Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, and an improved pass rate at Higher and Advanced Higher, as well as significant growth in Scottish Progression Award, HN and SVQ entries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers; without your continued support and confidence in SQA all of this would not have been possible.

The information contained here and in the *Annual Statistical Report* is available on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk), from where the data can be downloaded as Excel spreadsheets or in PDF format.

We welcome your views on the scope and content of the *Annual Statistical Report* and *Annual Statistical Digest*. You can comment by using the questionnaire on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk), by e-mail (ris.statistics@sqa.org.uk), or by writing to: SQA, Research and Information Services, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, EH22 1LE.

DIRECTOR OF QUALIFICATIONS

NATIONAL UNITS AND GROUP AWARDS

National Units are qualifications which can either be taken as stand-alone Units or combined. Each Unit takes around 40 hours to complete and is achieved by successfully passing a Unit assessment.

Currently SQA also offers a variety of Group Awards – see table below. A review of SQA's portfolio of

qualifications has been carried out in consultation with stakeholders. The review will create a qualification framework which better meets the needs of candidates, centres, and employers. Consequently some of these Group Awards are being phased out and therefore entry figures are decreasing.

TABLE 1: Entries and awards for National Units and Group Awards, 2004

	Entries	Awards
National Units	1,750,544	1,290,108
General Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQ)	413	258
National Certificate Group Awards (NCGA)	2,648	1,781
Scottish Group Awards (SGA)	3,402	1,723
Scottish Progression Awards (SPA)	2,199	948

National Units

- ◆ Entries have increased by 20% this year, while awards have decreased slightly, by 4%.
- ◆ On average, candidates entered for 7.2 National Units in 2004. The average number of Units entered by school candidates is higher than by college candidates (8.1 and 5.9 Units per candidate respectively).

GSVQ

- ◆ Both entries and awards have continued to decline in 2004. Entries dropped by 51%, while awards were down by 57%.
- ◆ 62% of GSVQ entries were from candidates aged under 20. 75% of entries were from female candidates.

NCGA

- ◆ Entries dropped slightly in 2004, by 8%. Awards, however, increased by 4%, from 1,710 in 2003 to 1,781 in 2004.
- ◆ The most popular NCGA was in *Engineering Practice* with 379 entries; 98% of those entries were from male candidates.

SGA

- ◆ SGA entries decreased by 14% overall. Entries from school candidates, however, increased from 1,136 in 2003 to 1,391 in 2004.
- ◆ Awards grew by 17%. This was entirely due to a 39% increase in awards in the school sector.

SPA

- ◆ Both entries and awards have increased dramatically, by 243% and 103%, respectively. The increase in entries is due to improved uptake in a wider range of SPAs, including *PC Passport*.
- ◆ 61% of SPA entries come from candidates aged over 30.

Further information on National Units and Group Awards can be found in the full *Annual Statistical Report*, tables NU1-6 and GA1-9.

Study 1: National Units

The average number of National Units entered per candidate varies depending on the age of the group.

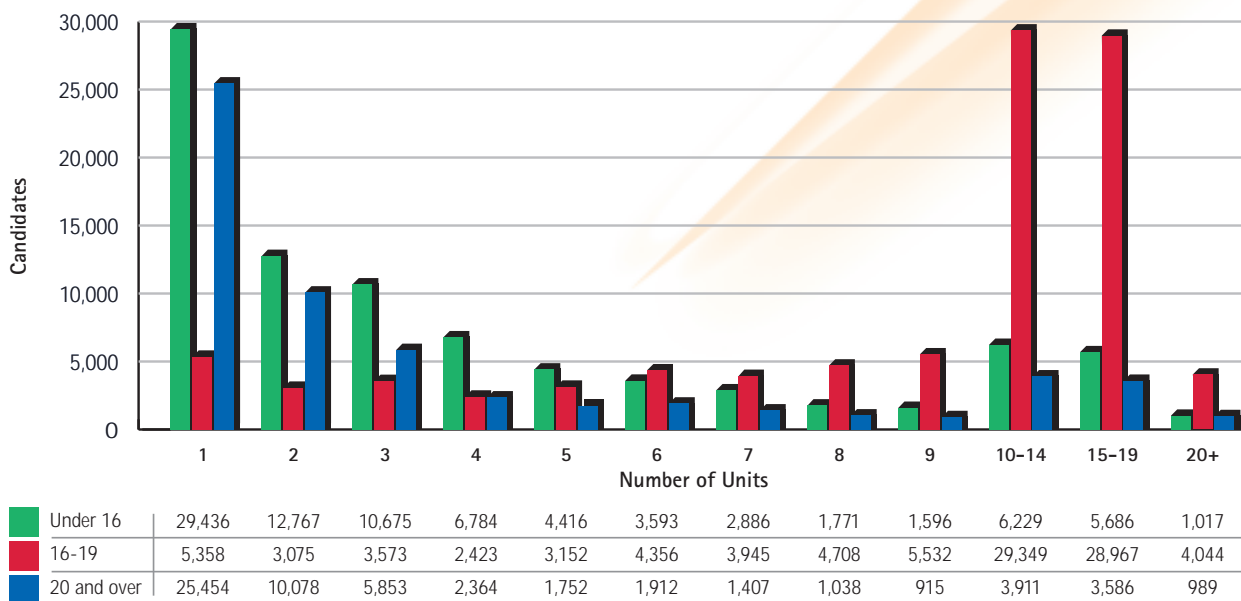
TABLE 2: National Unit entries and average number of Units per candidate by age group

