

A guide for **teachers**
to the new **National Qualifications**

New qualifications —
new opportunities for your learners



it can
be done  SQA

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*Our new **National Qualifications** recognise that there are different types of learners. They reward a wide range of achievement and are designed to help learners develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed.*

Dr Janet Brown
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications
Authority (SQA)

Support for you

The subject pages of our website contain the latest updates, supporting documents, answers to common questions and links to other areas of interest for all new National Courses.

Available from www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects

Mandatory information	Course Specifications
	Unit Specifications
	National 4 Added Value Unit Specifications
Advice and guidance	Course and Unit Support Notes
	Award Support Notes
Assessment support	Coursework information
	Specimen question papers and marking instructions
	Higher Exemplar question papers, marking instructions and guidance
	Past paper guidance

CfE Support Team

Our Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Support Team has been working with schools since 2010 to help teachers prepare for putting in place and delivering the new qualifications.

The team is available to attend staff meetings, in-service days and local authority events, and is also happy to attend parents' evenings and to meet with other members of your school community.

Please contact your area manager for an initial discussion about your requirements, or to make an appointment.

You can find contact details and more information at www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam

Available from our secure website

Confidential assessment support	Unit assessment support packs
	Coursework assessment tasks

You can find more information on these documents at www.sqa.org.uk/supportdocuments



The new National Qualifications

We have worked with schools, colleges and universities across Scotland to develop the new qualifications. The new National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications are now available. The following tables give a brief overview of the new qualifications.

Qualification	National 1 Units	National 2 Courses	National 3 Courses	National 4 Courses	National 5 Courses
SCQF level	1	2	3	4	5
Structure	Does not apply	Made up of Units	Made up of Units	Made up of Units and an Added Value Unit assessment	Made up of Units and a Course assessment
Graded or assessed as	Pass or fail	Pass or fail	Pass or fail	Pass or fail	A to D or 'no award'
Requirements for achieving the qualification	Learners need to pass the Unit assessment	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments, including the Added Value Unit assessment	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments, plus the Course assessment
Could lead to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 2 - Other National 1 Units - Awards at SCQF level 1 or 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 3 - Other National 2 Courses or Units - Awards at SCQF level 2 or 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 4 - Other National 3 Courses or Units - Awards at SCQF level 3 or 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National 5 - Other National 4 Courses or Units - Awards at SCQF level 4 or 5 - National Certificates (NCs) - National Progression Awards (NPAs) - Modern Apprenticeships - Other employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher - Other National 5 Courses or Units - Awards at SCQF level 5 or 6 - National Certificates (NCs) - National Progression Awards (NPAs) - Modern Apprenticeships - Other employment opportunities

Our series of National 4 video clips highlights the options available to learners who are working towards, or have gained, National 4 qualifications. You can watch the video clips on our YouTube channel, [SQAonline](#)

New National Qualifications (continued)

Qualification	Higher Courses	Advanced Higher Courses
SCQF level	6	7
Structure	Made up of Units and a Course assessment	Made up of Units and a Course assessment
Graded or assessed as	A to D or 'no award'	A to D or 'no award'
Requirements for achieving the qualification	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments plus the Course assessment	Learners need to pass all Unit assessments plus the Course assessment
Could lead to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced Higher - Other Higher Courses or Units - Awards at SCQF level 6 or 7 - Scottish Baccalaureates - National Certificates (NCs) - National Progression Awards (NPAs) - Higher National Certificate (HNC) - Higher National Diploma (HND) - Undergraduate degree - Technical Apprenticeship - Other employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher National Diploma (HND) - Undergraduate degree - Other employment opportunities

Further information

www.sqa.org.uk/national1

www.sqa.org.uk/national2

www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects

For more information on how the new qualifications are assessed, visit

www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment

Developing skills

Making sure learners can use their knowledge, skills and understanding beyond the classroom

Added Value

When assessing learners, it is important to make sure that they can use their skills, knowledge and understanding beyond the classroom. This will be essential in life after school, particularly in the workplace.

