

## 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.

it can  
be done  SQA

## What is changing?



**The new Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers are being introduced in Scotland between 2013 and 2016, and will replace the current Access, Standard Grade, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications.**

The new qualifications have been developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to support Curriculum for Excellence and aim to secure a successful future for Scotland's young people.

## 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 applicable 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. The new qualifications are presented in a new, simplified format that will be easier for learners, parents and prospective employers to understand.

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

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) website. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner](http://www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner)

## When do the new qualifications start?

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**National 1, National 2, National 3, National 4 and National 5** will be introduced from August 2013.

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

Some schools and colleges may choose to introduce these changes at different times, so it's a good idea to speak with your teacher/lecturer first to find out when your school or college is planning to introduce the new qualifications.

You'll continue to choose the subjects you want to study at all levels, and your school or college will tell you when these choices have to be made.

## 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 current 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 <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available <sup>†</sup>
2014-15	Broad general education* in S2	Broad general education* in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4 <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available <sup>†</sup>
2015-16	Broad general education* in S3 Learner may choose subjects for S4 <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available <sup>†</sup>
2016-17	Senior phase in S4 National 1 to National 5 available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available <sup>†</sup>	
2017-18	Senior phase in S5 National 1 to National 5 and Higher available <sup>†</sup>	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available <sup>†</sup>		
2018-19	Senior phase in S6 National 1 to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available <sup>†</sup>			

\* To read a briefing note about this, search for 'Broad General Education' at [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

<sup>†</sup>Speak to your school or college about how the new qualifications will be introduced.

## How will they actually work?

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

**National 4** Courses will be 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 externally marked by SQA or, where appropriate, internally assessed by the school or college. They will normally consist of an examination question paper and/or Coursework (assignments, projects, portfolios, etc).

Units at National 5 and above will be assessed and marked internally 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?

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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 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 Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC), these Units will be listed on your detailed record of attainment, along with the SCQF credit points you have achieved.

## Core Skills

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Core Skills can help individuals 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfecoreskills)



## How do I prepare?

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To help you revise and prepare for the new qualifications, SQA has published the following support materials for learners studying towards **National 5** in Session 2013-14:

- Specimen question papers and marking instructions for subjects that include an examination question paper as part of the Course assessment
- General assessment information for parts of the Course assessment that involve Coursework, such as an assignment or practical activity

These materials can be downloaded from the subject pages of SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk/browsecfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/browsecfesubjects) 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.



## New Awards

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Everybody is different and that's why SQA has introduced more new ways of recognising your achievements at school or college. As well as our existing Awards and the new National Qualifications, we've also introduced a number of new Awards that have been available in schools and colleges since August 2012. These Awards are completely new and don't replace any existing qualifications.

Some of the new Awards cover work from various subjects, some are shorter than traditional Courses, and some recognise success across different levels of difficulty.

Each Award supports CfE and is available at different levels:

**Personal Achievement**  
SCQF levels 1 and 2

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**Personal Development**  
SCQF levels 2 to 6

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**Modern Languages for Life and Work**  
SCQF levels 3 and 4

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**Wellbeing**  
SCQF levels 3 to 5

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**Religion, Belief and Values**  
SCQF levels 3 to 6

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The following Awards will be available from August 2013:

### Scottish Studies Award

This Award will be available at SCQF levels 4 and 5 and will provide learners with the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Scotland — its people, society, culture, natural environment and heritage.

### Cycling Awards

SQA's Cycling Awards are available at SCQF levels 1 and 2. They will equip learners with the skills to check, maintain and ride their cycle safely and will help them develop an awareness of the main safety requirements when cycling, including: safety checks, basic maintenance and repair skills, rules, practices and codes of conduct for safe cycling.

These Awards are qualifications that recognise your abilities and achievements, whoever you are. They will be marked and assessed within your school or college.

For more information, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/awards](http://www.sqa.org.uk/awards)

## Scottish Baccalaureates

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Scottish Baccalaureates are available at SCQF level 7 and will be awarded at pass or distinction. The following Scottish Baccalaureates are available in schools and colleges:

- Science
- Languages
- Expressive Arts
- Social Sciences

For more information, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/baccalaureates](http://www.sqa.org.uk/baccalaureates)

## Who can I talk to now?

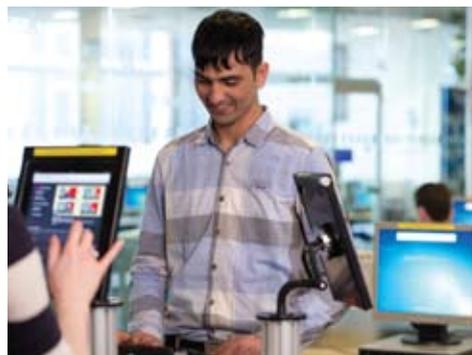
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Your teachers/lecturers and parents/carers have also been sent information about the new qualifications, so they know what's happening too. Why not discuss it with them?

If you want to find out more for yourself, visit SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople](http://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](https://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 as the new qualifications get underway. We want to ensure that the new qualifications are a success and that they will help you in the future.



## Other useful links

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



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be done



curriculum for excellence



CfE Liaison Team  
[www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeteam)  
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