



Background information for progression 2023

Official Statistics in Development

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Background information

Purpose

Progression 2023 presents a summary of progression from National 4 to National 5, National 5 to Higher, and Higher to Advanced Higher in 2023.

Status

These data are classified as *Official Statistics in Development*.

Geography and time period covered

This publication presents data on progression for National Qualifications in Scotland between the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years.

Description

Progression tables present data for candidates achieving the lower qualification level of the subject in 2021/2022 to each available graded result at the higher qualification level of the subject in 2022/2023 (National 4 to National 5, National 5 to Higher, and Higher to Advanced Higher).

In 2023, awarding operated using the established procedure as far as possible in order to evaluate the performance of the course assessment, but with consideration given to the following factors:

- ◆ The impact of the reducing legacy of disruption to teaching and learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ◆ The impact of modifications to course assessment.
- ◆ The impact of the removing revision support.

Awarding decisions were therefore 'sensitive' to these factors, ensuring that grade boundary decisions recognised that performance continues to be impacted. This was informed by the full range of qualitative and quantitative data used during awarding, with additional data from 2021–22 on the impact of modifications. [Further details about the approach to awarding in 2023 can be found in the methodology report.](#)

In 2022, SQA worked with partners across the education sector, including teachers, lecturers, learners, parents and carers, throughout the year to agree the wide-ranging package of support that was put in place to enable learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do, despite the disruption to learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. SQA implemented various modifications and revision support to reduce the assessment requirements for courses and increase learning and teaching time. [Further details about the approach to awarding in 2022 can be found in the methodology report.](#)

The figures are produced by professional independent statistical staff in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Source of data

National Qualification data used in the production of these figures is the same as Attainment Statistics — December 2023. These data have been collected at a point when results are reasonably complete, in this case, 8 November 2023.

Methodology

Progression from an ungraded to graded National Qualification is only considered for National 4 to National 5, given that such qualifications were designed to be in a hierarchy. In most instances, only subjects with a direct (intended by design) progression route are included. Typically, these progression routes will involve a qualification at consecutive levels with the same qualification code. A small number of alternative subject progression routes are considered where the number of learners involved is moderate or high, and/or no direct progression is available between levels (eg Human Biology is not available at Advanced Higher level, so the progression route Higher Human Biology to Advanced Higher Biology is given). For cases where progression is between subjects with different titles, these are explicitly detailed as 'Qualification Name X' and 'Qualification Name Y' in the title columns of the data tables.

Figures for courses available in different languages are combined and reported as a single course for reporting purposes. These courses are as follows:

- ◆ Mandarin (Traditional), Mandarin (Simplified) and Cantonese are reported as Chinese Languages.
- ◆ Mathematics and Matamataig are reported as Mathematics.
- ◆ Applications of Mathematics and Gniomhachas Matamataigs are reported as Applications of Mathematics.
- ◆ Geography and Cruinn-eòlas are reported as Geography.
- ◆ History and Eachdraidh are reported as History.
- ◆ Modern Studies and Nuadh-eòlas are reported as Modern Studies.
- ◆ Biology and Bith-eòlas at National 4 are reported as Biology.

Progression from National 4 to National 5 is reported as the number of candidates progressing from any National 4 result to each of the available National 5 grades (A to No Award). Only candidates that have a result at National 4 in the 2021/2022 academic year and an A to No Award grade at National 5 in the 2022/2023 academic year for the subjects in the progression pathway are included in the calculations.

Progression from National 5 to Higher and Higher to Advanced Higher is reported as the percentage of candidates progressing from the individual given grades (A to No Award) at the lower level to each of the available grades (A to No Award) at the higher level. For example, progression from an A in National 5 to each of the grades (A to No Award) at Higher. Only candidates that have an A to No Award grade at the lower level in the 2021/2022 academic year and an A to No Award grade at the higher level in the 2022/2023 academic year for the subjects in the progression pathway are included in the calculations.

The 'Total Candidates Progressing' figure is the total number of candidates progressing from the lower qualification level to the higher qualification level.

Confidentiality and rounding

'Total Candidates Progressing' figures between one and nine inclusive have been suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information and are marked up with the shorthand [c]. All percentage figures relating to that course have also been suppressed. The remaining 'Total Candidates Progressing' figures are rounded to the nearest ten.

Not applicable is used where no candidates have progressed from the given grade at the lower level to any grade at the higher level. Cells containing such figures are marked up with the shorthand [z].

Percentages are calculated using figures prior to rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, with a value greater than zero and less than 0.5% marked up with the shorthand [low].

Total values of rows are calculated using figures prior to rounding; the sum of rounded figures may differ from the total reported.

Limitations

SQA external assessments returned in 2022, but significant assessment modifications were put in place with the aim to increase learning and teaching time. The course assessment modifications were retained for 2023. The different awarding arrangements in place prior to 2020, in 2022, and in 2023 mean that it is not possible to compare progression between years without full consideration of this essential contextual information.

SQA produces progression analysis for the purpose of recording learner movement within subject areas. The data show actual observed attainment of learners across two consecutive academic years. As this analysis does not take into account a variety of factors which influence learner attainment, and is based on recorded statistical data, it should not be used to support measures or decisions with respect to particular individuals. As a consequence, progression information should not be used to determine what qualification/level choices are appropriate for any particular learner as such information does not take into account the individual circumstances of the learner.

Revisions and corrections

[Further information about revisions and corrections is available in our policy document.](#)

Related publications

For any related publications for qualifications offered in Wales, Northern Ireland and England please contact the [Joint Council for Qualifications](#) or the respective regulators [Qualifications Wales](#), [CCEA](#) and [Ofqual](#).

Useful links

- ◆ [data tables accompanying this release.](#)
- ◆ [grade boundaries 2023.](#)
- ◆ [attainment statistics 2023.](#)

Official Statistics in Development

Official statistics in development are official statistics that are undergoing development; they may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

This is the first time progression statistics are being published as official statistics in development. To ensure the statistics are developed in a way which is useful we invite users to provide their views and feedback on future developments or improvements that could be made to these statistics to meet your needs. If you have comments or questions, please contact us: data.analytics@sqa.org.uk.