

Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle

A third explainer for teachers and practitioners

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This is the third publication in the *Curriculum Improvement Cycle: Explainer for Teachers and Practitioners* series. You can access the first two explainers via Resources – Curriculum Improvement Cycle.

Throughout the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), we are committed to being transparent about the work and regularly sharing developments as they emerge. For example, in **November 2025**, we shared our emerging thinking on the Numeracy and Mathematics framework to support early engagement and discussion. In **June 2026**, we shared a first draft of Building Scotland's Curriculum guidance and samples of the Know-Do-Understand (KDU) framework from each curriculum area. And now in **November 2026** we are sharing:

1. **Updated draft of Building Scotland's Curriculum**

Once finalised, this will be an interactive, digital resource that provides national practice guidance and supports curriculum making in schools and education settings across Scotland.

2. **Draft full KDU frameworks for Early to Fourth level**

Once finalised, these will be used by teachers and practitioners to plan learning, teaching and assessment.

Please note that as part of the commitment to align the Broad General Education and Senior Phase curriculum, Education Scotland and Qualifications Scotland are continuing to work on the alignment of Fourth Level and SCQF level 4 across all curriculum areas; therefore, there may be some further amendments at this level.

Scotland's Know-Do-Understand model

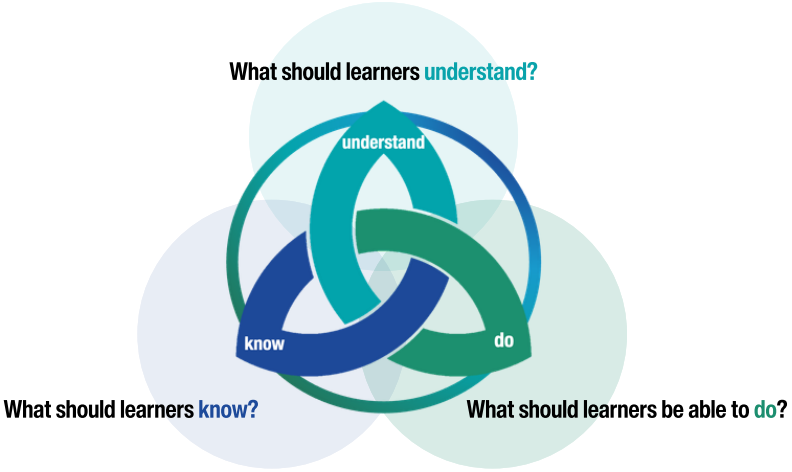


Image 1 Scotland's Know-Do-Understand model

How the KDU knots are written

Understand: Statements that decribe the relationship between concepts.	
Know: **Facts, definitions** or **examples** that learners need to know to develop the understanding above.	**Do:** **Skills**, **processes** and **procedures** learners need to do to develop the understanding above.
Notes: Information that helps practitioners in their planning for this KDU knot.	

Version 1.0, November 2026

How to navigate the draft KDU documents

These are draft documents to update practitioners on the progress with the KDU frameworks. At this stage it is not expected that all practitioners will read all elements of the release.

There is one draft KDU framework shared per curriculum area. These have been co-designed by over 1,500 teachers, practitioners and partners. Each framework has:

Section	Purpose
A short introduction	Information about the draft release
Curriculum area purpose statement	A rationale for each curriculum area
Big Ideas	The overarching understanding in the curriculum area
Summary of Progression	A table showing a summary of the draft statements of understanding from CfE Early to Fourth Level
Draft KDU strands	The draft KDU statements and supporting notes. Please note that the length of this section may vary, as the level of detail required differs across curriculum areas and CfE levels.

The draft KDU frameworks are also shared per CfE level for Early, First and Second. Please note that work is ongoing alongside practitioners and leaders to consider presentation for Early Learning and Childcare and Primary settings.

The ongoing work

Alongside the publication of the draft KDU frameworks, work continues in several key areas:

Early Learning and Childcare and Primary
Continued focus on decluttering and improving the presentation of the KDU frameworks to better support practitioners who plan across all curriculum areas.

Responsibility of All
Finalising the embedding of Responsibilities of All more explicitly throughout the KDU frameworks.

Cross-curricular learning
Ensuring that cross-curricular learning is reflected within the KDU frameworks and developing supporting guidance to help practitioners plan meaningful interdisciplinary learning.

Version 1.0, November 2026



What happens now?

Over 3,700 people have signed up to be part of a process to review the draft curriculum and provide feedback at this stage. This sample group includes teachers, practitioners, school and setting leaders and local authority leads amongst others. Importantly, this is a representative sample of Scotland's education workforce.

The CIC Reference Groups will have the opportunity to review the draft materials through their specialist legislative and policy lenses too.

What happens next?

Based on the information from the feedback and Reference Group reviews on this first draft, we will share advanced drafts of the KDU frameworks at early in 2027 and invite open feedback at that stage.

Informed by the feedback on the advanced draft, the final version of the KDU Framework will then be available in May 2027 when we will enter phase 3 of the CIC: **sharing, learning and adopting**.

What should I do now?

