

Your questions answered



This guide is for you. It answers some of the practical questions you have been asking about delivering the new National Qualifications.

“What do I need to know?”



The new qualifications from National 1 to National 5 started in August 2013. The new Higher will start in 2014 and the new Advanced Higher in 2015

As with any change, there are lots of questions. Here you will find answers to the most frequent questions raised as our CfE Liaison team visit schools and colleges across Scotland.

Of course we can't answer every question here. If you need to know more about the subject you teach, go to www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects

“How will standards be maintained?”

Quality Assurance (QA)

QA is critical to the success of the new National Qualifications.

New verification arrangements will ensure national standards are maintained and credibility is enhanced among employers and higher education institutions.

They are designed to support you as a teacher or lecturer, building confidence in your assessment decisions by reviewing internal assessment decisions at key points in the year. Our verification process is designed to help you, *it is not a critique of your work.*

“What are the key points?”

The new QA arrangements are about delivering the very best for Scotland’s young people.

- Every centre will be verified at least once for each broad subject area each year
- Units and internally assessed Coursework will be verified
- There will be three rounds of verification annually in November, February and May
- Your SQA Coordinator will be notified of the subjects chosen for verification
- Your verification evidence will be sent to an SQA QA panel event

- Where evidence is non-portable, verifiers will visit your school/college
- Complete or interim evidence can be used to support an assessment decision
- We need evidence from 12 candidates drawn from across all the levels of the Course you offer
- Feedback will be sent to your SQA Coordinator
- If follow-up action is required, it may involve resubmission of evidence or amendments to results — we will support you through any remedial action
- You must retain all candidate evidence for one academic year and sometimes longer — where a Course takes two years to complete, for example
- We will publish our internal assessment teams’ findings after each round
- An annual report will be published for each subject

Schools and colleges are represented on our internal assessment teams by nominated subject specialists, called Nominees. They will undertake verification activities, and share knowledge and understanding of national standards.

For more details on **Quality Assurance**, go to www.sqa.org.uk/cfeqa

“Can we devise our own assessments?”



Prior Verification

Prior Verification is offered as a free service to any centre choosing to develop their own assessments or change our assessments significantly.

- You can use the Prior Verification service all year round
- It ensures your proposed assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards
- Verification is by a subject expert who is an SQA Appointee
- You should receive your report of the outcome within six weeks (though we cannot guarantee this at peak times, particularly during verification rounds)

- Where possible, verified assessments will be published anonymously on our secure website, adding to the range of assessments available*
- Until June 2015, it is mandatory to use our published assessments for the National 4 Added Value Unit

For the full Guide to **Prior Verification**, go to www.sqa.org.uk/cfedelivery

* These are published as submitted to us, so may contain approaches which possibly cover only some Assessment Standards. Responsibility lies with the centre to ensure their assessment approach is complete and valid.

“What is replacing the appeals system?”

Results Services

Our new Results Services will be introduced in April 2014 for all qualifications, replacing the existing appeals system.

There will be two main services:

Exceptional Circumstance Consideration

Available before examination results are published in August, this service allows us to take account of a wide range of alternative evidence to determine a candidate’s performance potential and award an appropriate grade.

Post-Results Service

After results are published, we will no longer consider alternative evidence. A **clerical check** will ensure all marks have been registered correctly. A senior examiner may also undertake a **marking review** to ensure the original marker has allocated marks according to the agreed national standard.

NOTE – if there is no change to the original grade, your school or college will have to pay a fee, and grades can go down as well as up.

For more information about **Results Services** go to www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices. Leaflets for candidates and parents are also available from your SQA Coordinator.

“Do I continue to submit estimates?”

Estimates

Estimates remain a valuable part of our awarding processes. They are used to inform a range of activities including **Exceptional Circumstance Consideration**. It’s important that you continue to submit estimates for all candidates.



“When do I have to submit Unit passes?”

Key dates

Key dates are built into the process, and these must be met to ensure certification of National Qualifications in August.

For further details or a full list of our key dates please speak to your SQA Co-ordinator.

5 Nov Uplift of Verification National 1–5 Round 1 materials

8 Nov *Closing date for initial entry information on Courses, Units and Course Assessments (schools) (**31 Jan** Colleges)

2 Dec Receive notification of National 1–5 selections for Verification Round 2

15 Jan Uplift of Verification National 1–5 Round 2 materials

End Jan Verification National 1–5 Round 1 Key Messages published

10 Feb – 16 May Visiting Examination Period

3 Mar Receive notification of National 1–5 selections for Verification Round 3

25 Mar Uplift for externally assessed coursework for all National 5 subjects that also have a timetabled exam (with the exception of Art and Design which will be uplifted on 30 Apr)

31 Mar *Closing date for Entry Withdrawals to be submitted/*Closing date for Entries and Changes of Level to be submitted

End Mar Verification National 1–5 Round 2 Key Messages published

24 Apr Uplift for externally assessed coursework for all National 5 subjects that have coursework components only

28 Apr Uplift of Verification National 1–5 Round 3 materials/*Closing date for submission of estimates for all National Courses

29 Apr – 6 Jun NQ diet of Examinations

30 Apr Uplift for externally assessed coursework submissions for Art and Design Intermediate 1 and 2, National 5 and Higher

14 May Uplift for Geographical Folio submissions for Geography Advanced Higher

23 May *Closing date for submission of outstanding Unit results for National Courses (schools) (**2nd June** Colleges)

End Jun Verification National 1–5 Round 3 Key Messages published

5 Aug Candidates receive results by post and, if registered with MySQA.org.uk, by text and e-mail

5 Aug – Late Aug (TBC) Submit Clerical Check and Marking Review requests for Results Services

* Closing dates

“What happens where a student gets ‘No Award’?”

There is no automatic fallback where students achieve ‘No Award’. However, as part of our Recognising Positive Achievement, a National 5 student may be eligible for the National 4 award where specific criteria have been met:

- A corresponding/hierarchy Course at National 4 exists
- Students have passed all internally assessed National 5 Units and have passed the National 4 Added Value Unit
- For English, Maths and Gaidhlig, a pass must also be held in the additional Literacy and Numeracy Unit

The opportunity to achieve the National 4 Course is open until the following April.

Further details about this arrangement can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/cfedelivery

“Will there be practice exam papers?”

Specimen Question Papers and Coursework specifications are now available for National 5. Many of the questions from past Intermediate 2 and Standard Grade Credit examination papers remain relevant and can support students preparing for examinations.

Details can be found for your subject at www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects

“Can I become a marker on the new examinations?”

Working with SQA

Working with SQA in any role which supports our examinations and assessments offers an unrivalled professional and career development opportunity. You work with leading subject experts, see good practice at first hand, and constantly learn from other specialists.

Recruitment is by open competition and interview.

You’ll find details on all our appointee roles, an overview of duties and recruitment opportunities at www.sqa.org.uk/cfevacancies

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

*“Who should I talk to if I have
any questions?”*

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to
keep in touch.

To contact your local CfE Liaison Manager – visit
www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam

Call or email on 0303 333 0330
mycentre@sqa.org.uk



it can
be done  SQA