

ANNUAL STATISTICAL DIGEST

2003



SCOTTISH  
QUALIFICATIONS  
AUTHORITY





## FOREWORD

This is the second Annual Statistical Digest to be provided by SQA. Following the positive feedback on the 2002 Annual Statistical Digest, it has been extended to allow some aspects of the data in the Annual Statistical Report to be highlighted, as well as giving an overview of uptake and attainment.

The information contained here (and in the Annual Statistical Report) is available on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)), where the data can be downloaded as Excel spreadsheets or pdfs. Additional analyses are available on request, subject to confidentiality, and on sufficient resources being available to carry out the work involved. An appropriate charge may be made.

Your comments on the scope and content of the Annual Statistical Report and Annual Statistical Digest are welcome and can be expressed either by using the questionnaire available on the SQA website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) or by writing to: SQA, Research and Information Services, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, EH22 1LE.

John Young  
Director of Qualifications

## NATIONAL UNITS AND GROUP AWARDS

National Units are internally assessed and subject to external moderation; they are awarded on the basis of evidence of the successful attainment of all the Outcomes. The Performance Criteria define the standard of performance required to attain the Outcomes.

General Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQ) are Group Awards made up of National Units (formerly National Certificate Modules) with an additional integrative assessment at levels II and III. They are broadly-based qualifications which group together skills that apply equally well to a number of different jobs or Courses of further study within a certain area.

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

National Certificate Clusters (NCC) are Group Awards made up of three National Units (formerly National Certificate Modules).

Scottish Group Awards (SGA) 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 (SPA) are Group Awards made up of either SVQ Units, National Units, or HN Units.

*Table 1: Entries and awards for National Units and Group Awards, 2003*

	ENTRIES	AWARDS
National Units	1,461,605	1,347,261
General Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQ)	843	594
National Certificate Group Awards (NCGA)	2,893	1,710
National Certificate Clusters (NCC)	81	80
Scottish Group Awards (SGA)	3,973	1,472
Scottish Progression Awards (SPA)	642	467

- National Units – Entries and awards have increased this year, by 2% and 4%, respectively.
- GSVQ – With Scottish Group Awards (SGAs) gradually replacing GSVQs, both entries and awards have shown a continued sharp decline in numbers in 2003. Entries dropped by 55% while awards were 58% down.
- NCGA – Entries and awards dropped slightly in 2003. Entries have decreased

by 7%, and awards by 5%.

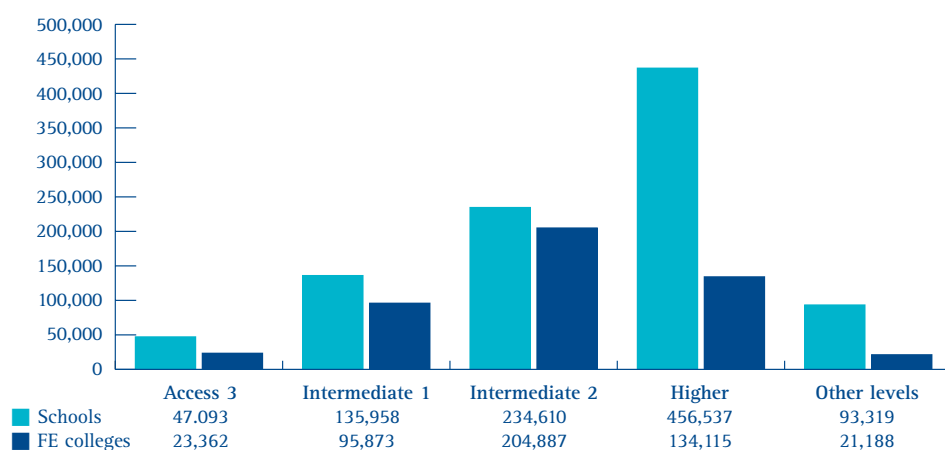
- NCC – Entries have fallen by 31% and awards by 30% in 2003. There were entries in only two Clusters this year.
- SGA – Scottish Group Awards show growth in entries and awards. Entries increased by 51% overall. FE College entries grew particularly rapidly with

- an additional 1,063 entries (60%). Awards grew by 47%. This was mainly due to a 71% increase in awards in the Schools sector.
- SPA – Although numbers remain relatively low, there was a significant rise in entries (up by 50%) and especially awards (up by 227%).

### Study 1: National Units

The 2% rise in entries from 2002 was due to continued growth in the schools sector. There was a slight drop in FE college entries, but a substantial 30% fall in entries from workplaces and training providers. The 4% rise in awards was again due to schools where 15% more awards were made. There was a drop of 58,349 awards at FE colleges (-12%).

