

New Qualifications — New Opportunities for your Child



New qualifications are being introduced in Scotland from August 2013. The new **Nationals, Highers** and **Advanced Highers** will replace the existing Access, Standard Grade, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications. These new qualifications are designed to give your child the skills they will need to succeed in the 21st century.

it can
be done  **SQA**

Why are new qualifications needed?



The new qualifications have been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which introduced a new way of learning to secondary schools and colleges in 2010.

SQA has designed the new qualifications with the interests of the learner at heart. They will help young people demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills they've developed at school or college and enable them to prepare for further learning, training and employment.

The new, simplified format of the qualifications will also be easier for learners, parents/carers and prospective employers to understand.

What is changing?

This table shows which of the current qualifications the new National Qualifications will replace:

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/readyreckoner



When are the new qualifications being introduced?



National 1, National 2, National 3, National 4 and National 5 will be available from August 2013.

The new **Higher** will be introduced in August 2014 and the new **Advanced Higher** in August 2015.

In 2013-14 and 2014-15, the new qualifications will run in schools and colleges alongside some of the current qualifications - this is called 'dual running'. This means that learners who are entering S5 or S6 in session 2013-14 will continue to study towards the current qualifications until they complete their education.

Most learners, entering S4 in session 2013-14 or thereafter, will study for the new qualifications at school in S4, S5 and S6, or at college. However, schools

and colleges may choose to introduce these changes at different times, so your child should speak to their school or college about their plans to introduce the qualifications.

Learners will continue to choose the subjects they want to study at each level and your child's school or college will tell you when these choices have to be made.

Schools and colleges are working with education authorities, and are in discussion with parents and learners to develop and deliver a Senior Phase curriculum that best suits their young people.

The final exam results for Standard Grade will be issued in August 2013.

Which qualifications will be available to my child?

The table below shows when the new **Nationals**, **Highers** and **Advanced Highers** will typically be available to learners in S1, S2, S3 and S4 in 2013-14. Learners in S5 and S6 will continue to work towards the current qualifications.

If your child is studying at college, they should speak to their college about when the new qualifications will be available to them.

Academic year/session	Learners in S1 in 2013-14	Learners in S2 in 2013-14	Learners in S3 in 2013-14	Learners in S4 in 2013-14
2013-14	Broad general education* in S1	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 S2	Broad general education* in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4 [†]	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available [†]	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available [†]
2015-16	Broad general education* in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4 [†]	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 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 S4 National 1 to National 5 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 [†]	
2017-18	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 [†]		
2018-19	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available [†]			

* The broad general education phase spans from age 3 to the end of S3, before learners move on into the senior phase from S4 to S6. To read a briefing note about this, search for 'Broad General Education' at www.educationscotland.gov.uk

[†]Speak to your school or college about how the new qualifications will be introduced.

How will the new qualifications be assessed?

National 1, National 2, National 3, and National 4 will be marked and assessed by your child's school or college. You can speak to the school or college to find out more about how they will manage internal assessment.

SQA will check internal assessments to ensure that assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

National 4 Courses will be made up of Units, including an Added Value Unit. In order to achieve a Course at National 4, learners will need to pass all Units plus an Added Value Unit assessment. The National 4 Added Value Unit assessment will be set and marked by the school or college. To assist schools and colleges, SQA will set the National 4 Added Value Unit assessments in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

The Added Value Unit assessment performs a similar function to the Course assessment at National 5 and above.

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses will also include Units that are assessed and marked by the school or college. In order to achieve a Course at National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher, learners must pass all Units plus a Course assessment. Course assessments will continue to be externally marked by SQA or, where appropriate, internally assessed by the school or college, ensuring continuity with the current qualifications. The Course assessment will normally



be carried out using one or two assessment methods from seven possible types:

- assignment
- case study
- practical activity
- performance
- portfolio
- project
- question paper / test

Assessments will be appropriate to the subject and level of study.

New quality assurance arrangements are being introduced to ensure that the new qualifications are recognised as a valuable achievement for learners.

We are working with schools and colleges to ensure that all assessments are secure, valid and reliable. We will also make sure that they are fair, consistent, in line with national standards, and can be trusted by colleges, universities and employers in the future.

Find out more at
www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment

How will they be graded?

All Courses will continue to contain Units that are marked throughout the year by teachers and lecturers, as it is at present. These Units will be assessed as pass or fail, as is the case with current qualifications.

Courses at **National 2**, **National 3** and **National 4** will not be graded, but will be assessed as a pass or fail.