Age Group of Candidates	Number of National Unit entries	Average number of National Unit entries per candidate
Under 16	397,119	4.6
16-19	1,105,728	11.2
20 and over	247,697	4.2

The largest proportion of entries, 63%, comes from candidates aged between 16 and 19. This encompasses the expected age range of candidates sitting National Courses at school. National Courses are usually made up of three National Units and an external assessment. If a candidate enters for four National Courses they

will also have entries for 12 National Units. This age group also has the largest average number of Units entered per candidate; on average, candidates aged between 16 and 19 enter for seven more National Units than candidates aged 20 or over.

FIG 1: National Unit entries by number of Units and candidate age



From Fig 1, it can be seen that candidates in the under-16 and 20-and-over age groups enter for fewer Units per candidate than the other group; 34% of candidates under 16 and 43% of candidates of

20-and-over enter for a single National Unit. The candidate group aged 16-19, however, is more likely to have entered for between 10-19 Units.

Success for NQ high achievers

The individual successes of Andrew McIntyre and Tracey Mulholland bring real meaning to overall statistics and show the impact of National Qualifications on people's lives.



Andrew McIntyre, who attended St Brendan's High School, has Down's Syndrome. He has achieved great success in many areas of the secondary curriculum. This is due to the wonderful combination of outstanding personal commitment and access to mainstream education. Academically in 2004 he achieved three Standard Grades and certification in Access Units; IT, Using Mathematics in Everyday Situations 1, and Work Experience.

Andrew now attends James Watt College with a view to becoming a gymnastics coach for pre-school children and pupils with special needs.



Tracey Mulholland, who attended Our Lady's High School, has achieved excellent academic success — that helped her secure the awards of Intermediate and Senior Dux. During her school career, Tracey gained seven A passes at Higher and an A pass at Advanced Higher.

Tracey has won accolades for public speaking as a member of the winning team in the North Lanarkshire Council's International Speaking Competition. The competition ignited an interest in international agencies.

Tracey is now studying law at Glasgow University with a view to fulfilling her ambition to work for the United Nations.

ACCESS CLUSTERS

Access Clusters are groups of three related Access Units which together form a coherent package. They differ from National Courses in that they have no external

assessment. They are available at levels 2 and 3, with Access 3 being benchmarked on Standard Grade Foundation Level.

TABLE 3: Entries and awards for Access Clusters, 2004

	Entries		Awards	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
Access 2 Clusters	2,264	2,344	1,398	1,617
Access 3 Clusters	9,154	12,759	6,399	9,207

Access 2 Clusters

- ◆ There was a 4% increase in entries in 2004, and a 16% increase in awards.
- ◆ 43% of Access 2 Cluster entries come from 15-year-old candidates.
- ◆ *English and Communication*, and *Mathematics* had the largest number of both entries and awards in 2004.

Access 3 Clusters

- ◆ There was an increase in entries in 2004 of 39%, and an increase of 44% in awards.
- ◆ There has been a 219% increase in Access 3 Cluster entries from colleges; from 48 entries in 2003 to 153 entries in 2004.
- ◆ *Mathematics* has the largest number of entries, followed by *French*, *Biology*, *Chemistry*, and *English*.

Further information on Access Clusters can be found in the full *Annual Statistical Report*, tables AC1-8.

NATIONAL COURSES AND STANDARD GRADE

- ◆ Standard Grade is designed to be taken after four years of secondary education when candidates are, on average, 15-16 years old. It is structured in such a way that almost all candidates in the age group take the examination and achieve a graded result.
- ◆ Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, and Higher Courses were designed primarily for candidates in the fifth and sixth year of secondary education and adults, while

Advanced Highers were designed for candidates in the sixth year of secondary education and adults.