To help with this, Course assessment in the new qualifications will focus on:

- **breadth** – the range of knowledge, skills and understanding that the learner has developed throughout the course;
- **challenge** – how the learner has deepened or extended their knowledge or skills (or both); and
- **application** – how well the learner can apply their knowledge and skills to different situations.

This is known as the ‘added value’ of the course and it is assessed through:

- the Added Value Unit at National 4; and
- the Course assessment at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

For more information on Core Skills, visit www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills

For more information on Skills for Learning, Life and Work, visit www.sqa.org.uk/sflw where you can also watch case-study videos on developing employability and enterprise skills.

Core Skills

Core Skills continue to be an important part of our qualifications system. The following qualifications have Core Skills or Core Skill components that will automatically be recognised on the learner’s qualifications certificate.

- National Courses in English, Mathematics, Lifeskills Mathematics, Gaidhlig, Computing Science, and Administration and IT
- National Literacy Units and National Numeracy Units
- Awards
- New Skills for Work Courses

Skills for Learning, Life and Work

We support the development of the following essential general skills through the Skills for Learning, Life and Work (SfLLW) framework.

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Health and wellbeing
- Employability, enterprise and citizenship
- Thinking skills

Literacy and numeracy

The new National Courses have been designed to help learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. However, literacy skills are particularly relevant to English and Gàidhlig courses, and numeracy skills are particularly relevant to Mathematics and Lifeskills Mathematics courses.

We have introduced new National Units in Literacy and Numeracy, which form a mandatory part of the following courses.

Courses with mandatory Literacy Units	Courses with mandatory Numeracy Units
National 3 English	National 3 Lifeskills Mathematics
National 3 Gàidhlig	National 4 Mathematics
National 4 English	National 4 Lifeskills Mathematics
National 4 Gàidhlig	National 5 Lifeskills Mathematics



National Literacy and Numeracy Units may also be taken separately for those who want or need certification of these skills. National Units in Literacy and Numeracy are also available at National 5.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/literacyandnumeracy

Literacy support for disabled learners and learners with additional support needs

We have produced guidance on support in National Literacy Units for disabled learners and those with additional support needs. A wide range of support is allowed, which may include things such as large font, dictionaries, word processors, spell-checkers, screen and text readers, word-prediction software and extra time to complete tasks.

For more information, and to access helpful resources, visit www.sqa.org.uk/literacysupport



Assessment arrangements for disabled learners and learners with additional support needs

Giving learners an equal chance to show what they know and can do

If a learner in your class is disabled or needs additional support, an assessment arrangement can be made for them in their exams and assessments.

Assessment arrangements give learners an equal chance to show what they know and can do. For example, learners who use a laptop to type their answers because of problems with writing can also use a laptop in their exams and assessments.

Schools can contact aarequests@sqa.org.uk for advice about what support might be possible for individual learners.

To find out more, visit www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements



Unit assessment

For each Unit, it is important that you refer to the Unit Specification and the Unit assessment support pack.

We have designed each Unit assessment to give you more flexibility and independence when assessing your learners. Generally, there are no restrictions on the method of assessment you can use, and you can select a method that best suits the needs of your learners.

Our Unit assessment support packs contain examples of the types of assessments you can use with your learners, to produce work that meets the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Unit. You can use these assessments as they are, adapt them to suit your needs by changing the context or assessment method, or use them as a basis to develop your own Unit assessments. Unit assessment support packs are available from our secure website and you can arrange access to them through your SQA Co-ordinator.

Developing your own Unit assessments

As with other Unit assessments, it is now possible for you to produce your own National 4 Added Value Unit assessments to use with your learners.

If you develop your own Unit assessment, you should make sure there are opportunities for learners to produce evidence that meets the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Unit, as well as the Evidence Requirements. You should use your professional judgement and knowledge of your learners to select the most appropriate method of assessment.

