

section 5: the consultation questions

Please note that the Respondent Information Form **MUST** be returned with your response.

As indicated in section 3 – How to Respond, responses can be submitted on-line, or on a copy of the questionnaire printed from the website, or by cutting out and completing this section of the document. Additional paper should be used if you wish to provide more extended responses but please ensure that any such pages include your identifying details.

Name/Organisation: Eastwood High School

PROPOSAL 1

National Qualifications at Access, Higher and Advanced Higher will be retained as points of stability. Highers, in particular, will remain the 'gold standard' of the Scottish education system. The content of all National Qualifications will be updated to reflect the values, purposes and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Some aspects of the structure of these qualifications will also be reviewed.

Q1. Do you welcome the intention to update all qualifications at Access, Higher and Advanced Higher in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*? Please comment on any implications to be considered.

YES

NO

Comment

They must be updated or their content and teaching approaches will be at odds with the new S1 – S3 courses.

PROPOSAL 2

A new qualification will replace the present Standard Grade General and Credit levels and Intermediate 1 and 2 (SCQF 4 and SCQF 5) qualifications. The new qualification will be available in a wide range of subjects, as at present. The new qualification will reflect the best features of Standard Grade and Intermediate. Standard Grade Foundation level will be removed and Access 3 will provide certification at SCQF level 3. (See Annex A Table 1 for illustration of new qualifications on SCQF framework.)

Q2. Early consultation has identified the 'best' features of Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications as:

- the 'inclusive' approach to certification contained in Standard Grade; and
- the 'unit based' structure of Intermediate qualifications.

Are there anyother features in the present Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications which should be included in the new qualification at SCQF levels 4 and 5?

Comment

Yes. There has to be a system whereby near fails / Ds at level 5 are accredited at level 4. At present many Intermediate 1 and 2 courses have completely different content making changing the level of presentation in S4 impossible. Consequently pupils can fail and their attainment is lost. This is an opportunity to make sure that in all NQ levels the content of the courses articulates with the levels above and below. This would also help schools (particularly small schools) organize Bi-level teaching groups and facilitate better transfer of pupils between levels where appropriate.

Q3. One of the proposals is to grade units. Do you agree that units should be graded A-C rather than pass/fail?

YES

NO

Explanation

Grading units is unnecessary as the unit assessments tell us little that the final exam does not. In addition there will be pressures from pupils/parents to resit unit assessments to "upgrade". At present pupils only resit unit assessments to pass and continue. The pressure to "upgrade" will lead to more assessment and increased unnecessary teacher workload.

Q4. Do you want graded units to count towards the final award?

YES

NO

Explanation

Graded units are not a good idea (see Q3) but by them counting towards the final award the pressures mentioned in the response to Q3 will increase.

Q5. Which option for introducing compensatory arrangements would you most support?

Please tick one option or suggest an alternative.

Option A Extend the range of grading in course awards to grade E.

Option B Recognise unit passes only.

Option C Compensatory award at the level of the course studied with no grade awarded.

Option D Compensatory grade C award at the level of course below that studied.

Option E Compensatory grade A award at the level of course below that studied.

Explanation/other suggestion

From 4 years of evidence of presentations at Int 1 and Int 2, Most S4 pupils dropped from Int 2 to Int 1 after S4 December prelims get an A at the lower level. The key here is the status of D awards that have very little currency. Level 5 Ds should receive a Level 4 compensatory award and the same should apply at all levels.

Q6. The proposed name for the new award is General (SCQF 4) and Advanced General (SCQF 5). Please indicate if you are content with this suggestion. If not please offer an alternative and explain your choice.

YES

NO

Explanation/other suggestion

Why not just call it Scottish Qualification level 4 and Scottish Qualification level 5. General has too many Standard grade connotations

PROPOSAL 3

New awards in literacy and in numeracy will be available at SCQF levels 3 to 5. *Curriculum for Excellence* brings a sustained focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills in our young people. To help strengthen this focus, the Scottish Government is proposing new separate awards to accredit young people's literacy and numeracy skills – the Scottish Certificate for Literacy and the Scottish Certificate for Numeracy. The awards will be available at SCQF levels 3 to 5. The expectation is that all young people will be presented for these awards unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so. The intention is also to ensure that the structure of these awards is flexible enough to make them available to adult learners.

Q7. Do you agree with the proposal to offer literacy and numeracy awards at a range of SCQF levels (3 to 5)? If not please offer an alternative.

