

What you need to know:

A guide to the new National Qualifications for learners

Spring/Summer 2012



curriculum for excellence



New National Qualifications

New SQA exams will replace Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 from next year.

The world in the 21st century is an exciting and changing place. For those with the right knowledge and the most up-to-date skills, it's a world full of possibilities.

SQA is introducing new National Qualifications, to support Curriculum for Excellence and help you achieve your full potential.

It's all designed to help you progress smoothly from a broad-based secondary school education to the more specialised demands of college, university or employment.

So, what do you need to know?



Who will do the new qualifications?

Those of you who are in S3 in 2012-13 will sit the new National Qualifications. As you approach the point where you would have been working towards your Standard Grades and Intermediates, we feel it is important for you to be as comfortable and prepared as you can be.

Why are the changes happening?

In a changing world, it's important that education changes to keep pace.

SQA has designed new qualifications to support Curriculum for Excellence as a new way of learning, to give you the skills, knowledge and understanding you will need to succeed. The skills you are learning in the classroom today will be more applicable than ever when you go beyond the classroom.

These new qualifications represent an important part of this change, ensuring that your skills and abilities are appropriately assessed and recognised.

Which qualifications are changing?

This table shows the new qualifications and how they compare to the qualifications your friends and family may have studied for:

SCQF Level	Current National Qualifications	Replaced by	New National Qualifications
1 and 2	Access 1 and Access 2	→	National 1 and National 2
3	Access 3 Standard Grade (Foundation level)	→	National 3
4	Standard Grade (General level) Intermediate 1	→	National 4
5	Standard Grade (Credit level) Intermediate 2	→	National 5
6	Higher	→	Higher (new)
7	Advanced Higher	→	Advanced Higher (new)

You can find out more about the new qualifications and how they compare with existing qualifications on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Visit www.sqa.org.uk/scqf

When will the new qualifications start?

National 1, National 2, National 3, National 4 and **National 5** will be available from August 2013, while the new **Higher** will be introduced in August 2014 and the new **Advanced Higher** in 2015.

Most of you will study for these new qualifications in S4, S5 and S6.

However, schools may introduce these changes at different times, so do ask your teachers about their plans to introduce the qualifications.

How will they actually work?

Schools and colleges will mark and assess the new **National 1, National 2, National 3, and National 4.**

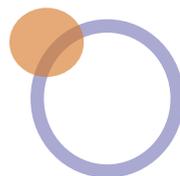
As well as the work that's marked and assessed by your teacher or lecturer, **National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher** will involve an additional assessment – usually a question paper and/or coursework – which will be marked by us here at SQA.

Assessment will be appropriate to the subject and the level you're studying. So, if you're doing an assignment for **National 4** Computing Science, it will be marked differently from a **Higher** Computing Science assignment.

Of course, it's in everyone's interest to ensure that these qualifications are recognised as being fair and consistent. SQA is working with schools and colleges to ensure all assessments continue to meet national standards.



Which qualifications will be available?



This table shows when the new Nationals will typically be available to learners currently in S1, S2 and S3. Learners in S4 and above will continue to work towards the current qualifications.

		Learners in S1:	Learners in S2:	Learners in S3:
Academic Year /Session	2012/13	Broad general education in S1	Broad general education in S2	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*
	2013/14	Broad general education in S2	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available*
	2014/15	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*
	2015/16	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*
	2016/17	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*	
	2017/18	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*		

*Speak to your teacher about how the new qualifications will be introduced.

How will they be graded?

Courses at **National 2**, **National 3** and **National 4** will not be graded. They'll be assessed as pass or fail. Courses at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** will be graded A to D or 'No Award'.

If you fail a Course assessment, you will receive credit for the Units you have achieved.

How do I prepare for the new qualifications?

We are preparing sample questions and other resources for you, and these will be available before the new National Qualifications are introduced to help you revise and prepare.

New Awards

Because everybody is different, SQA has developed more new ways of recognising your achievements at school or college. These are in addition to the Nationals, and they don't replace any existing qualifications.

Some of these new Awards cover work from a variety of subjects, some are shorter than traditional Courses, and some recognise success across different levels of difficulty.

Each Award supports the values, purpose and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and is available at different levels. There are Awards in:

- Personal Achievement
- Personal Development
- Modern Languages for Life and Work
- Wellbeing
- Religion, Belief and Values

This means that there is now a qualification that recognises your abilities and achievements, whoever you are. These will be available in schools and colleges from August 2012, and will be marked and assessed within the school, with no external assessment.

Who can I talk to now?

Your teachers and parents have also been sent information about all these changes, so they know what's happening too. Why not discuss it with them?

If you want to find out more for yourself, go to the SQA website at www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople. Or look out for **MYSQA_SAM** on Twitter, Facebook at www.facebook.com/sam.sqa and The Student Room.

SAM is there to answer any questions you may have about anything to do with exams, Curriculum for Excellence or any other SQA related issue.

Other useful websites include www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone; www.scqf.org.uk and www.engageforeducation.org

Meanwhile, we'll continue to provide information and support as the changes are put in place to ensure the qualifications are a success and that they help you in the future.