Reassessing Units

If a learner has not met all of the Assessment Standards for the Unit (including the National 4 Added Value Unit) and so has not passed, they may be reassessed. Our advice is that they should normally be reassessed only once – or in exceptional circumstances, twice. You can decide the most appropriate time for this reassessment to take place during the session.

Prior verification

Prior verification is a free service designed to support centres that want to create their own assessments. If you develop your own Unit assessment, or make significant changes to one of our Unit assessments (including the National 4 Added Value Unit assessment), you should send it to us to verify before it is used by learners. Your assessment will be checked by an SQA appointee to make sure it is valid and fit for purpose.

For more information, including a guide to the process, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfedelivery

Examples of Unit assessments

When you submit a Unit assessment for prior verification, we will ask you if you want to give permission for us to publish the assessment on our secure website, where it can be shared with other teachers.

You can arrange access to prior-verified Unit assessments through your SQA Co-ordinator. All prior-verified assessments on our secure website have been published in their original format.

For more information on Unit assessment, including assessment conditions and judging evidence, visit www.sqa.org.uk/unitassessment

Quality-assuring internal assessment

We use a combination of approaches to check, and reassure schools, that the new qualifications are being successfully put in place and delivered, are appropriately assessed, and that national standards are being consistently applied. This is known as external verification.

Our approaches to external verification consist of the following.

- Prior verification (see page 9).
- Verification events – twice a year, we select assessment evidence from schools that have been chosen for verification. This evidence is taken to national or area events to be verified.
- Verification visits – for subjects where some or all of the evidence must be observed at the school by an external verifier.

To find out more, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfeqa

Internal verification toolkit

We have developed an internal verification (IV) toolkit to help schools manage their internal quality assurance of National Qualifications. It provides templates that can be used to support internal verification, and examples which help show how the toolkit might be used in practice.

To find out more, visit www.sqa.org.uk/IVtoolkit



Understanding Standards

We are delivering a three-year programme of Understanding Standards activity to help you develop your understanding of the national standards required for assessment in the new National Qualifications.

