

Annual

Statistical Digest 2005

Setting the scene —
Scottish education
and training

Lifelong learning —
the contribution of
Scottish Vocational
Qualifications

School qualifications
for fourth year students

Narrowing
of the gender gap

SCOTTISH
QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY



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Introduction from John Young



John Young, Director of Qualifications, Scottish Qualifications Authority

I am delighted to introduce SQA's fourth Annual Statistical Digest. This gives me the opportunity to explain some of the key features of this publication and to briefly review the attainment of learners who were engaged in Scottish qualifications in 2005.

Introduction from John Young	John Young, Director of Qualifications at SQA, introduces the new <i>Statistical Digest 2005</i> , and thanks everyone from the world of education and training for their commitment.
Setting the scene – Scottish education and training	A summary of the current and future developments in Scottish education, and how the Scottish Qualifications Authority is actively involved in making things happen.
National Units and Group Awards	Overview statistics and commentary on National Units and Group Awards.
The growth of Scottish Progression Awards	Over the past five years there have been large increases in the number of entries for Scottish Progression Awards. This article gives additional information on this increased uptake, the reasons for it, and explains the future of these qualifications.
Access Clusters	Overview statistics and commentary on Access Clusters.
National Courses and Standard Grade	Overview statistics and commentary on National Courses and Standard Grade.
School qualifications for fourth year students	In recent years there has been a perception that the pattern of qualifications undertaken by fourth year students has changed. This section assesses the current situation.
Narrowing of the gender gap	This section considers whether the 'girls do better than boys' argument still holds. It goes on to look at whether there have been any changes in the uptake and pass rates of typically gender-specific subjects.
Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications	Overview statistics and commentary on Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications.
Lifelong learning – the contribution of Scottish Vocational Qualifications	SQA is committed to providing useful qualifications to learners throughout their lifetime. This section highlights the role of SVQs in lifelong learning and how entry profiles have changed over time.

Scotland is unique in offering an appeals process for National Qualification examinations, based upon the consideration of alternative evidence. The information used in both the *Annual Statistical Report 2005* and in this Digest comprises the final entries and results for 2005, and takes into account the results of appeals in National Qualifications.

This Digest highlights some of the key information contained in the *Annual Statistical Report*. It also allows us to draw attention to some of the emerging trends and changing patterns in uptake and attainment observed in 2005, as well as discussing some of the new

developments in Scottish education. For SQA and our candidates, 2005 was an extremely successful year. There was increased uptake in Access 3 Clusters, and Intermediate 1 and 2 Courses, and this was matched with stable or improving pass rates across all National Course qualification levels.

Entries for Scottish Progression Awards, National Certificate Group Awards and Scottish Vocational Qualifications also continued to grow, and Higher National qualifications have extended their market with increasing entries from overseas.

I would like to congratulate all our students on their attainment, and to thank all those who support learners in Scotland and beyond; without your continued support and confidence in SQA all of this would not have been possible.

I wish all our candidates continued success in their educational endeavours, and hope you find this Digest both useful and interesting.

John Young

The information contained here and in the *Annual Statistical Report 2005* is available on our website (www.sqa.org.uk), where the data can be downloaded as Excel spreadsheets or in PDF format. 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 2005* and *Annual Statistical Digest 2005*. You can comment by using the questionnaire on our website (www.sqa.org.uk), or by writing to: SQA, Research and Information Services, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, EH22 1LE.

Setting the scene – Scottish education and training



SQA, along with the Scottish Executive and other bodies involved in education and training in Scotland, has an on-going mission to provide the best possible system to all of Scotland's learners. To that end, reviews and initiatives are always taking place in order to provide the highest possible standard. This section outlines some of the most important current developments in Scottish education.

SQA has been working to ensure that our qualifications **remain fit for purpose.**

In the school sector, the Scottish Executive is working on 'A Curriculum for Excellence' to create a curriculum which will best meet the needs of every young person. The proposals which will emerge from this process will have a significant impact on the future of National Qualifications, and the way they are assessed, in years to come. The first of these changes is the introduction of new Skills for Work qualifications with a focus on 14–16-year-olds, with the first cohort completing their qualifications in the summer of 2006.

In England, the government has also recently set out plans for the reform of qualifications for 14–19-year-olds. The proposals to introduce vocational diplomas will lead to a new approach to vocational education and qualifications in schools, and bring much greater attention to this area.

Progress in the skills agenda will also lead to changes in Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Over the next two years, Sector Skills Agreements between employers, agencies and government

will be published, outlining the skills situations faced by various sectors of the economy, and the actions required to correct them. More detailed Sector Qualifications Strategies will be produced, outlining the changes to qualifications which will be required.