- ◆ Reporting on Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher, and Advanced Higher is on a Course-based analysis, ie candidates must obtain passes in all internally-assessed Units as well as attempting the external Course assessment.

NATIONAL COURSES AND STANDARD GRADE continued

TABLE 4: Entries and number of candidates entered for National Qualifications, 2004

	Entries		No. of candidates	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
Standard Grade*	453,450	433,855	63,416	63,381
Intermediate 1	24,613	31,231	17,693	22,720
Intermediate 2	72,327	80,283	38,698	42,516
Higher	166,885	165,575	59,298	58,755
Advanced Higher	16,998	17,185	10,937	11,094

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

Standard Grade

- ◆ Entries for Standard Grade have dropped by 4% this year. This is partly due to more candidates sitting Access Clusters and Intermediate Courses instead. This is most evident in Standard Grade Science where entries have fallen by 27% whilst entries in the discrete sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) at Intermediate levels have risen.
- ◆ On average, candidates entered for 6.8 Standard Grades in 2004.

Intermediate 1

- ◆ There have been 27% more Intermediate 1 entries in 2004. Increases in entries can be seen in the discrete sciences, Mathematics, and English.
- ◆ Given the large rise in entries, it is encouraging to see that the overall pass rate has stayed steady at 66%.

Intermediate 2

- ◆ Entries for Intermediate 2 Courses have increased by 11% this year. The overall pass rate has also gone up by two percentage points.
- ◆ 25% of Intermediate 2 candidates entered for three or more subjects in 2004.

Higher

- ◆ Entries for Higher Courses have dropped very slightly this year, by 1%. However, the overall pass rate has increased by one percentage point.
- ◆ The pass rates for both Higher English and Mathematics have increased in 2004; from 62% to 66% in English, and from 67% to 68% in Mathematics.

Advanced Higher

- ◆ Advanced Higher entries have increased by 1% overall. Entry increases in French, Geography, and Music are of particular note.
- ◆ 53% of Advanced Higher entries in 2004 were from female candidates. The overall pass rate for female candidates was five percentage points higher than for male candidates.

The *2004 Annual Statistical Report* now includes tables which give the detail of the pass rates by entry stage through all of the National Course levels (IA3b, IB3b, NH3b, AH3b). Further information on all of these qualifications can be found in the full Annual Statistical Report, tables SG1-7, IA1-8, IB1-8, NH1-8, AH1-8, and PR1-4.

Study 2: National Qualifications

Over the past three years, the composition of Intermediate 1 entries has shifted. In 2002, over half of the entries (53%) were from candidates aged 16. This dropped to 42% in 2003 and 32% in 2004. The majority of Intermediate 1 candidates in 2004 were aged 15; this is a considerably larger proportion of entries than in 2002 (27%). In addition, there have been continued decreases in the percentage of entries from candidates aged 17, and 18 and above, while candidates aged under 15 have grown from 5% of entries in 2002 to 10% of entries in 2004.

A similar pattern can be seen at Intermediate 2. Entries from candidates aged 16 have dropped from 60% in 2002 to 51% in 2004, while entries from candidates aged 15 have increased from 14% in 2002 to 24% in 2004. However, Intermediate 2 entries are still dominated by 16-year-old candidates. The percentage of entries from 17-year-old candidates has continued to decrease over the past three years, falling from 19% in 2002 to 16% in 2004. In each year since 2002 the percentage of entries from candidates aged 18 and over has stayed at 6%.