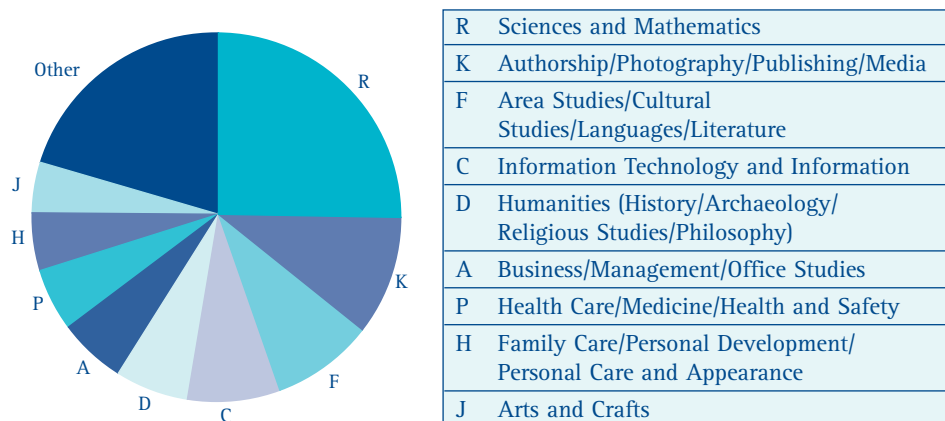
Fig1: Analysis of National Unit entry levels



- 967,517 (66%) of the 1.46 million National Unit entries processed were from schools, with 479,425 (33%) from FE colleges.
- The highest proportion of school entries were made at Higher level (47%) followed by Intermediate 2 (24%).
- 43% of FE college entries were at Intermediate 2 level, with 28% at Higher level.

Fig2: National Unit entries by Superclass, 2003

Superclass is a classification system used in Scottish and UK vocational education and training databases.



ALL SUPERCLASSES	R	K	F	C	D	A	P	H	J	OTHER
1,461,605	369,748	153,129	129,575	116,792	91,897	84,236	78,479	73,773	64,887	299,089
	25.3%	10.5%	8.9%	8.0%	6.3%	5.8%	5.4%	5.0%	4.4%	20.5%

- 25% of all National Unit entries are from the Superclass area 'Science and Mathematics'.
- The top 9 Superclass areas, which have the highest entries, make up 80% of the overall National Unit entries.

Further analysis of National Units by Superclass can be found in tables NU2 and NU3 of the full Annual Statistical Report.

### ACCESS CLUSTERS

Access Units are internally-assessed Units which sit below Intermediate 1 in the National Qualifications framework. 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 component. They are available at levels 2 and 3 with Access 3 being benchmarked on Standard Grade Foundation Level.

*Table 2: Entries and awards for Access Clusters, 2003*

	ENTRIES		AWARDS	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Access 2 Clusters	1,687	2,264	1,353	1,398
Access 3 Clusters	3,567	9,154	3,116	6,399

- There was a 34% increase in level 2 entries in 2003 and a 3% increase in awards.
- There was an even greater increase in level 3 entries in 2003 (157%) and an increase of 105% in awards.

This year's Annual Statistical Report features two new Access Cluster tables at each level (AC1, AC2, AC5, AC6). The first is a trend table which shows the number of entries by centre type over the past four years. The second table gives a breakdown of the present year's entry figures by age and gender.

### NATIONAL COURSES

National Courses cover Standard Grade, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher level courses.

- Standard Grade is normally taken after four years of secondary education when candidates are on average 15–16 years old. It is based on a criterion-referenced system and is structured in such a way that almost all candidates in the age group take the examination.
- 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.

Table 3: Entries and number of candidates entered for Standard Grade and National Courses, 2003

	ENTRIES		No. OF CANDIDATES
	2002	2003	2003
Standard Grade*	456,288	453,450	63,416
Intermediate 1	20,352	24,613	17,693
Intermediate 2	67,509	72,327	38,698
Higher	164,004	166,885	59,298
Advanced Higher	15,749	16,998	10,937

\* Entries exclude the Writing options of Modern Languages and Gaelic (Learners)