Demographic changes are also about to start impacting on Scotland to a much greater degree than previously. Over the next five years, there will be a drop of 10,000 fourth to sixth year pupils in publicly-funded schools in Scotland. While the numbers of working adults are likely to remain constant for the next five to ten years, after that there will be a drop in the number of young people entering the workforce.

SQA has been working to ensure that our qualifications remain fit for purpose

Our Portfolio Review, which looked at the full array of qualifications that we offer, has now concluded, and included significant recommendations on how we can further modernise our qualifications so that they better meet the needs of the people and

economy of Scotland. Specifically, a number of changes will be made to our Group Awards which will affect existing qualifications and new National Certificates being introduced. More details of these changes can be found on the SQA website. There will also be further developments in the e-agenda, leading to greater flexibility in qualifications, allowing us to better meet the needs of all of SQA's candidates. These changes will lead to significant developments in qualifications in Scotland over the next few years.

SQA's *Annual Statistical Report and Statistical Digest* are an effective way of keeping track of how these developments impact on our learners. To be kept up to date with developments within SQA, our monthly e-zine 'Connecting with SQA' is available through our website. It will inform you of current news and reviews within the organisation.

Progress in the skills agenda will also lead to **changes in Scottish Vocational Qualifications.**

National Units and Group Awards

What are National Units? National Units are qualifications which can be taken in schools, colleges and in other training centres. Most National Units are designed to take 40 hours of teaching time to complete, and students are expected to do some additional work on their own. You achieve a Unit by passing an assessment – coursework, tests, or practical work which is marked by the teacher, lecturer or trainer. The marking is then checked by SQA.



National Units can be taken as individual qualifications or can be built up into National Courses. National Units are available at seven levels: from Access 1 Units at SCQF level 1, to Advanced Higher Units at SCQF level 7.

What are the main kinds of Group Awards?

National Certificate Group Awards (NCGAs) are Group Awards taken mainly in FE colleges. They are designed to meet the specific needs of particular employment sectors.

Scottish Group Awards (SGAs) are Group Awards made up of National Courses and National Units. A specified Core Skills Profile must also be achieved to gain an SGA.

Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs) are Group Awards made up of SVQ Units, National Units, or HN Units.

The entries for NCGAs and SGAs are decreasing as, in the future, they will be replaced by new National Certificates. Similarly, SPAs will be replaced by National Progression Awards.

Entries and awards for National Units and high uptake Group Awards, 2005

	Entries	Awards
National Units	1,721,338	1,317,631
National Certificate Group Awards (NCGA)	2,894	1,222
Scottish Group Awards (SGA)	2,669	1,336
Scottish Progression Awards (SPA)	5,150	2,399

National Units

National Unit entries have decreased by 2% this year, from 1,750,544 in 2004 to 1,721,338 in 2005. Conversely, National Unit awards have increased by 2%.

On average, candidates entered for 7.4 National Units in 2005. The average number of Units entered by school students is higher than by FE students (8.2 and 6.2 Units per student respectively).

The most popular National Unit is English: Literary Study – SCQF level 6, with 28,661 entries. This Unit makes up part of Higher English.

NCGAs

Entries grew by 9% in 2005. Awards, however, decreased by 31%, from 1,781 in 2004 to 1,222 in 2005.

The most popular NCGA was in Engineering Practice with 673 entries; 97% of these entries were from male students.

SGAs

SGA entries and awards both dropped by 22% in 2005. The most popular SGA was in Care (Intermediate 2) with 500 entries.

SPAs

Entries and awards have increased dramatically, by 134% and 153% respectively. The increase in entries is due to improved uptake in a wider range of SPAs, including PC Passport.

Of SPA entries, 48% come from students aged under 20, with a further 41% of entries from students aged over 30.

Further information on National Units and Group Awards can be found in the *Annual Statistical Report 2005*, tables NU1–6 and GA1–8.

The growth of Scottish Progression Awards

Awards

Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs) are designed to provide some of the skills, knowledge and understanding that will be attractive to employers and which candidates can build upon when working towards a full SVQ.

This year, one of the most popular SPAs is Specialised Plant and Machinery Operations, with 1,054 entries



SPAs have a high percentage of entries from candidates aged over 30.

Over the past five years, the number of entries in Scottish Progression Awards has grown considerably (Figure 1). 'FE' and 'other' sectors have increased the number of entries by 2,077% and 2,220% respectively, from 2001 to 2005. The school sector, where there were no SPA entries until 2004, now makes up 14% of the total entries.