FIG 2: Intermediate 1 entries by candidate age

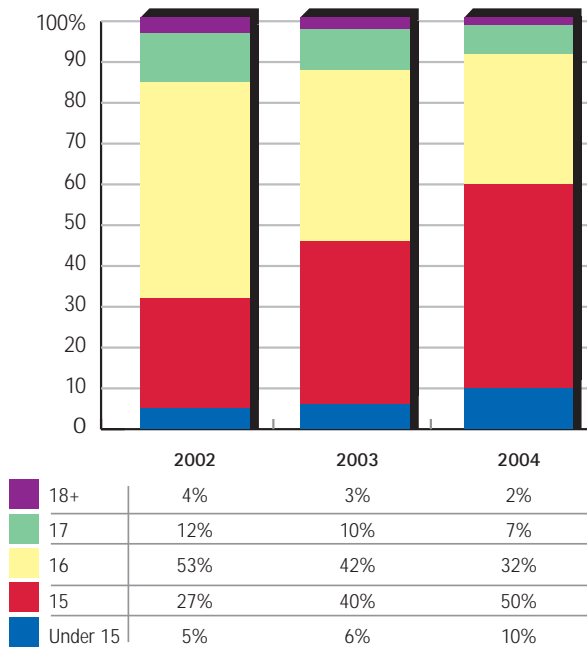
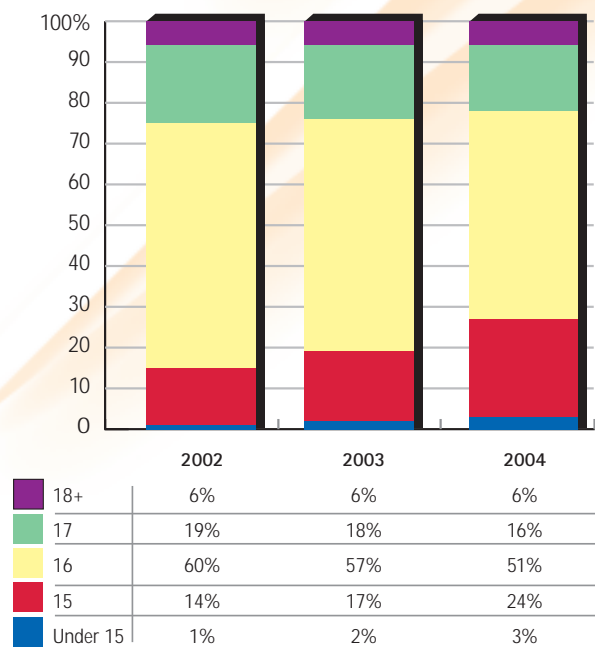


FIG 3: Intermediate 2 entries by candidate age



Note: Percentages are independently rounded and so may not always add exactly to 100%.



HN courses make the grade for Lifelong Learning

This was certainly the case for Mhairi Heron for whom two separate Higher National Certificates (HNCs) taken a decade apart have facilitated two different careers.

In 1993, whilst working, Mhairi attended Reid Kerr College to complete an HNC in Electronic Engineering. This opened up several opportunities for her to work as a draughtsperson within local engineering firms.

'From the age of 20, I worked for a variety of engineering consultants and enjoyed my career, but more recently I felt I needed a change of direction. In March 2004 I entered a competition with Paisley-based radio station Q96, to win a job as presenter. After an initial interview and 'Pop Idol' style auditions with a celebrity panel, I made it to the final

six. I received a call a few days later to say that I had been selected as the new co-presenter on the Q96 Breakfast Show and started my new job immediately.'

Mhairi heard about the HNC in Radio Broadcasting at Reid Kerr and made the decision to re-train for her new career. Based at Ferguslie Park Radio (FPR) in Paisley, Mhairi is working hard towards achieving her HNC and making the most of her experience at Q96 and FPR. It means a bright and early start every morning to complete her shift on air and then off to college for the rest of the day.

Mhairi aims to complete her HNC by June 2005.

'The HNC is mainly driven by practical, hands-on learning at FPR, giving you the best possible training. The course covers all areas of Radio Broadcasting including Editing, Script Writing, Interview Techniques and Producing and Developing a Show. I feel very privileged that I can take what I learn at college and transfer my skills immediately into the workplace.'

HIGHER NATIONAL AND SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Higher National (HN) Units can be taken as stand-alone Units, or built up into Group Awards, such as Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), or Professional Development Awards (PDA). HNC and HND are credit rated in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at the same level as the first and second years of a Scottish degree, respectively.

Professional Development Award Advanced Diplomas, Diplomas, and Advanced Certificates are constructed exclusively from HN Units. The Certificate can be constructed from HN Units, National Units, Workplace-Assessed Units, or a combination of these.

The Units which make up SVQs are designed to be

assessed in the conditions of the workplace. SVQ levels range from 1 (a notional level 4 on the SCQF framework – equivalent to Intermediate 1 or General level Standard Grade) to 5 (a notional level 11 on the SCQF framework – equivalent to Masters degree level).

Reporting on SVQs has changed; accreditation-only qualifications are no longer included in the main analysis (accreditation-only qualifications are those accredited to be offered by another awarding body or other awarding bodies in partnership). See commentary in *Annual Statistical Report 2004* for details.

Workplace Professional Development Awards (PDA-Ws) can be constructed from HN Units, National Units, Workplace-Assessed Units, or a combination of these.

TABLE 5: Entries and awards for Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, 2004

	Entries	Awards
Higher National Units	408,163	327,796
Higher National Certificates	19,097	12,440
Higher National Diplomas	12,916	7,107
Professional Development Awards	2,407	1,672
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (awarded by SQA)	44,119	22,787
Workplace Professional Development Awards	6,718	7,341

HN Units

- ◆ HN Unit entries have increased by 30,751 (8%) in 2004, while awards have fallen by 17,535 (5%).
- ◆ On average, candidates entered for 7.1 Units. This compares to 6.6 Units in 2003.

