

What you need to know:

A guide to the new National Qualifications for employers

Spring/Summer 2012



curriculum for excellence



Introducing the new National Qualifications

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is Scotland's national body for qualifications.

We develop qualifications, which are open to everyone, from learners in schools and colleges to trainees, apprentices, those currently out of work and people who are already employed.

You may have heard about Curriculum for Excellence, the new approach to learning in schools and colleges which will develop young people's skills for the 21st century.

SQA has developed new National Qualifications to support Curriculum for Excellence.

The new qualifications, which will be available in schools and colleges across Scotland in just over a year's time, will help young people reach their full potential as they progress from their broad, general education through to college, university, other learning, training and employment.

If you'd like more information about the new qualifications, visit www.sqa.org.uk/cfeemployers

Over the coming year we will continue to engage with employers to ensure the new qualifications are well understood. Together we will deliver for the young people of Scotland.

Dr Janet Brown
Chief Executive
Scottish Qualifications Authority



Why are the qualifications changing?

Curriculum for Excellence has brought a new way of learning into schools and colleges, equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in the 21st century. The skills young people learn today will help them to succeed in life outside the classroom.

SQA has designed new qualifications that will help young people demonstrate and recognise the knowledge and skills they've acquired at school or college and help them adapt to further learning, training and employment.



Which qualifications are changing?

This table details the new qualifications and the current qualifications they 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 can I expect to see potential employees with the new qualifications?

The new qualifications will be introduced from August 2013 onwards and the first school leavers with the new **National 1, National 2, National 3, National 4** and/or **National 5** will be in June 2014.

Many young people will continue to study at school or college after they turn 16, and some may go on to study for the new **Higher** and **Advanced Higher**. The first of these young people will leave school or college in June 2015 and June 2016 respectively.

Some schools and local authorities may implement the delivery of the new qualifications in different ways, so these timescales could vary across the country.



How will the new qualifications be graded?

Courses will continue to contain Units that are assessed and marked throughout the year by teachers and lecturers, just as they are at present. These Units are assessed as pass or fail in all National Qualifications.

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

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

If a Course assessment is failed, credit will be given for the Units achieved at that level.

New Awards

As well as developing new National Qualifications, SQA has developed a number of new Awards. These don't replace any existing qualifications. 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 across different subject areas, are shorter than traditional Courses, and recognise success across different levels of difficulty, meaning they're 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 schools and colleges and do not have any external assessment or exams. SQA will check the assessments to make sure they meet national standards.

Other types of National Qualifications

As well as the new qualifications, we are continuing to offer other types of National Qualifications that support learners' Wider Achievement. These include:

- Skills for Work Courses, which encourage young people to become familiar with the world of work – www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork
- National Progression Awards and National Certificates, which assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and are designed to prepare young people for employment, career development or progression to further study at HNC/HND level – www.sqa.org.uk/npa

Where can I find more information?

Our website, www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforemployers, is full of useful information to help you understand the changes to the new National Qualifications, including how they have been developed and how we are working with teachers and lecturers to introduce them.

You can also keep in touch with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ScottishQualificationsAuthority,

follow our updates from [@sqa_news](https://twitter.com/sqa_news) on Twitter and

subscribe to our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline



Other useful links

- For information on how SQA can help your business, visit www.sqa.org.uk/workwithus
- Find out how to help young people into work, visit www.employersandyoungpeople.org
- Keep in touch with what's happening across Scotland's education community, visit www.engageforeducation.org
- Stay up to date with Scottish qualifications and learning programmes and how they compare with each other, www.scqf.org.uk