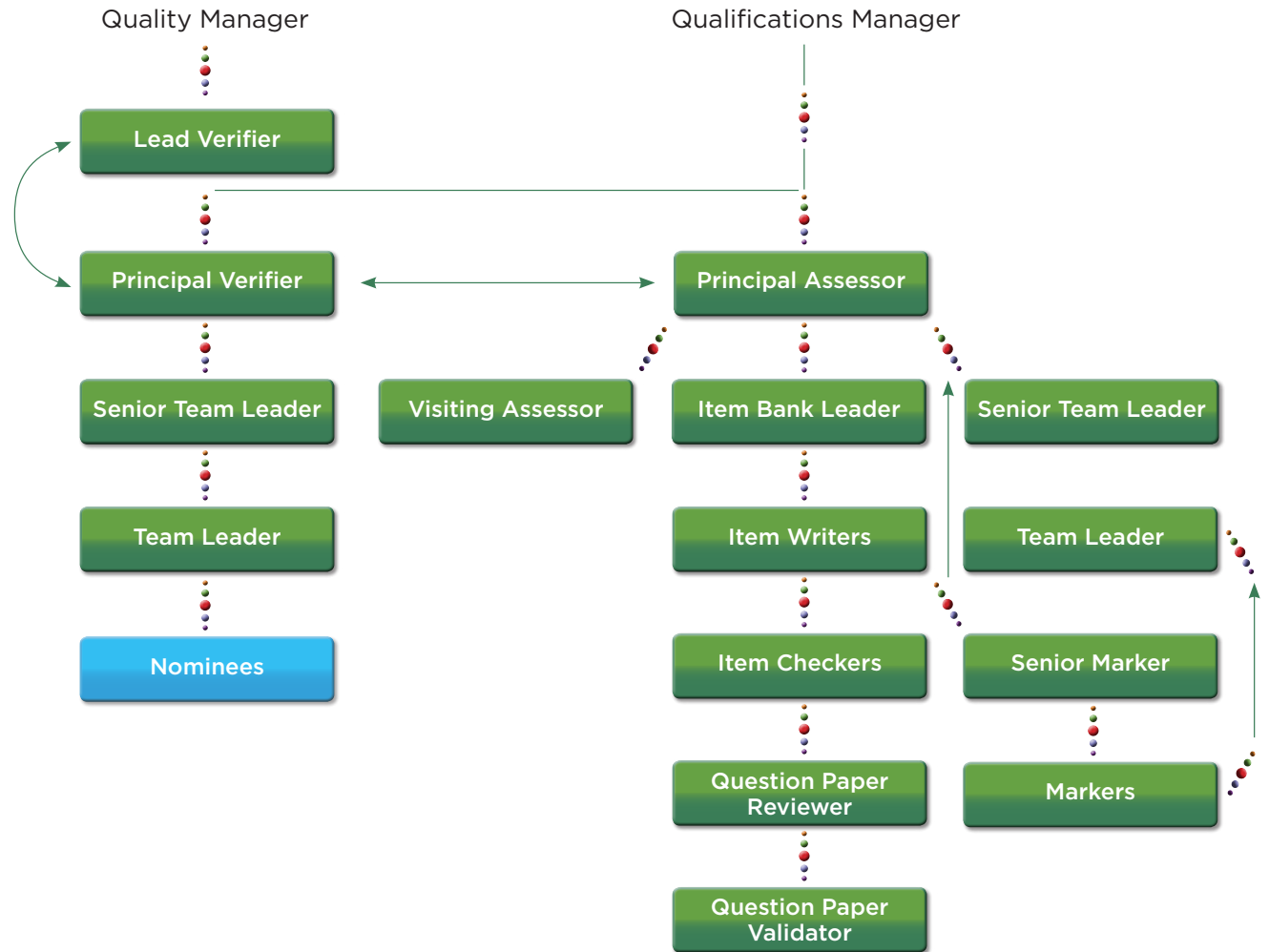
For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/understandingstandards

SQA appointee teams

We have a number of appointee teams working with our Qualifications Managers on the main aspects of quality assurance and assessment.

The diagram gives an overview of the various roles within each of the appointee teams.

For more information on the appointee roles, an overview of their duties and recruitment opportunities, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfevacancies



Learners who receive a fail or 'no award' result

Learners will still receive credit for any Units they have achieved

There is no automatic backup arrangement for a learner who fails the course. However, if a learner fails the course, they will still receive credit for any Units they have achieved at that level. This means that when they receive their qualifications certificate, the Units they have passed within the course will appear on the detailed Record of Attainment section of their qualifications certificate pack. Each Unit will be listed, along with the SCQF credit points gained.

Recognising Positive Achievement

We have arrangements in place to support candidates who do not achieve the National 5 Course assessment, but may be able to achieve the Course Award at National 4 instead. We refer to these arrangements as 'Recognising Positive Achievement'.

A guide to these arrangements is available at www.sqa.org.uk/rpa and you can use it to help explain the arrangements to colleagues, parents or carers, and learners.



Results Services

Results Services replaced our Appeals Service in 2014. There are two parts to Results Services, as follows.

Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service

This service supports candidates who have been unable to attend an externally assessed, timetabled exam, or whose performance in the exam may have been affected as a result of an incident beyond their control, such as a bereavement or medical condition. The service is available for all exams that appear in the exam timetable.

If the school believes a candidate has been affected by an exceptional circumstance, it can tell us and submit alternative evidence of attainment demonstrated by the candidate for us to consider.

You can find our Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service policy and further details of the service in '**Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service: Information for Centres**', which is available from SQA Connect at <https://www.sqaconnect.org.uk>

For more information on Results Services, including frequently asked questions, visit www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices

Results Services is also explained in our Beyond the Exam film, which is available to watch on our YouTube channel, [SQAonline](#).