HNC

- ◆ Entries increased from 18,168 in 2003 to 19,097 in 2004, an increase of 5%. Awards stayed reasonably steady with a small drop of 1% from 12,522 to 12,440.
- ◆ The most popular HNC was *Computing*, with 1,552 entries. 82% of those entries were from male candidates.

HND

- ◆ HND entries increased by 1% from 12,727 in 2003 to 12,916 in 2004. Awards also showed an increase; from 6,409 in 2003 to 7,107 in 2004.
- ◆ 44% of HND entries are by candidates aged under 20.

PDA

- ◆ PDA entries and awards increased in 2004, by 11% and 13% respectively.

SVQ (awarded by SQA)

- ◆ SVQ entries increased by 12% in 2004; awards also increased, from 21,164 in 2003 to 22,787 in 2004.

- ◆ The most popular SVQ was *Care* (level 2) with 2,479 entries. 89% of those entries were from female candidates.

Workplace PDA

- ◆ There has been a considerable decrease in Workplace-Assessed PDA entries; 2004 saw a drop of 29%. The number of awards also decreased, by 2%.

Further information on all of these qualifications can be found in the full *Annual Statistical Report*, tables HN1–HN18, and tables VQ1–VQ9.

Study 3: Professional Development Awards

Entries for the range of PDAs have risen by 43% over the past four years. PDA Certificates are typically at SCQF levels 4/5 and can be used as a platform to further study. PDA Certificates have shown the fastest growth rate of any PDAs, and in 2004 were 343% higher compared with 2001. They now account for 38% of all PDA entries.

Entries were received for 18 different PDA Certificates in 2004, with female candidates making up 57% of entries. The top five PDA Certificates accounted for 87% of entries. The top course was *Childcare and Education*, followed by *Civil Engineering*, *Introduction to Teaching in Further Education*, *Introduction to Adult Literacies Learning*, and *Motor Vehicle Body Repair and Refinishing*.

The gender difference in entries was greatest in *Childcare and Education*, where 99% of entries were from female candidates, and *Motor Vehicle Body Repair and Refinishing*, and *Civil Engineering* where respectively 99% and 94% of entries were from male candidates.

FIG 4: PDA Certificate & Total PDA entries 2004

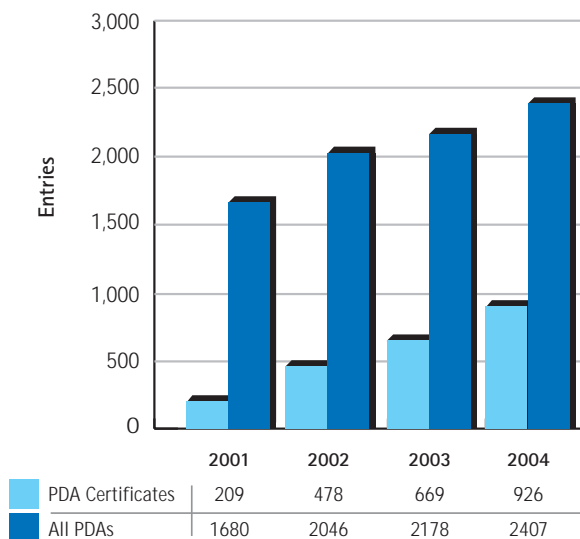
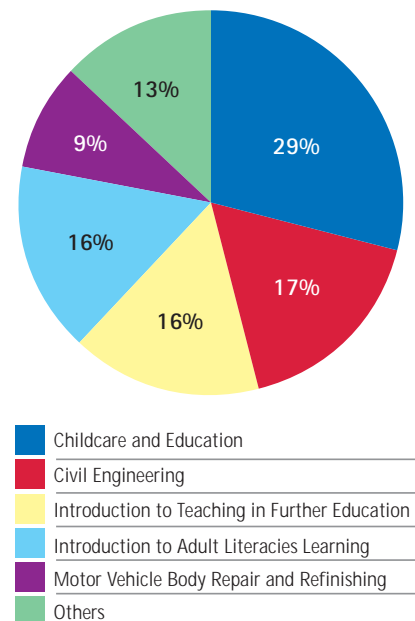


FIG 5: PDA entries by qualification title 2004







Hanover House Ironmills Road
24 Douglas Street Dalkeith
Glasgow Midlothian
G2 7NQ EH22 1LE

Customer Contact Centre
Tel: 0845 279 1000
Fax: 0141-242 2244
e-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk
website: www.sqa.org.uk