The highest proportion of entries comes from the 'other' sector each year. Centres in this sector include Training Providers, Employers, Voluntary Sector Organisations, and HM Prisons. This year, the most popular SPA in this sector is Specialised Plant and Machinery Operations, with 1,054 entries. This qualification allows students to apply for the red Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) card, which indicates that the holder is a trained operator. The red card is the stepping stone to a blue/green card which enables the trained operator

to get on-site to gather the work experience required to complete a Scottish Vocational Qualification.

SPAs have a high percentage of entries from candidates aged over 30. Many of these adult learners are unemployed and are seeking vocational/enterprise training to increase their opportunities for employment. Highest growth in uptake by the over-30s is in PC Passport. There were only 38 entries for PC Passport in 2004, but this rose to 498 in 2005. There was also high uptake by the over-30s in care subjects and Specialised Plant and Machinery Operations.

In the last two years there have been entries from the school sector in a small range of SPAs. In 2005, there were 731 entries across four separate awards. Three of these are different levels of PC Passport – Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced – making up 49%, 46%

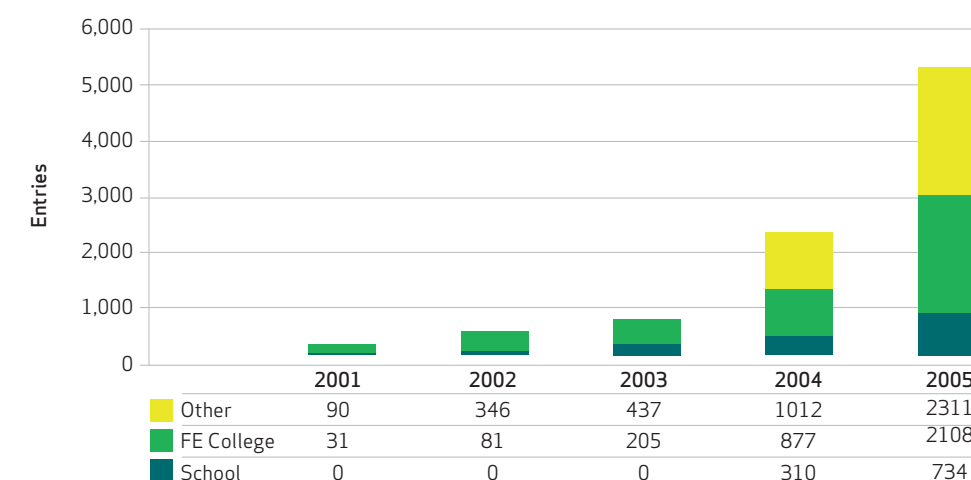
and 2% of school sector entries respectively. The remaining entries come from students entering the SPA in Culinary Excellence. Three quarters of these SPA school entries were from fifth and sixth year students, and 53% of all school SPA entries were from male students.

SPAs have undergone a modernisation review

From summer 2006, SPAs will be re-badged as National Progression Awards (NPAs). NPAs are designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and link to National Occupational Standards.

Further information on Scottish Progression Awards can be found in the *Annual Statistical Report, 2005* tables GA7 and 8.

Figure 1: Growth in SPA entries, 2001–2005



Access Clusters

National Courses and Standard Grade

What are Access Clusters?

Access Clusters are groups of three related Units built up by students at Access levels 2 and 3 which together form a coherent package. Learning at all Access levels is assessed by the school or college, and does not involve sitting an exam. Assessments, however, are quality assured by SQA. Access Clusters are available at two levels; Access 2 Clusters at SCQF level 2, and Access 3 Clusters at SCQF level 3.



What are Standard Grades? Standard Grades are generally taken over two years of study in third and fourth year at secondary school. They are made up of parts called 'Elements', and usually have an exam at the end. Standard Grades are available at three different levels; Credit at SCQF level 5, General at SCQF level 4, and Foundation at SCQF level 3.

Entries and awards for Access Clusters, 2005

	Entries		Awards	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Access 2 Clusters	2,344	2,138	1,617	1,622
Access 3 Clusters	12,759	15,820	9,207	11,945

Access 2 Clusters

Entries fell by 9% in 2005, while the number of awards stayed stable. Mathematics and English continue to have the largest number of both entries and awards. Of Access 2 Cluster entries, 71% come from students aged 15 and under.

Access 3 Clusters

Entries and awards continue to show strong growth; by 24% and 30% respectively. Mathematics and the sciences have the largest increases in both entries and awards. Of Access 3 Cluster entries, 58% are from male students.

Further information on Access Clusters can be found in the *Annual Statistical Report 2005*, tables AC1-8.

What qualification types make up National Courses?

National Courses are the suite of qualifications which includes Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4), Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5), Higher (SCQF level 6), and Advanced Higher (SCQF level 7) Courses.

Who takes National Courses?

Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher Courses were designed primarily for post-16 students, while Advanced Higher Courses were designed for students in the sixth year of secondary education, and for adults. In 2005, however, 50% of Intermediate 1 and 20% of Intermediate 2 entries were from S4 students, an increase of 5 and 6 percentage points respectively, from 2004.

What do you have to do to achieve a National Course?

National Courses usually consist of three subject-related National Units plus a Course assessment. Course assessments can take the form of an examination, project work or folio, or a combination of these.

National Courses and Standard Grade

The average pass rate for all Intermediate 2 subjects was 76%, showing a steady increase over the past five years.

How does SQA report on National Courses?

Reporting on National Courses is on a Course basis, ie students must obtain passes in all internally-assessed Units as well as attempting the Course assessment.

Entries and number of candidates entered for National Qualifications, 2005

	Entries		No. of Candidates	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Standard Grade*	433,855	411,181	63,381	62,622
Intermediate 1	31,323	36,653	22,720	26,906
Intermediate 2	80,283	87,100	42,516	46,233
Higher	165,575	164,142	58,755	58,353
Advanced Higher	17,185	17,146	11,094	11,021

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

Standard Grade

Entries for Standard Grade fell by 5% in 2005. This is the fourth consecutive year that there has been a decrease in entries. This is partly due to students migrating to Access Clusters and Intermediate Courses. Entries for Standard Grade Science fell by 25%.

On average, students entered for 6.6 Standard Grades in 2005 and achieved 2.9 awards at Credit level (grades 1 or 2).

Intermediate 1

Entries for Intermediate 1 Courses continue to grow and have risen by another 17% in 2005. The highest percentage increases in subjects with over 100 entries were in: Media Studies, Hospitality, Practical Cookery, Physics, Art and Design, Italian, and History. Course entries come mainly from students in fourth (50%) or fifth (36%) year.

The overall pass rate was 69%, with female students outperforming males by 6 percentage points (72% compared to 66%). The percentage of students achieving at least one grade A pass is up to 32% from 29% in 2004.



Intermediate 2

There were 87,100 entries at Intermediate 2 in 2005, an 8% increase on 2004. Of all entries, 37% were in English or Mathematics.

Of Intermediate 2 entries, 27% were from students aged 15, 48% from students aged 16, and 15% from students aged 17.

The overall pass rate for all Intermediate 2 subjects was 76%. There has been a steady increase over the past five years. For fourth year students, the pass rate was 88%.

Higher

There was a 1% fall in entries at Higher level in 2005. The largest falls in high uptake subjects were in Accounting (down 19%), Economics (down 16%), and Information Systems (down 13%).

Although the overall pass rate remained steady at 73%, both Mathematics and English showed slight increases to 69% and 68% respectively.

On average, students entered for 2.8 Higher subjects, passing, on average, 2.1 of them.

Advanced Higher

Entries at Advanced Higher fell by under 0.5% to 17,146. The largest drops in entries were in English (down by 147), French (down by 113), and Mathematics (down by 98).

With an additional 122 entries (8%), Biology is now the third most popular subject at Advanced Higher, after Mathematics and Chemistry.

Pass rates across all subjects rose to 77%. For subjects with over 100 entries, pass rates ranged from 93% for Music, to 63% for Accounting. The pass rate in English fell from 79% in 2004 to 75% in 2005.

Although the pass rate for males (76%) was lower than for females (78%), the grade A pass rate was higher—25% compared with 23%.

Further information on National Courses and Standard Grade can be found in the *Annual Statistical Report 2005*, tables SG 1-7, IA 1-8, IB 1-8, NH 1-8, AH 1-8, and PR 1-4.



School qualifications for fourth year students

Traditionally, fourth year students entered a number of Standard Grades and progressed to Highers in fifth and sixth year. In 2000, National Courses, including new levels at Access 2 and 3 and Intermediate 1 and 2, were introduced. In recent years, there has been a perception that the patterns of qualifications undertaken by fourth year students has changed significantly.

For example, some schools are using Intermediate Courses instead of Standard Grades, while others are using Standard Grades as qualifications for students prior to fourth year. In this section, we evaluate the extent to which that is true.