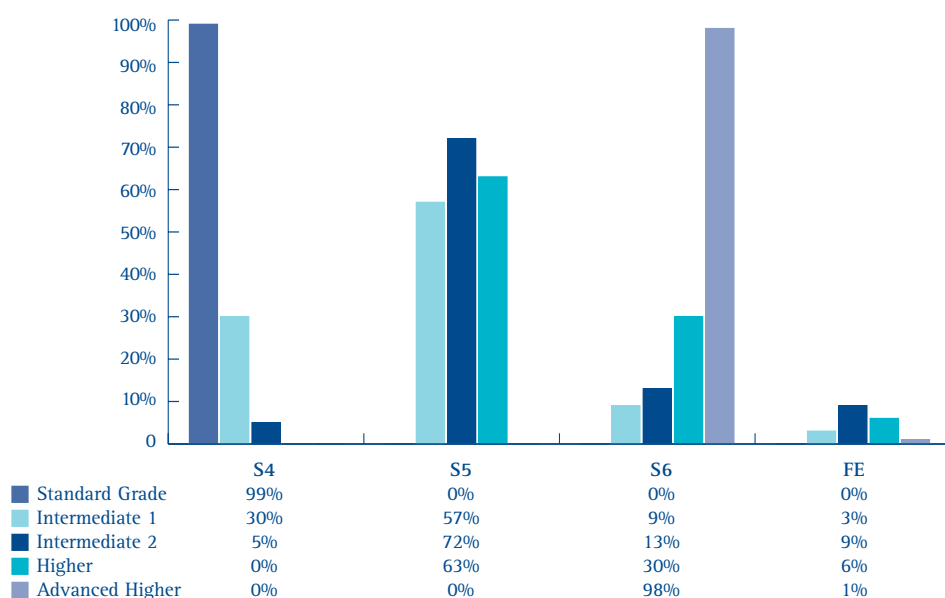
The 2003 Annual Statistical Report now includes tables which give the stage breakdown of entries through all of the National Qualification levels (SG2, IA3, IB3, NH3, AH3). These tables identify the percentage of entries from S3 to S6 at high school, other school entries (from S1, S2, or adults attending secondary education) and FE college entries.

### Study 2 – National Qualification Entries by Stage

With the introduction of the new National Qualification stage tables in the 2003 Annual Statistical Report, this second Digest study focuses on information contained within those tables.

Figure 3, below, illustrates the differences in uptake by the main stage classifications through the NQ levels. In some cases, the entries at a particular level will not sum to 100%. These missing entries are from entry stages not listed in this Digest analysis. More extensive breakdown can be found in the Annual Statistical Report, tables SG2, IA3, IB3, NH3, AH3.

Fig 3: Percentage of National Qualification Entries by Stage



The graph shows that almost all of the 2003 Standard Grade entries have come from S4. The entries for Advanced Higher also mainly come from one single stage group, S6. Both Intermediate levels attract entries from a wider range of stage groups, from S4 to FE, but both receive the largest percentage of entries from S5. Higher entries are essentially split between S5 (63%) and S6 (30%), with only a small percentage of entries from FE.

## 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). HNCs and HNDs are credit-rated in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at the equivalent of 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 (level 4 on the SCQF framework – equivalent to Intermediate 1 or General level Standard Grade) to 5 (level 11 on the SCQF framework – equivalent to Masters degree level).

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

Table 3: Entries and awards for Higher National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, 2003

	ENTRIES	AWARDS
Higher National Units	377,412	345,331
Higher National Certificates	18,168	12,522
Higher National Diplomas	12,727	6,409
Professional Development Awards	2,178	1,486
Scottish Vocational Qualifications	39,816	21,519
Workplace-assessed Professional Development Awards	9,498	7,497

- HN Unit entries have decreased slightly (by 2%), while awards have fallen by 19%. The average candidate entered for 6.6 Units.
- Both HNC entries and awards fell by 17% and 21%, respectively. Females made up 56% of entries.
- HND entries increased by 7%, but awards have decreased by 16%. 42% of entries were from those under 20.
- PDA entries increased by 6%, while awards decreased slightly (by 1%).
- SVQ entries fell by 11%, and awards fell more sharply (by 31%). 51% of SVQ entries were for level 2 SVQs.
- Workplace-assessed PDA entries fell by 17%, and awards by 8%.