Courses at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** will be graded A to D, or 'No Award'.

If a learner does not achieve a Course assessment at National 4, National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher, they will still receive credit for any Units they have achieved at that level. So, when the learner receives 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.

Centres will use policies to ensure each young person is certificated for their best possible achievement. You can speak to your child's school or college for further details.



Core Skills

Core Skills can help individuals to meet both their personal needs and the needs of society.

A small number of Courses contain Core Skills which are automatically recognised. For further information, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfecoresskills



Studying for the new qualifications

SQA has published the following support materials for learners studying towards **National 5** in Session 2013-14:

- specimen question papers and marking instructions for subjects that include an examination question paper as part of the Course assessment
- general assessment information for parts of the Course assessment that involve Coursework, such as an assignment or practical activity

These materials can be used to help learners revise and prepare. They are available from the subject pages of SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk/browsecfesubjects by clicking on the relevant subject and selecting 'National 5'.

Support materials will also be made available for the new Higher and Advanced Higher before they are introduced.



New Awards

As well as the new National Courses, SQA has developed a range of new Awards designed to give young people more opportunities to demonstrate their achievements at school or college.

These Awards have been available since August 2012. They are marked and assessed by teachers and lecturers, according to national standards.

Some cover work from different subject areas, are shorter than traditional Courses and recognise success across different levels of difficulty.

Each Award is based on the values, purpose and principles of CfE and is available at various levels:

Personal Achievement

SCQF levels 1 and 2

Personal Development

SCQF levels 2 to 6

Modern Languages for Life and Work

SCQF levels 3 and 4

Wellbeing

SCQF levels 3 to 5

Religion, Belief and Values

SCQF levels 3 to 6

The following Awards will be available from August 2013:

Scottish Studies Award

SQA has developed a new Scottish Studies Award. This Award will provide opportunities for learners at SCQF levels 4 and 5 to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Scotland — its people, society, culture, natural environment and heritage — and to make connections across the curriculum.

Cycling Awards

SQA's newly created Cycling Awards will equip learners with the skills to check, maintain and ride their cycles safely. Learners will develop awareness of the main safety requirements when cycling, including: safety checks, basic maintenance and repair skills, rules, practices and codes of conduct for safe cycling. These Awards are available at SCQF levels 1 and 2.

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

Scottish Baccalaureates



Scottish Baccalaureates are qualifications which are available to learners in S5 and S6. They have been introduced to encourage more young people to study Highers and Advanced Highers in the curriculum areas of Science, Languages, Expressive Arts and Social Sciences.

Scottish Baccalaureates in Science and Languages have been available in schools since 2009. SQA has also developed Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts and Social Sciences, which have been available to schools since August 2012.

They are available at SCQF level 7. To achieve a Baccalaureate, learners will need to achieve two Advanced Higher Courses and one Higher Course, from an approved list of subjects within

the relevant curriculum area, and undertake an Interdisciplinary Project at Advanced Higher. This project is designed to develop the kind of skills that employers and universities are looking for in young people, such as communication and presentation skills, independent thinking skills, information management skills and collaborative working skills.

In addition to their qualifications certificate, learners who achieve a Baccalaureate will also receive a Commemorative Certificate which will show the achievement of a Scottish Baccalaureate.

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

Other National Qualifications

We continue to offer other types of National Qualification that support wider achievement. These include:

- Skills for Work Courses, which introduce learners to the demands and expectations of the world of work. www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork
- National Progression Awards and National Certificates, which assess skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and are designed to prepare learners for employment, career development or progression to further study at Higher National level. www.sqa.org.uk/npa

Where can I find out more?

The SQA website, www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents, is full of useful information to help you understand the changes to National Qualifications. There are also details on how we are working with teachers and lecturers to introduce the new National Qualifications and Awards.

Keep in touch with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/scottishqualificationsauthority, follow the updates from [@sqanews](https://twitter.com/sqanews) on Twitter, or subscribe to our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline

If you have any further questions about the new qualifications, please speak to your school, college or local authority.



Other useful links

- For information on how to support learning for young people – www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone
- Parents can visit the Scottish Parent Teacher Council website at www.sptc.info
- Get in touch with the National Parent Forum of Scotland at www.parentforumscotland.org
- Keep up to date with Scotland's education community at www.engageforeducation.org
- Advice and information about additional support for learning at www.enquire.org.uk



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curriculum for excellence



CfE Liaison Team
www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam
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