

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 Access, Standard Grade, Intermediate, and the existing 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.

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.

What is changing?

Standard Grade exam results were issued for the final time in August 2013. Now, the new **National 1**, **National 2**, **National 3**, **National 4** and **National 5** qualifications are being delivered in schools and colleges across Scotland.

This table shows how the new National Qualifications will replace previous and existing qualifications.

SCQF level	Previous / existing 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)

To find out more about the new qualifications and how they compare with existing SQA 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 were introduced in 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 existing qualifications - this is called 'dual running'. This means that learners who are currently in S5 or S6 will continue to study towards the existing qualifications until they complete their education.

Learners currently in S4 or below will study for the new qualifications. The new qualifications will be undertaken in S4, S5 and S6, or at college. Some 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.

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 are made up of Units, and will be marked and assessed internally by your child's school or college.

National 4 Courses also include an Added Value Unit and, in order to achieve a Course at National 4, learners need to pass all Units plus an Added Value Unit assessment.

To assist schools and colleges, SQA will provide the National 4 Added Value Unit assessments in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Teachers will be able to use their professional judgement when deciding on the assessment method for each Unit, with the exception of the National 4 Added Value Unit.

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

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. This will ensure continuity with the current qualifications.



The Course assessment will normally consist of a question paper exam and/or coursework (assignments, practical activities, portfolios etc)

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

New quality assurance arrangements have been 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.

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, just like many of the previous qualifications. These Units will continue to be assessed as Pass or Fail.

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 along with the SCQF credit points they have achieved.

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 learners 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/cfecoreskills



Studying for the new qualifications



SQA has published the following support materials which may be helpful to learners studying towards **National 5** in Session 2013-14:

- specimen question papers and marking instructions
- general assessment information about Coursework

These materials can be used to help

learners revise and prepare for their Course assessments. They are available from the subject pages of our 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.

The new Nationals in action

The new National Qualifications place greater emphasis on 'deeper learning'. They require learners to show that they can interpret and apply what they learn, display a wider range of skills, and make connections across their learning.

The following examples show how many different skills can be applied across different curriculum areas:

In the Electricity and Energy Unit of the National 4 Physics Course, learners could be asked to investigate what might affect their school or college's energy consumption. In doing so, learners would be required to use a

range of skills which also span different subjects – including data collection, literacy, numeracy, team working and presentation skills.

When learning about the Wars of Independence in National 5 History, learners could be asked to examine the different views of William Wallace by evaluating sources and writing a newspaper report. There could also be a re-enactment of Wallace's trial. Again, learners would be required to use a range of skills including literacy, creativity, thinking, independent working and/or team working skills.



Other qualifications supporting Curriculum for Excellence

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.

Each Award is based on the values, purpose and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and is available at various levels.

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

Scottish Baccalaureates

Scottish Baccalaureates are qualifications at SCQF level 7 which are available to learners in S5 and S6. There are Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences.

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. They will also need to 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.

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

Skills for Work Courses

Skills for Work Courses introduce learners to the demands and expectations of the world of work. These Courses offer opportunities for learners to acquire critical employability skills through a variety of practical experiences linked to a particular vocational area, such as construction, hairdressing and hospitality.

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

National Progression Awards and National Certificates

National Progression Awards and National Certificates assess skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and are designed to prepare learners for employment, career development or progression to further study at HNC/HND level.

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

Where can I find out more?

Our 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.



A guide for **Parents/Carers** to the new **National Qualifications**

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



it can
be done  **SQA**

curriculum for excellence



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