

The New Qualifications — New Opportunities to Get Ahead



The world in the 21st century promises to be an exciting place. For those with the right knowledge and the most up-to-date skills, it's full of possibilities. The new **Nationals, Highers** and **Advanced Highers** are designed to give you the skills you need to succeed.

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.

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

Why change?

In a changing world, it's important that education changes to keep pace.

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.

They are designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge and understanding you will need to succeed now and in the future. The skills you are learning in the classroom today will be more relevant than ever when you go out beyond the classroom.

The new qualifications will help you to demonstrate the knowledge and skills you develop at school or college, and will help you prepare for further learning, training and employment.

This table shows the previous and existing qualifications your older friends and relatives may have studied, and the new National Qualifications that will replace them.

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) website, visit www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner

What qualifications will be available to me?

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

If you're studying at college, you should speak to your college about when the new qualifications will be available to you.

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 [†]			

* 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 they actually work?



National 1, National 2, National 3, and National 4 will be marked and assessed by your school or college.

National 4 Courses are made up of Units, including an Added Value Unit. To achieve a Course at National 4, you'll need to pass all of the Units plus an Added Value Unit assessment. The National 4 Added Value Unit assessment will be set and marked by your school or college.

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Courses will be made up of Units and a Course assessment. Course assessments will continue to be marked by SQA or, where appropriate, assessed by the school or college. They will normally consist of a question paper exam and/or Coursework (assignments, projects, portfolios, etc).

Units at National 5 and above will be assessed and marked by your teacher or lecturer; they don't contribute to your overall grade, but to achieve the Course you'll need to pass all Units plus the Course assessment.

Coursework will be appropriate to the subject and level you're studying. So, if you're doing a National 4 Geography assignment, it will have different demands from a Higher Geography assignment.

Of course, it's in everyone's interests to ensure that the new qualifications are fair and consistent, so SQA is working with schools and colleges to make sure all assessments continue to meet national standards.

How will they be graded?



All Courses will continue to contain Units that are marked throughout the year by your teacher or lecturer. These Units will be assessed as Pass or Fail.

Courses at **National 2**, **National 3** and **National 4** will not be graded; you'll either receive a Pass or a Fail.

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

If you fail a Course assessment (No Award) at National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher, you'll still receive SCQF credit points for the Units you've passed within the Course. So, when you receive your results certificate, these Units will be listed on your detailed record of attainment, along with the SCQF credit points you have achieved.

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



How do I prepare?



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 you revise and prepare for your Course assessments. They are available from the subject pages of our website at www.sqa.org.uk/browsecfesubjects and you can access them 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 2014 exam timetable is available on our website at www.sqa.org.uk/timetable

The new Nationals in action

The new National Qualifications place greater emphasis on 'deeper learning'. They require you to show that you can interpret and apply what you learn, display a wider range of skills, and make connections across your 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, you could be asked to investigate what might affect your school or college's energy consumption. In doing so, you 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, you 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, you would be required to use a range of skills including literacy, creativity, thinking, independent working and/or team working skills.



Awards and Scottish Baccalaureates



Awards

Everybody is different and that's why SQA has introduced more new ways of recognising your achievements at school or college. Our new Awards support Curriculum for Excellence and are available at different 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, you will need to achieve two Advanced Higher Courses and one Higher Course from an approved list of subjects within the relevant curriculum area. You 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

Who can I talk to now?

Your teachers/lecturers and parents/carers have also been sent information about the new qualifications, so they know what's happening too. Why not discuss it with them?

If you want to find out more for yourself, visit our website at www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople

Look out for SAM on Twitter [@MYSQA_SAM](https://twitter.com/MYSQA_SAM) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MySQA.SAM. SAM is there to answer any questions you have about anything to do with exams, CfE or any other SQA-related issue.

SQA will continue to provide you with information and support. We want to ensure that the new qualifications are a success and that they will help you in the future.



A guide for **Learners** to the new **National Qualifications**

Other useful links

- Find out more about how the new National Qualifications compare with existing SQA qualifications on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) by visiting www.scqf.org.uk
- Keep up to date with Scotland's education community at www.engageforeducation.org
- Revision materials and quizzes can be accessed from www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
- For information and advice on preparing for Course assessments, including revision tips and how to avoid stress, visit www.youngscot.org
- For general study help with your chosen subjects, visit www.thestudentroom.co.uk



curriculum for excellence



it can
be done  SQA

CfE Liaison Team
www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam
BD6664 October 2013