

Curriculum for Excellence factfile

Assessment + Qualifications



Why are assessment and qualifications changing?

Now that Curriculum for Excellence is coming into place, we need a new framework for assessment as well as new qualifications that best support and reflect children's learning. This will raise standards of achievement, improve learning experiences and develop skills for learning, life and work.

What does assessment cover?

- The ways teachers support and assess children's learning and monitor progress.
- Reporting to parents – in writing and discussions to help them understand their child's progress and what parents can do to help their child's learning.
- Formal recognition of learners' achievements through profiles and qualifications.

What is new?

- A more effective and consistent system of assessment and updated qualifications.
- A better connected assessment system with smoother links through pre-school, primary, secondary school and college.
- More ways of assessing progress to support learning and more flexibility to meet learners' individual needs.
- Schools will provide profiles of learner achievement at key points – eg end of P7 and S3.

What and how will teachers assess?

Teachers carry out ongoing assessment to see what children know, understand and are able to do. They assess in a number of ways – watching pupils carry out tasks like practical investigations; performances, presentations and discussions; learners' assessment of their own work and comparisons with others; written responses like tests; and evaluation of a final product eg a piece of artwork, report or a project.

When will teachers assess a child's learning?

Assessment will take place throughout the school year. Parents are key partners in learning, and assessment gives them a chance to be involved in understanding, reviewing and planning next steps. Parents can discuss any concerns or questions about their child's learning with the school.

How will reporting change?

Reporting can already take the form of written reports, children presenting their learning to parents, parents evenings and on-going discussions. This will continue and parents will receive at least annual reports on their child's progress. Reports will provide clear, positive and constructive feedback about children's learning and their progress against national standards and expectations. As at present, there are no set formats for written reports, with each Local Authority (Council) having flexibility to develop their own, in line with national guidance.

Autumn 2010

Curriculum for Excellence in action
Bringing life to learning and learning to life

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These are the expected levels of progression:

Curriculum level	Stage
Early	Pre-school to P1
First	P2 to end P4
Second	P5 to end P7
Third and Fourth	S1-S3 (Fourth level aligns to National 4 qualifications)
Senior phase	S4 to S6 in school, college, workplace or community

What are profiles?

All children and young people will have their achievements and progress formally recorded in a 'profile' at key points of change – eg moving from primary to secondary. The profile confirms how they are doing, records their achievements and progress against national standards and expectations, noting any awards. It covers all curriculum areas studied and records achievement in literacy and numeracy. It also contains a learner statement – their thoughts on their own achievements. Profiles will be phased in over the next three years.

How are qualifications changing?

- **National 4** replaces Standard Grade General and Intermediate 1. It will be assessed by teachers.
- **National 5** replaces Standard Grade Credit and Intermediate 2. It will involve a final external assessment; usually an exam plus other types of assessment like coursework or performance.
- **Access 3** replaces Standard Grade Foundation.
- **Access, Higher and Advanced Higher** qualifications all remain and will be refreshed.

All the new and refreshed qualifications will be quality assured by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to ensure standards and credibility are maintained.

What will be different?

- Young people will have access to a wider range of qualifications and learning experiences that reflect their abilities and aspirations.
- There will be more flexibility, with qualifications being taken over 1 or 2 years.
- There will be more partnership arrangements between schools, colleges, training providers and local employers.
- Young people will be able to take National 4 and 5 qualifications in S4, S5 and S6 or by-pass these and go straight to Highers if they are ready for it. This gives more flexibility to meet the needs of learners.

When will subject choice take place?

Children will study and be assessed for qualifications from S4 onwards. In S3, they will choose which qualifications to take in the senior phase. That doesn't mean that there will be no choice before then. S1-S3 will be designed to provide a broad, general education. There will be scope for choices including increasing specialisation during that time, ensuring that young people have the right level of challenge and support. This will provide a strong basis for moving on to study for qualifications from S4. The subject options are determined by the school and Local Authority.

How many qualifications can learners take?

The new qualifications will build upon learning in S3. That means young people could study up to eight qualifications from S4, depending on the level of qualification and whether they are taken over 1 or 2 years. The precise number and range of qualifications offered, as well as when they are undertaken, will be a decision for schools and Local Authorities to take, in consultation with parents and learners.

When will there be more information about new qualifications?

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is responsible for developing the new qualifications. It is already working on this with teachers, colleges, universities, parents and employers. The timeline is:

2010 – 2012	development of new qualifications
2012 – 2013	last Standard Grades
2013 – 2014	first new and revised qualifications at Access and National 4 and 5
2014 – 2015	first revised Higher qualifications
2015 – 2016	first revised Advanced Higher qualifications

Where can I get information or ask a question?

Speak to your local school or visit:

www.youngscot.org (learners)
www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk (parents and carers)
www.employersandyoungpeople.co.uk (employers)
www.sqa.org.uk (information on qualifications)
www.hmie.gov.uk (standards, inspections)
www.itscotland.org.uk (teaching practice and support)
www.engageforeducation.org (share ideas and questions about education issues)
www.scotland.gov.uk/cfeinaction (examples of CfE in action and signposts to further information).

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