Qualification entries for fourth year students

Entries to Intermediate 1 and 2 and Access 3 qualifications from fourth year students have been increasing rapidly in recent years. Since 2003, Intermediate 2 entries from this

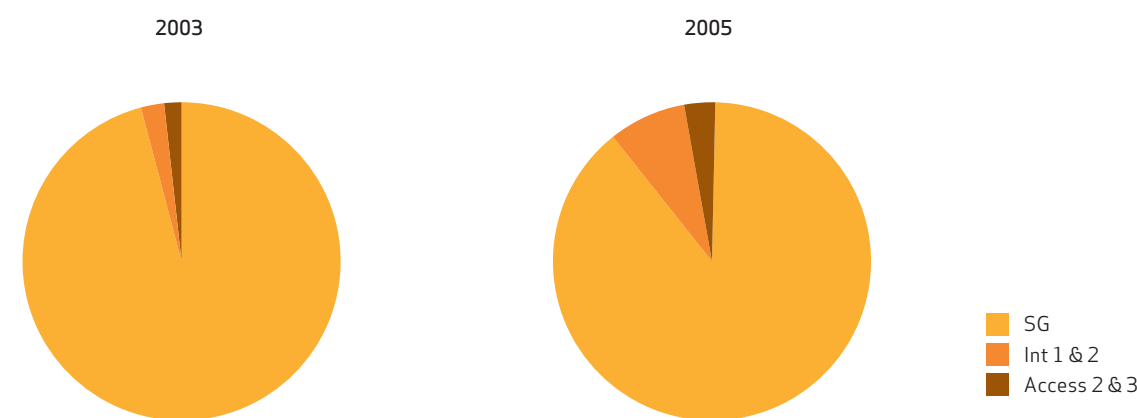
group have grown from 3,952 to 17,157, while Intermediate 1 entries have grown from 7,370 to 18,274. Access 3 entries from fourth year students are also up from 6,293 to 11,091. Fourth year Standard Grade entries are correspondingly lower, falling from 450,849 in 2003 to 406,115 in 2005.

Nonetheless, we can see that Standard Grade still forms the vast majority of fourth year provision. In 2005, 89.5% of all entries from fourth year students were in Standard Grade, although this is

down from 96.0% in 2003. This can be seen in Figure 1. When considered separately, none of the other qualifications entered by fourth year students made up more than 4% of entries in 2005.

Although there is evidence that fourth year students are increasingly entering for Intermediate and Access qualifications, it is still true that the vast majority of students sit Standard Grade qualifications in their fourth year at school.

Figure 1: Entries from fourth year students as a proportion of entries for each type of qualification



Proportion of entries for each qualification from fourth year students

While the majority of S4 candidates are still predominantly being entered for Standard Grade, it is interesting to look at the proportions of entries for each qualification that come from S4 candidates. Currently, a significant proportion of all entries to Access and Intermediate qualifications come from this group.

At Access 3, the majority of entries (70%) are from S4 students, while a substantial fraction of entries at Access 2, Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 are also from this group (46%, 50% and 20% respectively).

At Access 2 and 3, the proportion of fourth year entries has remained almost constant since 2003. However, at the Intermediate levels, the proportion of fourth year student

entries has continued to rise. In 2003, 30% of Intermediate 1 entries and 5% of Intermediate 2 entries were from fourth year students, compared with 50% and 20% respectively in 2005. This shows that the average Intermediate candidate is getting younger. Despite the considerable publicity about S3 candidates being entered for Standard Grade, almost all Standard Grade entries (99%) are still from S4 students.

Figure 2: Proportion of entries in school qualifications coming from fourth year students

	Acc 2	Acc 3	SG	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	Advanced Higher
2005	46%	70%	99%	50%	20%	0%	0%
2004	47%	72%	99%	45%	14%	0%	0%
2003	42%	69%	99%	30%	5%	0%	0%

The large proportion of fourth year entries in Access and Intermediate qualifications confirms that these qualifications are being used as a replacement for Standard Grades in some areas.

National Courses are also being used in areas where there is no Standard Grade provision.

With the consistently high proportion of Standard Grade entries from fourth year students, the perception that Standard Grades are being extensively used prior to fourth year is unfounded at this stage. While this may be happening, it is still very much the exception to the rule.

Narrowing of the gender gap

Across the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, female students are now generally outperforming male students in school education. Much research has gone into the reasons why this is so, and a number of initiatives have been introduced to try to reduce the imbalance.

Difference in attainment, however, is not the only issue. In many cases there are specific subjects that are more popular with male or female students. This section considers the differences in pass rates at

Higher and Advanced Higher over recent years, and also some subject-specific analysis commenting on the proportion of entries from male and female students.

Attainment differences at Higher and Advanced Higher
 Figures 1 and 2 plot the pass rates over the past few years from male and female students at Higher and Advanced Higher.

