

Skills in a Nutshell

Curriculum for Excellence is designed to provide all children and young people with opportunities for developing:

skills for learning • skills for life • skills for work

There are various definitions of 'skills'. Broadly, a skill might be usefully defined as an activity that a learner undertakes, can do again, can apply to different circumstances and can improve over time.

Key skills open the door to children's progress; thinking skills show progression in cognitive development; personal skills include softer skills such as relationship-building as well as employability skills. These are skills that feature in Curriculum for Excellence learning and in wider achievement activities.

The development of skills is essential to learning and education to help young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. BUILDING THE CURRICULUM 4

Curriculum for Excellence can offer your child the following overlapping skills:



Key skills

- literacy
- numeracy
- communication
- problem-solving
- technological competence
- skills to support physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- learning skills



Thinking skills

also see overleaf

- knowing
- applying
- analysing
- synthesising
- evaluating
- systems thinking
- creating



Personal skills

- personal qualities, attributes and character development
- interpersonal skills
- employability skills:
 - specific subject, occupation, industry or sector skills
 - technical skills
 - professional skills
 - skills in enterprise
 - investigative/research skills
 - leadership skills



Skills in the Broad General Education

In the Broad General Education (early years to the end of S3), the development of skills is reflected in the Experiences and Outcomes of the Curricular Levels (Early, First, Second, Third and Fourth) within the eight curricular areas which include Health and Wellbeing. Statements such as "I can..." and "I am able to..." record the learning achievements and skills development of children and young people. These achievements will be shared and reported regularly to you by your child's school.

The key message, however, is that knowledge on its own is not enough. The task now is to create a curriculum in which the knowledge and skills are seen as mutually supportive and equally significant.

Skills in the Senior Phase

In the Senior Phase (S4 to S6/college), the development of skills is reflected in the Scottish Qualifications Authority's (SQA) qualifications and awards and in the SQA's expectations of learners. To achieve SQA qualifications, young people are required to:

- develop a range of specific skills within their subjects
- develop and show progression in a range of thinking or 'cognitive' skills
- demonstrate their skills and knowledge in the Course Assessments.

Key skills and personal skills are embedded in subject learning for qualifications and in core subjects such as personal and social education, physical education, religious, moral and philosophical education. Skills are also developed through wider experiences in the Senior Phase such as work experience, volunteering or participation in other award schemes.

Thinking Skills in Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence is built around the development and progression of eight thinking skills. If you look in detail at the Experiences and Outcomes of the Broad General Education, and at the wording of SQA National Qualifications in the Senior Phase, you can trace these thinking skills. The Curriculum for Excellence thinking skills are set out below, with a listing of the words used to identify those thinking skills in the Broad General Education and in SQA qualifications.

Thinking Skills in the Broad General Education and in the Senior Phase



Your Child's Progress in Developing Skills

As well as regular updates from your child and your child's teachers about your child's progress, the Learner Profiles in P7 and S3 will set out your child's progress in developing skills, through school learning and through wider achievements.

Transferable Skills

Many skills are transferable and learners can use them throughout their lives. Literacy, numeracy, physical skills, investigative skills, interpersonal skills, research skills, independent learning, presentation skills, employability skills, organisational skills, resilience, working in a team, career planning and so on are recognised in Curriculum for Excellence.

Employability Skills

These include:

- understanding employee responsibilities eg time-keeping, appearance, customer care
- self-evaluation skills
- a positive attitude to learning
- flexible approaches to solving problems
- adaptability and a positive attitude to change
- the confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience.

"The world economy no longer pays for what people know but for what they can do with what they know."

ANDREAS SCHLEICHER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION, OECD

Further Information

- The SQA Skills Framework: <http://tinyurl.com/obju545>
- The SQA table of skills in specific qualifications: <http://tinyurl.com/n4s7b2n>
- The SQA Core Skills: www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills
- The Skills Development Scotland website: www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
- Keir Bloomer and Chris McIlroy's Developing Skills <http://tinyurl.com/kh4aqj2>
- Angus Council's guide for parents: <http://tinyurl.com/nnkqv6>
- Education Scotland's Building the Curriculum 4: Skills <http://tinyurl.com/qbdjyjf>
- Education Scotland's Skills in Practice: <http://tinyurl.com/pgvszxc>
- The Scottish Government's Refreshed Skills for Scotland Strategy: <http://tinyurl.com/mdwldsy>



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