

What you need to know:

A guide to the new National Qualifications for parents and carers

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curriculum for excellence



Introducing the new National Qualifications



Dr Janet Brown

Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority

I am delighted to introduce the new National Qualifications, which will be available in schools and colleges across Scotland in just over a year's time.

The new qualifications, which are known as 'Nationals', have been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence. Changes are also being made to our Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications and we are introducing a number of new Awards too.

These new qualifications will help young people reach their full potential as they progress from their broad, general education through to college, university, other learning and employment.

If you'd like more information on the new National Qualifications, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents

We will continue to give you information as we introduce the new National Qualifications. Together we will deliver for the young people of Scotland.



Why are qualifications changing?

Curriculum for Excellence has been running in Scottish secondary schools and colleges since 2010 and has brought a new way of learning into schools and colleges, equipping learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in the 21st century.

The skills that learners develop today will help them to succeed in life outside the classroom.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has designed new qualifications that will help learners demonstrate and recognise the skills, knowledge and understanding they've acquired at school or college.





Which qualifications are changing?

This table shows which 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/scqf

When will the new qualifications be available?

The new National Qualifications will be introduced gradually. In August 2013, the new **National 1**, **National 2**, **National 3**, **National 4** and **National 5** will be available.

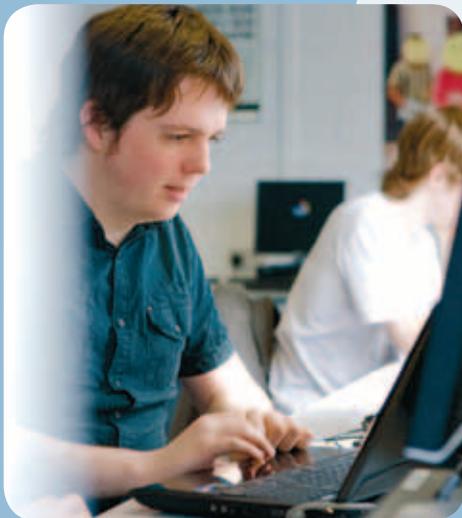
The new **Higher** will be available in August 2014, and the new **Advanced Higher** will be available from August 2015.

In most cases, school learners will be in S4, S5 and S6 when they study for the new qualifications.

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



Will learners still choose their subjects?



Learners will continue to choose individual subjects at all qualification levels.

Speak to your school or college about when learners will make their subject choices.

How will the new qualifications be assessed?

Teachers and lecturers will assess the new Courses and Units at **National 1** to **National 4**. SQA will check the assessments to make sure they meet national standards.

Courses at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** levels will still include work that is assessed by teachers and lecturers, but learners will also have to pass a Course assessment for these qualifications – usually a question paper and/or coursework. This will be marked by SQA.

Assessment methods – such as assignments, case studies and question papers – will be appropriate to the subject and level learners are studying. For example, the **National 4** Geography assignment will have different demands from the **Higher** Geography assignment.

We are working with schools and colleges to make sure that there are robust quality assurance procedures so that all assessments are fair, valid, consistent and that they continue to meet national standards.



How will the new qualifications be graded?

Courses will continue to contain work that is assessed and marked throughout the year by teachers and lecturers, as it is at present. These Units are assessed as pass or fail in all National Qualifications – this isn't changing.

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

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

If a learner fails a Course assessment, they will receive credit for the Units they have achieved at that level. There are no automatic compensatory arrangements at any level.

How can learners prepare for the new exams and assessments?

Specimen question papers and other assessment resources will be available before the new qualifications are introduced to help learners revise and prepare.



New Awards

As well as developing the new qualifications, SQA has developed a number of new Awards. Their job is to give young people more ways to demonstrate their achievement at school and college.

Some of the new Awards cover work from different subject areas, are shorter than traditional Courses, and recognise success across different levels of difficulty. This makes them suitable for young people of all abilities. The new Awards, which will be available for schools and colleges in August 2012, will be marked and assessed by teachers and lecturers, and adhere to national standards. They do not have any external assessment or exams.

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

There are Awards in:

- 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)

Other types of National Qualifications



We are continuing to offer other types of National Qualifications that support learners' wider achievement. These include:

- Skills for Work Courses, which encourage learners to become familiar with 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 HNC/HND level – www.sqa.org.uk/npa





Where can I find more information?

The SQA website, www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents, is full of useful information to help you understand the changes to National Qualifications, including opportunities to download the final documents. 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 our updates from [@sqanews](https://twitter.com/sqanews) on Twitter and subscribe to our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline



If you have further questions about how the new qualifications will be taught, please speak to your school or local authority.

Other useful links

- For more information on how to support young people's learning, visit www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone
- The Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework compares Scottish qualifications and learning programmes – www.scqf.org.uk
- If you're a member of a parent teacher council, visit the Scottish Parent Teacher Council's website – www.sptc.info or get in touch with the National Parent Forum of Scotland at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/>
- To keep up to date with what's happening across Scotland's education community, visit www.engageforeducation.org
- For advice and information about additional support for learning, visit www.enquire.org.uk



Which qualifications will be available?

This table shows when the new National Qualifications will typically be available to learners currently in S1, S2 and S3. Learners in S4 and above will continue to work towards the current National Qualifications.

		Learners in S1:	Learners in S2:	Learners in S3:
Academic Year / Session	2012/13	Broad general education in S1	Broad general education in S2	Broad general education in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*
	2013/14	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 S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4*	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available*
	2015/16	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 and Higher 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 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 S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*		

*Speak to your school or college about how the new qualifications will be introduced.