Figure 1: Higher pass rates by gender, 2002 to 2005

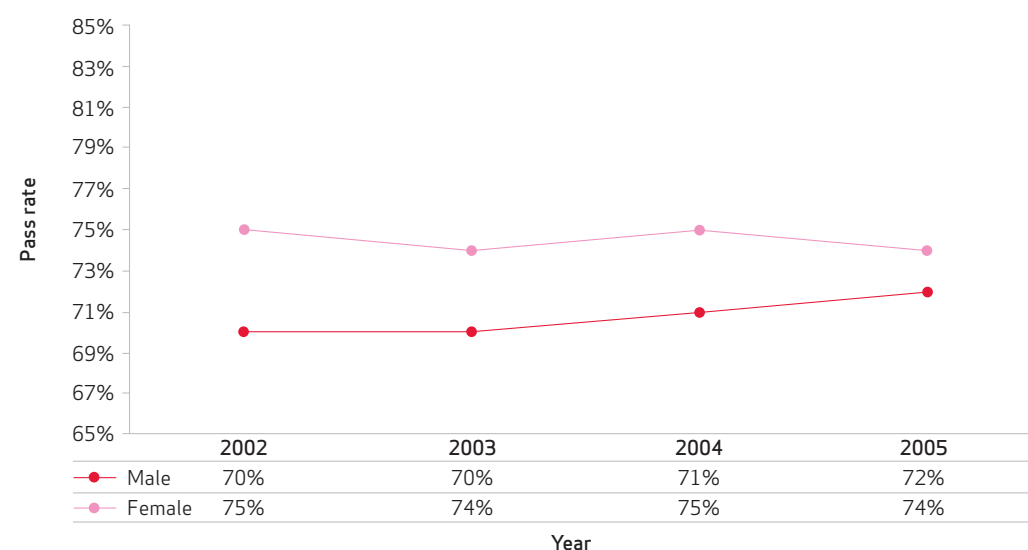
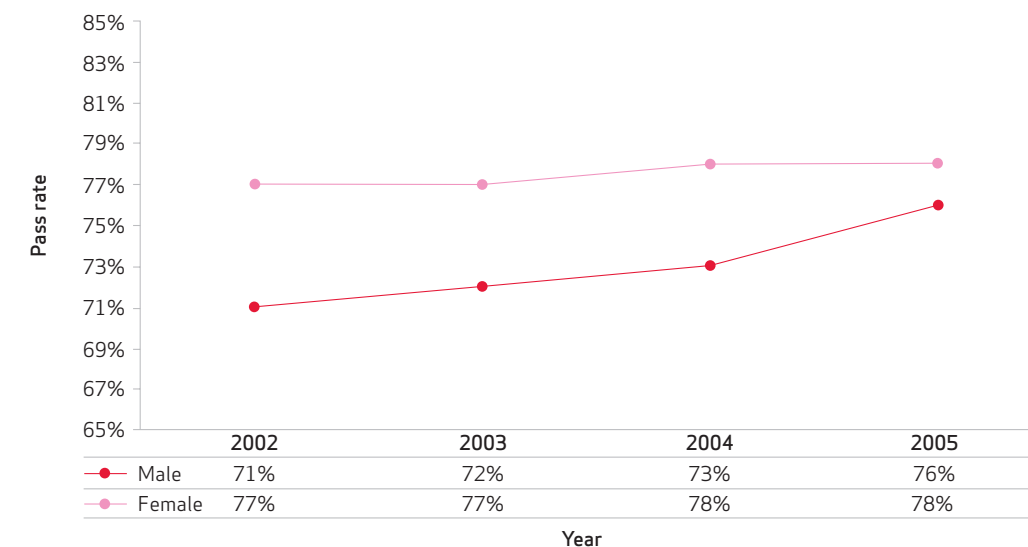


Figure 2: Advanced Higher pass rates by gender, 2002 to 2005



Differences in pass rates between male and female students have narrowed significantly since 2002

Female students still achieve better pass rates at both Higher and Advanced Higher, but the differences in pass rates between male and female students have narrowed significantly since 2002. The gap at both levels is now two percentage points.

At Higher, pass rates for male students have improved by two percentage points over the past four years, while pass rates for female students have remained steady. There is a similar picture at Advanced Higher, where male students have improved their pass rates in each year since 2002, while pass rates for female students have only risen slightly.

As can be seen from the table below (Figure 3), the proportions of male and female students at both Higher and Advanced Higher levels have not altered significantly since 2002. It seems unlikely that the change in pass rates has been affected by an alteration in the pattern of entries.

Figure 3: Proportions of male and female student entries, 2002 to 2005

	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced Higher	47%	53%	47%	53%	47%	53%	48%	52%
	(7,468)	(8,281)	(7,988)	(9,010)	(8,040)	(9,145)	(8,148)	(8,998)
Higher	45%	55%	46%	54%	45%	55%	45%	55%
	(74,077)	(89,927)	(76,032)	(90,853)	(75,329)	(90,246)	(73,721)	(90,421)

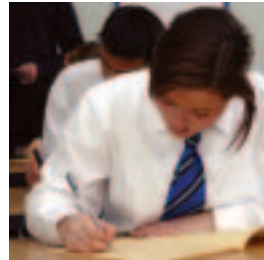
Gender difference at Higher

Figure 4 shows some of the most popular subjects at Higher and demonstrates that there is still considerable variation in the proportion of male and female candidates taking specific subjects.

