

HISTORY QUALIFICATIONS WORKING GROUP – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This new working group on History Qualifications has emerged as part of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme Curriculum Reform workstream. It seeks to address the recommendation created in partnership with the SQA to ensure anti-racist practice and content in the qualifications, and to align with the wider vision of the workstream and the *Breaking the Mould* curriculum principles.

Those key drivers and references are set out below and will be discussed at meeting one.

Background/context

- AREP - [Anti-Racism in Education Programme - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/anti-racism/arep) and [Curriculum Reform sub group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/curriculum-reform)
 - The vision and key recommendations from the SubGroup are noted below alongside the most relevant [Breaking the Mould](#) principles
 - Education Reform: Qualifications and Assessment and Curriculum Improvement Cycle
 - What do we know? What have young people told us? – meeting presentation
 - SQA - Recent changes to language in relation to decolonisation and anti-racist practice
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Vision

Scotland's schools and early learning environments will promote and embed racial equity, anti-racism and global citizenship through its systems, leadership and curriculum. All of our learners and the people that support them will benefit from a curriculum, culture and ethos that reflects the diversity of the early learning and school community, Scotland and the wider world.

The curriculum will include the historical and current influence on society and culture and the contribution of People of Colour and people with a racialised identity in a positive and empowered way. The role of Scotland and the UK in colonial history and the impact it has on the modern world will feature in teaching and learning to ensure our young people have an understanding and awareness of the impact of colonialism, including the UK's role in enslavement and other human rights violations, past and present.

Key recommendations (selected)

Review and Reform of the Curriculum Framework from the early years onwards to articulate and embed anti-racist practice and learning.

Development and curation of high-quality resources that support and grow anti-racist learning and teaching across the curriculum (aligned with professional learning to support and enhance implementation and embedding co-design and community involvement as integral features).

In recognition of the impact of national qualifications in shaping educational priorities, that SQA works with partners, including the AREP Curriculum Reform Sub-Group, to ensure appropriate inclusion of race equality and anti-racist practice and content in the development of new or adapted course specifications, and relevant guidance.

Relevant Breaking the Mould principles

Our children and young people:

1. Will experience a curriculum that meaningfully recognises and fairly represents the rich and diverse communities in Scotland and beyond.
2. Will understand and enquire into Scotland's role in historical world events, including trans-Atlantic enslavement and colonial histories, and their continuing impact today.
3. Will learn about and investigate past and present events in a way that amplifies under-represented perspectives and stories.
4. Will feel safe and confident to co-design their curriculum from their personal perspectives and those of the wider world.
5. Will be critical thinking global citizens that challenge discrimination and prejudice through an understanding and awareness of the behaviours, practices and processes that create injustice in the world.

Programme for Government 2024-5 commitment

Continuing to develop and embed social justice, rights, and equalities across education, through implementation of both our Learning for Sustainability Action Plan to 2030 and the recommendations of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme.

Within the wider Education Reform landscape there are key alignments in particular with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle and the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment.

Capture key issues

Our curriculum must be fit for purpose now and the future. It must define how we see knowledge in the 21st century to redress the imbalances that have existed and continue to exist to this day.

This can be addressed through language, focus and intent, racial literacy and cultural competence and applying the Breaking the Mould principles in relation to history qualifications.

SQA - Recent changes to language in relation to decolonisation and anti-racist practice

In June 2024 the SQA published changes to language in the history, geography and classical studies exams following a review of language and input from the AREP curriculum workstream and associated networks such as the Teaching Slavery in

Scotland community of educators. Full details are enclosed but key to the majority of changes was a focus on enslavement of people rather than the use of 'slavery' and 'slaves'. For example the previously-named The Transatlantic Slave Trade has been renamed to The trade in Enslaved African People.

This marked the start of activity in SQA focused on anti-racism and decolonised approaches to exam content and intent. It was recognised that language changes were vital and quick ways to demonstrate and initiate change and that a more substantial review would need to follow.