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: HN Units – Analysis of Superclass

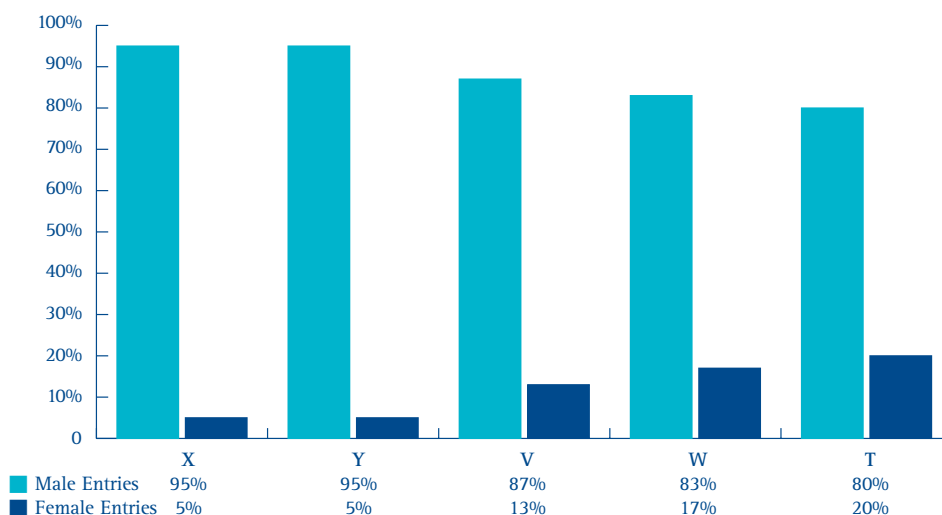
Superclass is a classification system used in Scottish and UK vocational education and training databases. Overall, the most popular Superclasses at HN Unit level were: Information Technology and Information; Business/Management/Office Studies; and Authorship/Photography/Publishing/Media.

Although HN Unit entries in 2003 were split almost exactly 50:50 by gender, there were large variations in the proportion of males and females making up the different Superclasses.

The five most popular Superclass areas for male entries were: Information Technology and Information; Authorship/Photography/Publishing/Media; Engineering; Business/Management/Office Studies; and Sciences and Mathematics. The five areas in which the male to female ratio was greatest, however, were slightly different. These are shown below.

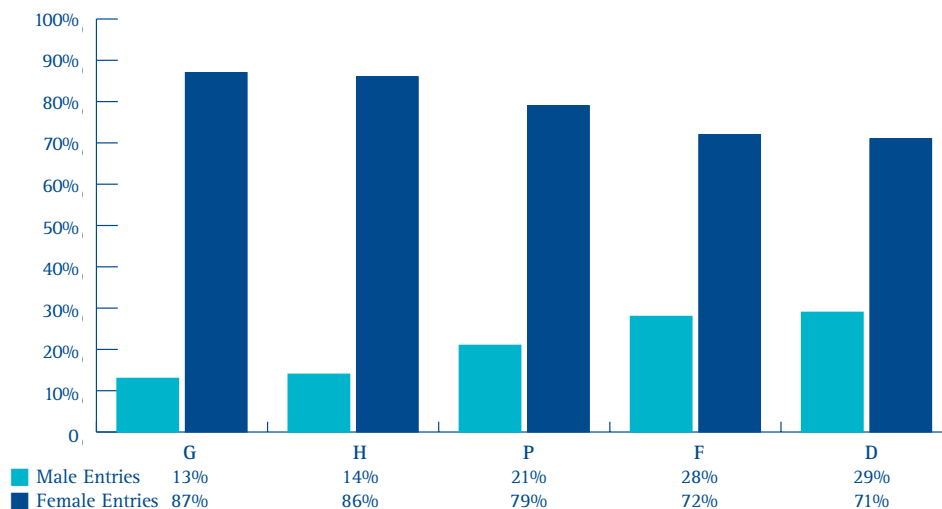
These Superclasses were: X – Engineering; Y – Oil/Mining/Plastics/Chemicals; V – Services to Industry; W – Manufacturing/Production Work; T – Construction and Property (Built Environment).

Fig 4: Superclasses in which males entries predominate



The most popular Superclass areas for females were: Business/Management/Office Studies; Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety; Information Technology and Information; Authorship/Photography/Publishing/Media; and Family Care/Personal Development/Personal Care and Appearance. However, the female to male ratio was greatest in: G – Education/Training/Teaching; H – Family Care/Personal Development/Personal Care and Appearance; P – Health Care/Medicine/Health and Safety; F – Area Studies/Cultural Studies/Languages/Literature; and D – Humanities (History/Archaeology/Religious Studies/Philosophy). These are shown below.

Fig 5: Superclasses in which female entries predominate



Further analysis of HN Units by Superclass can be found in tables HN2 and HN4 of the full Annual Statistical Report.



SCOTTISH  
QUALIFICATIONS  
AUTHORITY



Hanover House  
24 Douglas Street  
Glasgow  
G2 7NQ

Ironmills Road  
Dalkeith  
Midlothian  
EH22 1LE

Customer Contact Centre  
tel: 0845 279 1000  
fax: 0141-242 2244  
e-mail: [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

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

AE2348

June 2004