Within the science subjects there is a larger proportion of male students taking Physics, while Biology and Human Biology are predominately taken by female students. Chemistry, however, contains a more even split of entries between genders.

In Physics it is female students who have the higher pass rate, but in both Biology and Human Biology male students have the higher pass rates.

Narrowing of the gender gap



Other Higher subjects which are dominated by male students include Computing, Graphic Communication, and Product Design. Only in Product Design is there a significant variation in attainment; male students achieve a pass rate of 61% and female students achieve a pass rate of 74%.

In addition to Biology and Human Biology, female students make up the majority of entries in French and Administration. Within these subjects the pass rates of male and female students do vary, but there is not a large difference.

Figure 4: Percentage of entries and pass rates for high uptake Higher subjects by gender, 2005

Higher Subject	Total entries	Percentage of entries		Pass rate	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Administration	3,998	20	80	60	64
Biology	8,943	32	68	72	71
Chemistry	9,411	49	51	75	77
Computing*	4,628	76	24	67	67
English	28,707	41	59	68	68
French	4,515	24	76	84	82
Graphic Communication	3,366	70	30	79	79
Human Biology	3,609	26	74	69	65
Mathematics	19,181	52	48	68	70
Physics	8,952	71	29	73	80
Product Design	2,092	67	33	61	74

*both new and old Courses

In Mathematics the number of entries from male and female students is similar, as are the pass rates. Male students achieve a pass rate of 68% while female students achieve a pass rate of 70%.

There are more English entries from female students, 59%, but the performance by both groups is the same, with a pass rate of 68%.

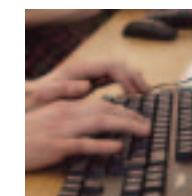
From all this information, we can see that there have been reductions in the gender gap in terms of the overall pass rates achieved at both Higher and Advanced Higher. Where specific Higher subjects are concerned, however, there are still some subjects which are more popular with either male or female students. Often, the gender which makes up the minority of subject entries performs better.

There are more English entries from female students, 59%, but the performance by both groups is the same, with a pass rate of 68%.



Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications

People often take a PDA after completing a degree or vocational qualification.



What are Higher National Units? Higher National (HN) Units are the building blocks of Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), though they are also qualifications in their own right. HN Units are available at various SCQF levels, but are normally between SCQF levels 6 and 9.

How are Higher National Certificates and Diplomas used?

HNCs and HNDs provide the skills and knowledge that people need in jobs at middle management and technician levels, covering a huge range of occupations. HNCs are at SCQF level 7, and HNDs are at SCQF level 8. Many HNDs allow the holder entry to the second or third year of degree courses.

What are Professional Development Awards?

Professional Development Awards (PDAs) are qualifications for people who are already in a career or vocation and who wish to gain recognition or extend 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 at a student's workplace or at college.

What about 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 in most occupations, and they are available for all levels of jobs. SVQs are primarily delivered to students in full-time employment and in the workplace.

Entries and awards for Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, 2005

	Entries	Awards
Higher National Units	372,283	298,792
Higher National Certificates	19,496	10,397
Higher National Diplomas	11,503	5,776
Professional Development Awards	2,959	1,622
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (awarded by SQA)	47,149	25,966
Workplace Professional Development Awards	6,733	5,061

HN Units

Both HN Unit entries and awards fell by 9% in 2005 to 372,283, and 298,792 respectively.

On average, candidates entered for 7.3 Units. This is the same as in 2004.

HNCs

Entries increased by 2% from 19,097 in 2004 to 19,496 in 2005. Awards dropped by 16% from 12,440 in 2004 to 10,397 in 2005.

Female candidates made up 55% of all HNC entries, and gained 60% of HNC awards.

HNDs

HND entries decreased by 1,413 (-11%) in 2005. The number of awards also fell; from 7,107 in 2004 to 5,776 in 2005 (-19%).

The largest number of entries by age and gender was from female candidates aged under 20 (23%). Male candidates in their 20s gained the highest percentage of awards (32%).

PDAs

PDA entries continue to increase, growing by 23% in 2004. Awards fell by 3%.

SVQs (awarded by SQA)

The number of SVQ entries and awards both grew in 2005; by 7% and 14% respectively. Of SVQ entries, 46% (48% of awards) were at level 2, with a further 44% of entries (45% of awards) at level 3.

Level 1, 2 and 3 SVQ entries came mainly from candidates aged under 30 (over 60% of all candidates at each level). Over 90% of all candidates taking SVQs at levels 4 or 5 were from the over-30s age group.