These are draft materials. The content, format and style are subject to change. There is no expectation of practitioners, schools, settings or local authorities to make changes to their provision based on these draft materials, including changes to current planning or tracking and monitoring systems at this stage.

Broad General Education (BGE) assessment

Teachers and practitioners are now working, together with Education Scotland, to co-create a BGE assessment framework. This assessment framework will address the key components of the purposes of assessment for Scotland's learners while ensuring clear alignment with the KDU framework. Professor Louise Hayward and Dr Carolyn Hutchinson are supporting this work as critical friends and advisors. **It is anticipated that the BGE assessment framework will be published in September 2027 for wider feedback.**

Senior Phase

Education Scotland is working closely with Qualifications Scotland on developing the approach to the curriculum for the Senior Phase. Curriculum will lead qualifications in the Senior Phase. It has been agreed that the KDU framework will be used in the senior phase curriculum to ensure consistency of approach across the 3-18 curriculum. **Stakeholders, including teachers and practitioners, will be involved in creating Understand statements and this work will start in 2027.**

<table>
<tr><th>WHAT IS BEING SHARED</th><th>HOW TO ENGAGE</th></tr>
<tr><td>First full draft of the KDU frameworks and updated Building Scotland's Curriculum</td><td>Opportunities to read some sections or all to understand direction of travel</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Feedback from sample and reference groups</td></tr>
<tr><td>Advanced draft</td><td>Opportunities to read and provide feedback</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Wider opportunities for feedback</td></tr>
<tr><td>Final versions of Building Scotland's Curriculum and the KDU frameworks CfE Early to Fourth levels</td><td>Opportunities to read, access self-directed or cluster professional learning ahead of adoption from August 2028</td></tr>
<tr><td>Draft Senior Phase Understand statements</td><td rowspan="2">Opportunities to read and provide feedback.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Draft BGE assessment framework</td></tr>
</table>

ASN and Foundation Milestones

Teachers and practitioners working with learners with complex needs have undertaken work to align the ASN Milestones with the KDU framework. This guidance is an early draft, and we will continue to seek feedback through the National Complex Needs Network and other groups, before sharing an updated version in 2027 for wider practitioner feedback.

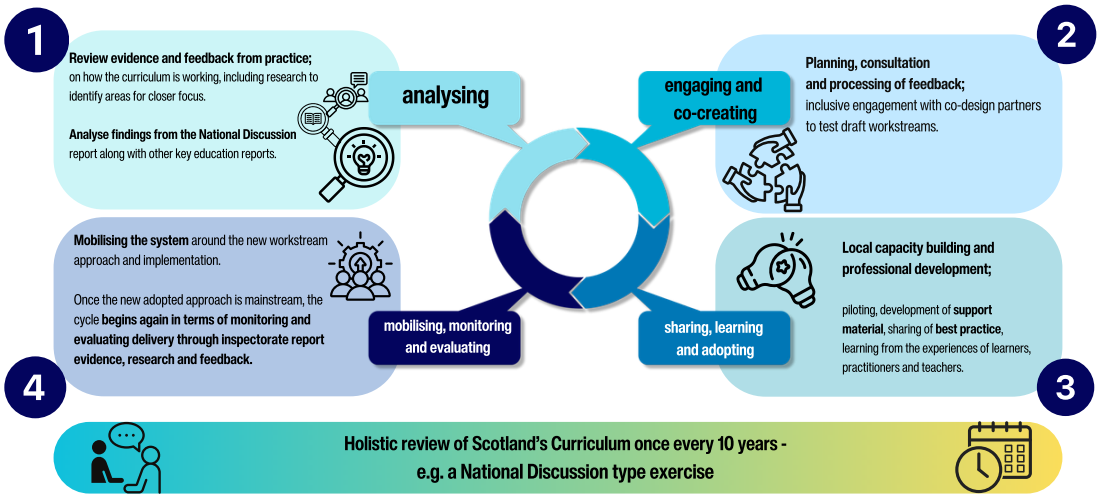


Image 2 The Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) process

Responsibility of All

Some changes to the Responsibility of All are currently being explored and will be shared in January 2027, in the advance draft, for feedback.

1. Health and wellbeing as a Responsibility of All has been reconceptualised as **Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical (MESP) health**. Health and Wellbeing remains as a curriculum area.

2. Literacy becomes **Communication, Language and Literacy**. This more inclusive title reflects the wide range of learner needs and aligns with the stages of early child development as described in Realising the Ambition.

3. **Numeracy** is the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to apply and use mathematics in everyday life, at home, work or in a learning environment.

For all three, learning is embedded across curriculum in the Know-Do-Understand (KDU) model. MESP and Literacy also have fully developed KDU strands as part of the Health and Wellbeing and English curriculum areas. The strands work as other strands in the KDU Frameworks, showing vertical progression.

Numeracy permeates the Mathematics KDU framework, rather than forming a separate strand, as knowledge, understanding and skills from all strands of mathematics support learners to become numerate. This will provide clarity on how knowledge, skills and understanding are built at developmentally appropriate points.

Version 1.0, November 2026

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