Post-results Service

Our Post-results Service can be used where the school has concerns about a candidate's certificated result. The service will run after candidates have received their qualifications certificates. It consists of a clerical check or marking review (or both).

A clerical check will make sure that all questions and components have been marked, the marks have been added correctly, and that the correct total has been entered into the system to calculate the candidate's final grade.

A marking review is where our Senior Examiner reviews the marks that were given to each question or component to check that the original marking was in line with the national standard. The school can ask for a priority marking review if the candidate's place in further or higher education depends on the outcome of the review.

Please note that the Post-results Service does not consider 'alternative evidence'.

Our Post-results Service policy and details of this service are included in the publication '**Post-results Service: Information for Centres**', which is available from SQA Connect at <https://www.sqaconnect.org.uk>

Depending on the findings of the check or review, it will be possible for the candidate's grade to be adjusted up, or down. Schools will not be charged for this service if the candidate's grade is adjusted. However, if the original grade remains unchanged following the check or review, the school will be charged for this service.

Awards, Scottish Baccalaureates and vocational qualifications

Awards

We have developed a range of new Awards, which recognise wider achievement and are available at various SCQF levels.

These Awards take into account the life and work skills that learners gain from activities they may already be taking part in at school or elsewhere – such as mentoring, voluntary work or fundraising activities. These Awards can be delivered and assessed flexibly over a period of time that best suits the needs of schools and learners.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/awards

Scottish Baccalaureates

Scottish Baccalaureates are available in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences. They are based on a related group of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher, and include an interdisciplinary project.

The interdisciplinary project allows learners to use their subject knowledge in realistic contexts and helps to equip them with the skills, attitudes and confidence they need to make the move into higher education or employment.

Scottish Baccalaureates are available at SCQF level 7 and will be awarded a pass or distinction.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/baccalaureates

Skills for Work Courses

Skills for Work Courses introduce learners to the demands and expectations of the world of work. These courses offer opportunities for learners to gain vital employability skills through a variety of practical experiences linked to a particular vocational area, such as construction, hairdressing or hospitality.

Learners will normally spend some of their time at a local college, other training provider or employer. This will mean learning in a different environment, meeting new people and facing new challenges.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork

National Progression Awards and National Certificates

National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates (NCs) assess skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and are designed to prepare learners for employment, career development or further study at Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) level.

NPAs and NCs encourage learners to think differently and aim higher, and also provide opportunities to develop the skills employers look for.

For more information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/npa

We are consulting employers to make sure they understand the changes to National Qualifications.

Stay informed

Our website - www.sqa.org.uk/cfe

Our website is the most comprehensive source of information about the new National Qualifications, assessment support, guidance, delivery processes and quality assurance.

To receive email alerts when content you are interested in has been added to or updated on the website, subscribe to MyAlerts at www.sqa.org.uk/myalerts

SQA Connect - <https://www.sqaconnect.org.uk>

SQA Connect is a secure online portal for schools and colleges. It provides access to a range of our services, including delivery and operational support for our qualifications.

Our e-newsletters

Look out for Centre News (weekly) and the New National Qualifications update (monthly). To subscribe to our e-newsletters, visit <http://mailer.sqa.org.uk>

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LinkedIn - [Scottish Qualifications Authority](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ScottishQualificationsAuthority)

YouTube - [SQAonline](https://www.youtube.com/SQAonline)



Centre enquiries

For general enquiries, contact our Customer Support Team.

Phone: 0303 333 0330

Fax: 0345 213 5000

Email: mycentre@sqa.org.uk

To download a copy of this guide, visit

www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforteachers

our dedicated web page for teachers delivering the new National Qualifications. Here, you will also find links to admissions statements from Scottish Universities regarding the new qualifications.



A guide for **teachers** to the new **National Qualifications**

Thanks to you

When deciding which courses to develop, we carried out extensive research and consulted a wide range of stakeholders from across the country. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the new National Qualifications.



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www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforteachers
BD7043 August 2015