

# Mintlaw Academy Options' Evening 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018

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Scottish Qualifications Authority  
(SQA)

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# Overview

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SQA in context

National Qualifications and how they are assessed

Approaching NQs in S4-6: pupil expectations.

Presentation for National Qualifications

Questions

# Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The screenshot displays the SQA website's 'About us' page. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5656.html>. The page features a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Who we are', 'What we do', 'News', 'Training and events', 'Freedom of Information', 'Partnerships', 'Policies', 'Research', 'Statistics', and 'Careers'. The main content area is titled 'About us' and includes a search bar. Below the title, there is a paragraph describing the SQA's mission: 'We provide products and services in skills, training and education which positively impact on individuals, organisations and society.' This is followed by another paragraph: 'We work nationally and [internationally](#) in two distinct areas – awards and [accreditation](#).' The page is organized into six columns, each with a header, a small image, and a brief description: 'Our qualifications' (We devise and develop internationally recognised qualifications and services.), 'Services' (We offer exam, assessment and qualifications services for employers, trainers and professional bodies.), 'Corporate Plan' (See our strategic direction for the next three years and our awarding and accreditation functions.), 'SQA careers' (Find out about working at SQA, available jobs and how to apply.), 'Training and events' (Sign up to our training courses and events.), and 'Statistics and information' (Discover qualification statistics, annual reports and component marks.). At the bottom, a 'Cookie Control' banner is visible, stating 'This site uses some non-essential cookies to store information on your computer.' with buttons for 'Information and Settings' and 'I'm fine with this'.

Search the SQA

## About us

We provide products and services in skills, training and education which positively impact on individuals, organisations and society.

We work nationally and [internationally](#) in two distinct areas – awards and [accreditation](#).

### Our qualifications

We devise and develop internationally recognised qualifications and services.

### Services

We offer exam, assessment and qualifications services for employers, trainers and professional bodies.

### Corporate Plan

See our strategic direction for the next three years and our awarding and accreditation functions.

### SQA careers

Find out about working at SQA, available jobs and how to apply.

### Training and events

Sign up to our training courses and events.

### Statistics and information

Discover qualification statistics, annual reports and component marks.

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<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70488.html>

# SQA

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Devise and develop a range of qualifications

Along with the vast majority of secondary schools in Scotland, most (but not all) qualifications that pupils take in the Senior Phase (S4-6) at Mintlaw Academy are SQA qualifications.

SQA examiners, setters, verifiers, markers are all subject experts ie teachers / lecturers

# Qualifications Update For Session 18 - 19

Scottish Credit and  
Qualifications  
Framework (SCQF)  
–Session 18/19

Qualification	SCQF Level
Advanced Higher	7
Higher	6
National 5	5
National 4	4
National 3	3

# NQ Overview

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National 2 / 3 – Course Award- 3 Units. Units assessed by teacher on pass / fail basis

National 4 – Course Award - 3 Units + Added Value Unit (AVU). AVU is an assignment marked by the teacher on pass / fail basis. N4 qualifications awarded on pass or fail basis (no grades). No exams at N4.

# National 5

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National 5 – Course Award –changed for current session onwards – unit assessments removed – now assessed through a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both – most of which externally marked (ie marked by SQA).

For example:

‘New’ N5 Exams in Practical Woodworking, Cake Craft, Hospitality.

Increased length of final exam – Chemistry, Physics, Biology have all increased from 2hrs to 2hrs 30min.

Implications for length of exam diet this session and beyond.

# Changes to Higher for Session 18-19

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As you'll be aware, these revisions to National Courses follow from the [Deputy First Minister's announcement](#) in September 2016 about the removal of units and unit assessments from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

As previously advised, the removal of units and unit assessments means that we need to strengthen course assessments and protect the integrity, breadth and standards of National Courses.

This process has resulted in one or more of the following changes to **Higher courses for 2018-19** onwards:

extension of the existing question paper

extension/modification of the existing item of coursework

a new question paper

a new item of coursework



# Higher and Advanced Higher

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Higher – Course Award – as National 5 above for session '18 – '19. Changes still to be finalised – likely to mirror those at N5 for example longer exam at N5 likely to mean longer exam at Higher.

Advanced Higher – structure of course units and course assessment – greater variation in course assessment. No changes for session '18-'19, units will be removed '19 – '20.

# Gaining an Award

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Grade D is a course award.

Grade D boundaries have been extended from 'notional' 45-49 to 40-49 (%) This applies to N5 this session, Higher Next

Pupils who attempt N5 and fail to get a grade D (ie receive a 'no award') may be eligible to get an 'automatic' N4 award through 'Recognising Positive Achievement'.

This option does not exist between Higher and National 5.

# ‘Skills for Work’ Courses

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Mainly offered in partnership with NESCOL

Vocational

Enhance skills and attitudes for employability

Learn through practical experience

Built around core skills of communication, numeracy, IT, problem solving and working with others.

Unit based, no final exam, ungraded

Construction, Energy, Engineering: most popular

Also ‘Creative Industries’

# Work Ethic

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N5 and Higher (and ultimately Advanced Higher) exams and coursework are now more 'end loaded'. Internal unit assessments no longer in place.

For N5 March coursework deadline, for Higher April, present significant planning and organisational challenges for pupils. It is vital they know internal deadlines and plan workload to meet these across their subjects.

Some exams longer and therefore more demanding.

There is no substitute for hard work and careful planning over the session.

# Presentation for National Qualifications

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Structure of our 'Senior Phase' S4-6.

Personalisation and choice

Breadth and depth

Progression: N5 to Higher, N4 to N5

N5 to N5 in another subject

'Crash' Highers – eg Politics

Advanced Higher – need to have studied the subject at Higher.

# Resources

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SQA Website [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41292.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41292.html)

National Parent Forum : Nationals in a Nutshell – still to be updated for revised N5s

[www.npfs.org.uk/nationals-in-a-nutshell/](http://www.npfs.org.uk/nationals-in-a-nutshell/)

Choice of course booklet



## Parents and carers



### Studying for exams

If your child is sitting exams as part of their National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher Courses, they may find the following resources useful when revising:

- [Specimen Question Papers](#)
- [Exemplar question papers](#)
- [Past Papers](#)

Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers are available from the Assessment Support section of the relevant [subject pages](#). Simply select your chosen subject from the menu, then select the level.

# SQA Website

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Past papers / specimen papers / markschemes

Key documents: 'Your coursework' 'Your exams'

Links to subjects pages – worth looking at 'course reports'

Eg 'In question 7 a large number of candidates were not able to offer suitable explanations for global variations in population density.'

'The comprehensive marking instructions published on the SQA website are a useful guide to the level of detail which candidates are expected to give in their answers'