Workplace PDAs

There was a slight rise in workplace-assessed PDA entries, but awards fell by 31%.

Further information on all of these qualifications can be found in the *Annual Statistical Report 2005*, tables HN1–HN18, and tables VQ1–VQ9.



Lifelong learning – the contribution of Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Education opportunities are not just for the young. SQA is committed to making qualifications available to everyone, appropriate to their needs. Lifelong learning is designed to meet the needs of society, individuals, and employers by developing a skilled workforce and promoting social justice. Scottish Vocational Qualifications help play a part in lifelong learning by offering awards over a wide subject area which form an integral part of career development.

Figure 1: Scottish Vocational Qualification entries by student age, 2001 to 2005

	Total Entries	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
2005	47,149	36.0%	23.6%	16.4%	16.0%	8.0%
2004	44,119	35.6%	25.6%	17.3%	14.5%	7.0%
2003	39,418	38.9%	26.7%	16.1%	12.3%	6.0%
2002	41,863	41.5%	25.6%	15.8%	11.6%	5.4%
2001	31,560	46.9%	23.9%	13.9%	10.0%	5.3%

SVQs are SQA's most rapidly expanding qualification block, with entries rising from 31,560 in 2001 to 47,149 in 2005.

Over the past five years there have been some noticeable shifts in the age breakdown of candidates entering for SVQs (Figure 1). Entries from candidates under the age of 30 have fallen by 11.2 percentage points, while entries from students in their thirties, forties and over 50 have all increased – by 2.5, 6.0 and 2.7 percentage points, respectively.

In addition to the overall growth in SVQ uptake, the proportion of female entries has increased steadily from 43% in 2001 to near-parity (49%) in 2005.

However, as the tables below show (Figure 3), there is still considerable gender segregation in individual SVQs. This reflects the proportions of men and women working in different sectors of the economy.

Figure 2: The proportion of male/female Scottish Vocational Qualification entries, 2001 to 2005

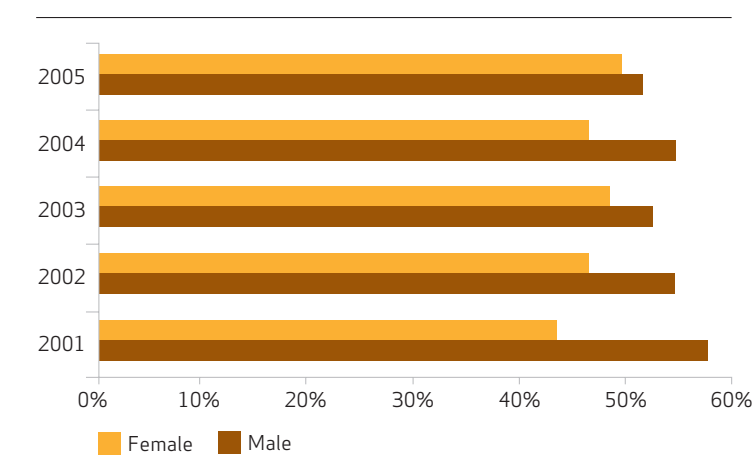


Figure 3: Entries in the most popular SVQs by gender, 2001 and 2005

Top 10 SVQ entries 2001	Total entries	% Male	% Female
Administration (level 2)	2,060	19	81
Performing Manufacturing Operations (level 2)	1,617	65	35
Customer Service (level 3)	1,475	35	65
Hairdressing (level 2)	1,031	3	97
Care (level 2)	991	12	88
Administration (level 3)	987	14	86
Using Information Technology (level 2)	959	55	45
Engineering Manufacture: Foundation (level 2)	915	97	3
Construction: Carpentry and Joinery (level 2)	891	98	2
Construction: Carpentry and Joinery (level 3)	730	99	1
Top 10 SVQ entries 2005	Total entries	% Male	% Female
Care (level 2)	2,603	11	89
Customer Services (level 3)	2,133	36	64
Promoting Independence (level 3)	1,945	21	79
Construction and Civil Engineering Services: Construction Operations (level 2)	1,816	99	1
Hairdressing (level 2)	1,778	5	95
Administration (level 3)	1,540	14	86
Administration (level 2)	1,471	18	82
Construction: Carpentry and Joinery (level 3)	1,464	99	1
Care (level 3)	1,421	10	90
Early Years Care and Education (level 3)	1,310	1	99

SVQs are aimed at developing and certificating skills in a work based environment, and closely reflect the changing needs of the Scottish economy. As the qualification is work based, candidates generally undertake the qualification with the support of their employer, to meet specific business needs. Varying patterns of presentations are likely, therefore, to reflect the changing training needs of Scottish business.



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