



Curriculum for Excellence Information for S2 Parents



S2 Options Choice Programme

Information and advice

Understanding the new National Qualifications

Background: Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the new curriculum in Scotland for all children and young people age 3 to 18. We are currently planning how best to deliver the “broad general education” entitlement up to the end of S3. We are also planning our approach to the new Scottish Qualifications Authority examinations and assessments, from S4 onwards. As well as developing Scotland’s new National Qualifications, SQA is also developing a number of new Awards. These new Awards will offer young people another way of recognising their achievements in school or college. Our current S2 pupils will be the first teenagers to sit these new national qualifications at the end of S4. As they make their subject choices for S3, they will continue to learn in all the following curriculum areas:

- Expressive arts
- Health and Well Being
- Languages and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Religious and Moral Education
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Technologies

The table below lists the new National Qualifications and shows which current qualifications they will replace:

New National Qualifications	Replaces	Current National Qualifications
Access 1 and Access 2 (revised)		Access 1 and Access 2
Access 3 (revised)		Access 3 and Standard Grade (Foundation level)
National 4		Standard Grade (General level) and Intermediate 1
National 5		Standard Grade (Credit level) and Intermediate 2
Higher (revised)		Higher
Advanced Higher (revised)		Advanced Higher

The new qualifications will be introduced gradually and pupils will be in S3-S6 when they study for them. Some of the new Awards cover work from across different subjects areas and recognise success across different levels of difficulty, meaning they’re suitable for young people of all abilities.

The following websites are full of useful information to help you understand the new National Qualifications.

www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents
www.educationscotland.gov.uk
www.scotland.gov.uk/cfeinaction
www.LTScotland.org.uk/commstoolkit
www.LTScotland.org.uk/Parentzone

The table on the next page shows when the new National Qualifications will be available to pupils currently in S1 and S2. Pupils currently in S3 and above will continue to use the current National Qualifications.

National Timeline for Implementation

School session	Pupils in S1 now	Pupils in S2 now
2011/12	S1 Pupil working at secondary level	S2 Pupil working at secondary level Pupil chooses subjects for S3/4
2012/13	S2 Pupil working at secondary level Pupil chooses subjects for S3/4	S3 Pupil working at secondary level towards the New Access 1-3, National 4 and National 5
2013/14	S3 Pupil working at secondary level (<i>New Access 1-3, National 4 and National 5 available</i>)	S4 New Access 1-3, National 4 and National 5 qualifications available
2014/15	S4 New Access 1-3, National 4, National 5 and Higher available	S5 New Access 1-3, National 4, National 5, and Higher available
2015/16	S5 New Access 1-3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available	S6 New Access 1-3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available
2016/17	S6 New Access 1-3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available	

So 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.

Why have we chosen to deliver the curriculum in this way?

At the moment, we feel this model will give your child a breadth of experience to the end of S4. We hope this will give them a range of choices about what they can do when they leave school and provide a more effective and consistent system of assessment as well as updated qualifications. It will also ensure a better connected assessment system with smoother links through pre-school, primary, secondary school and college along with more ways of assessing progress to support learning and more flexibility to meet learners' individual needs.

Will young people still choose their subjects?

Young people will continue to choose individual subjects at all qualification levels. The actual Courses they will choose from are still being developed but information on these new courses is regularly added to the SQA's website.

There will be scope for further choices including increasing specialization in S3, ensuring that your child experiences 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 for your child are determined by the school and Local Authority and you should be receiving information about the S2 Options process from your child's school in due course.

How will the new qualifications be assessed?

Schools and colleges will continue to mark and assess **Access 1**, **Access 2**, **Access 3** as well as the new **National 4**. Courses at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** levels will still include work which is assessed by schools, but for these qualifications, students will also have to pass an additional assessment – usually a question paper and/or an assignment – which will be marked externally by SQA. Sample question papers and other resources will be available before the first set of assessments to help pupils revise and prepare.

How will the new qualifications be graded?

Courses will continue to contain work which is assessed and marked throughout the year by teachers, as it is at present. For example, teachers will continue to mark assessments such as PE or drama performances and English listening and talking assessments. These are ‘Units’ of work which are marked as pass or fail in all National Qualifications. Individual subjects at **Access 1**, **Access 2**, **Access 3** and **National 4** levels will not be graded but marked overall by pass or fail.

If a learner fails an end of year assessment/exam, they will receive credit for what they have achieved at the level they were working at. This is similar to what currently happens with a number of our other qualifications. Subjects at **National 5**, **Higher** and **Advanced Higher** will be graded A to D. For more information on grading, visit SQA’s website.

What about wider achievement?

In our school we try to celebrate all of your child’s achievements, both within and out with school. As part of Curriculum for Excellence, we are working to develop an individualised Pupil Profile, and by the end of S3 your son/daughter should have a statement of all aspects of their learning including their own personal interests and achievements in an e-portfolio.

What are pupil profiles?

All children and young people will have their achievements and progress formally recorded in a ‘profile’ at key points of change – e.g. moving from primary to secondary. The profile will confirm how they are doing, record their achievements and progress against national standards and expectations and note any awards. It will cover all curriculum areas studied and record achievement in literacy and numeracy. It may also contain a learner statement – thoughts on their pupils’ own achievements. Profiles will be phased in over the next two to three years.

What about Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Well Being?

Secondary schools are currently considering how to develop Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Well Being across the whole school. Your son/daughter can expect to experience all three elements in their learning and may receive certification depending on which level of course they are studying.

How can I support my child at this important transition stage?

By taking time to read and go through the S2 Options booklet with your child you will be able to discuss subject choices and help your child to make decisions. By giving them encouragement and advice where required, they will feel supported and more confident in making their Options choice. By attending any parents’ information evenings and progress meetings in school, you will be able to speak with your child’s guidance teacher, subject teachers and someone from the Careers service all of whom will answer any questions you or your child may have.