



Qualifications are changing

A guide for parents and carers

curriculum for excellence



This booklet is designed to answer the most important questions you may have about the new qualifications.

Over the next few pages we'll explain what the changes mean for you and your family.



Why are qualifications changing?

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) represents a different approach to learning in schools. This will help pupils to develop skills and knowledge in more depth they can use across different subjects and gain abilities they can apply to life outside the classroom.

This fresh approach to learning requires new assessment methods and qualifications which are being developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

The new qualifications will have equal status and credibility to those currently available and will support the new curriculum.

SQA is working with parents, teachers, colleges, universities, employers and the Scottish Government to make sure national standards are maintained.

The new qualifications will be designed to help pupils reach their full potential as they progress from their broad, general education through to college, university, other learning and employment.



Which qualifications are changing?

In 2010/11, pupils in S2 and above have the chance to study for a number of current qualifications while they're at secondary school.

These pupils will carry on studying towards these existing qualifications throughout their secondary school education.

However, pupils who entered S1 in 2010/11 will study towards new National Qualifications.

The table below lists the existing National Qualifications and shows how they equate to the new qualifications:

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

Which qualifications will my child sit, and when?

To find out exactly which qualifications will be available to your child, please have a look at the handy chart on the back of this leaflet.



The changes will be introduced in a way that ensures pupils who have studied the new curriculum in S1 will go on to take the new qualifications.

S2 and S3 pupils who are studying the current curriculum will go on to sit the current qualifications. This means pupils who will be in S4 in 2013/14 will sit the new National 4 and National 5 qualifications, while S5 pupils will still be able to sit the current Intermediate 1, 2 or Higher qualifications.

In 2014/15, pupils in S5 will sit the new National 4, National 5 or revised Higher qualifications, while, at the same time, pupils in S6 will still sit the current Higher or current Advanced Higher qualifications.

Individual schools will implement this process in different ways, so it is worth checking with your school to confirm their final plans.



Will my child still choose subjects?

Yes. Your child will choose individual subjects to study at Access 2, Access 3, National 4 and 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

The Courses your child will be able to choose to study are currently in development and full information on this will be shared with you in the near future. Updates will also be available on the SQA website.

To find out when your child will make subject choices and how many they will choose, please speak to your school as this can vary from school to school.

Will the new qualifications be graded?

Individual subjects at Access 1, Access 2, Access 3 and National 4 levels will be judged pass or fail.

Subjects at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher will be graded A to D.

How will the new qualifications be assessed?

Assessment methods for the new qualifications will be appropriate to the subject and level pupils are studying.

Schools will continue to be responsible for marking and assessing Access 1-3 as well as the National 4. This marking will be externally verified by SQA.

These assessments may include a combination of practical, oral and written work. There are no additional external exams at these levels.

At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels, Courses will still include work assessed internally by schools, but they will also include passing an additional external assessment – this will usually take the form of coursework and/or an exam which will be marked by SQA.

To ensure internal marking is fair, SQA will work with schools to implement rigorous quality assurance procedures to ensure all assessments are consistent and meet national standards.



Will example question papers be available before the new exams?



Yes. To help pupils revise and prepare for the new exams, supporting materials, including example question papers, will be available in advance of the first set of assessments.

How can I keep up to date with what's happening?

The SQA website contains lots of useful information to help keep you up to date with the latest developments of the new qualifications.

www.sqa.org.uk

There you'll find:

- Dedicated pages for parents where you can check for updates.
- More information on Curriculum for Excellence and how the qualifications are being developed.
- Detailed timetables for the delivery of the new qualifications.
- The option to sign up to receive email alerts for the latest Curriculum for Excellence news.
- An opportunity for you to share comments and feedback on the new qualifications.

Where can I find further information?

For more information about when your child will make their subject choices and other arrangements within their classes, please speak to your child's school or local authority.

For more information on what you can do to support your child, you can visit the ParentZone website:

www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) compares Scottish qualifications and learning programmes.

You can find out more at: www.sqa.org.uk/scqf

Find out which qualifications will be available to your child

The top row shows the school year your child is in during 2010/11.
Follow the column down to see the qualifications available to your child.

Academic Year/Session	Your child is in P7 now:			Your child is in S1 now:			Your child is in S2 now:			Your child is in S3 now:		
	P7	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
2010/11	Child studying CfE at primary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level – may choose subject areas for S4*	New Access, National 4 and National 5 available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2011/12	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level – may choose subject areas for S4*	New Access, National 4 and National 5 available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2012/13	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level	Child studying CfE at secondary level – may choose subject areas for S4*	New Access, National 4 and National 5 available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2013/14	Child studying CfE at secondary level – may choose subject areas for S4*	New Access, National 4 and National 5 available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2014/15	New Access, National 4 and National 5 available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2015/16	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					
2016/17	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5 and Higher available*	New Access, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher available*					

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*This depends on provisions set within individual schools.