YES

NO

Explanation/other suggestion

The definition of literacy and numeracy as outlined. Page 26 of the consultation document is a problem because spelling, grammar and arithmetic are not specified. This is what these tests will be seen as the measure of by the general public.

Q8. National Qualifications at Access 3 (SCQF level 3) do not have an external examination. Do you agree that any new awards in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 3 should have an external examination?

YES

NO

Explanation

If they are for all pupils many would be unable to pass at level 4. See Q9 and Q10 Responses, but these tests need to be the end of the National Assessments programme. By not allowing Access 3 to be examined it would be divisive ie. The pupils themselves would not want to be singled out as different from their peers

Q9. Should the weighting between the internal and external assessments for the literacy and numeracy awards be equal? If not should more weight be attached to the internal or external assessment? Please explain.

- Equal weight
- More weight to internal assessment
- More weight to external assessment

Explanation

These tests are surely the natural culmination of the S1 – S3 broad curriculum and the National Assessments that currently end in S2. Assessment as an integral part of learning is the norm in Primary and S1 – S3. These tests should be the logical last national assessments in Reading, Writing and Maths. National attainment is also likely to improve as the NQ programme would be concluding a year later prior to curriculum specialisation.

THE KEY POINT HERE IS THAT THE TESTS SHOULD BE EXTERNALLY SET, INTERNALLY MARKED AND EXTERNALLY MODERATED. At moderation additional portfolios of evidence of literacy/numeracy competence from across the curriculum could be used in support of a candidate.

Q10. When should young people be assessed for literacy and numeracy awards?

Please tick one option.

- Option A At the end of S3 as part of the summer diet of examinations.
- Option B In the December of S4 as part of a winter diet of examinations.
- Option C At the end of S4 as part of the summer diet of examinations.

Definitely. In ACE S3 is the natural end of the broad general curriculum. The awards should be the natural culmination of the National Assessment programme. They are also an excellent opportunity to recognise attainment (as part of broader achievement) at the end of S3. If not the only one! S4 summer is a non starter as pupils are already over assessed there and many would be sitting English and Maths levels 3, 4 and 5 anyway. An inclusion in an S4 winter diet is a waste of time. The gain in literacy and numeracy skills between June and December would be minimal.

PROPOSAL 4

Increased flexibility to better meet the needs of young people. Suggestions include:

- studying National Qualifications over 18 months (or 2 years) as well as one year;
- introducing a winter diet of examinations; and
- encouraging the most able young people to bypass lower level qualifications and to study Highers from S4 onwards.

Q11. Do you agree with the proposal to allow the study of Highers and Advanced Highers over 12 months, 18 months and 2 years?

YES

No

Explanation

The 18 month option would be operationally very difficult to timetable as some pupils would be ready for presentation in January and others not. In addition it may well prove difficult to recruit examining teams and markers.

There is also a danger that the winter diet would become mainly a "resit diet" increasing assessment when one of the aims is to reduce the assessment burden.

Q12. Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a winter diet of examinations?

YES

NO

Q13. If you agree with the proposal to introduce a winter diet of examinations, what subjects and levels of qualifications might first be offered?

Suggestions

It will probably be used mostly by S6 for resits, as January of S5 will be too early for Majority Higher presentation. If S6 pass to their satisfaction in the winter diet many will leave school. If they don't provision will have to be provided by schools for a 5 month revision programme.

Q14. Would you agree with changes to the system which allowed the most able students to bypass qualifications at lower levels and begin study for Highers from S4 onwards?

YES

NO

Explanation

At present for many able pupils S4 presentation and Qualifications are irrelevant. There should however be a safety net for "fast track" Higher candidates – similar to the answer to Q5.

Q15. Do you have any other ideas for increasing flexibility within the senior phase (S4 to S6)?

Suggestions

Some able students eg in Music, etc could opt to study a Higher in one year S4 if their level of learning at the end of S3 merited it. However high tariff university courses would not get "5 highers in one sitting" but 5 highers by the end of S5. The university faculties would need to accept this.

TIMELINE

Q16. It is intended that planning for the new curriculum should commence in 2008/09, with approaches based on the new curriculum introduced from school year 2009/10. This suggests that the new and revised qualifications and any increased flexibilities would be required from 2012/13 onwards to ensure smooth progression between the curriculum and qualifications. Is this indicative timeline realistic? Please comment on any implications to be considered.

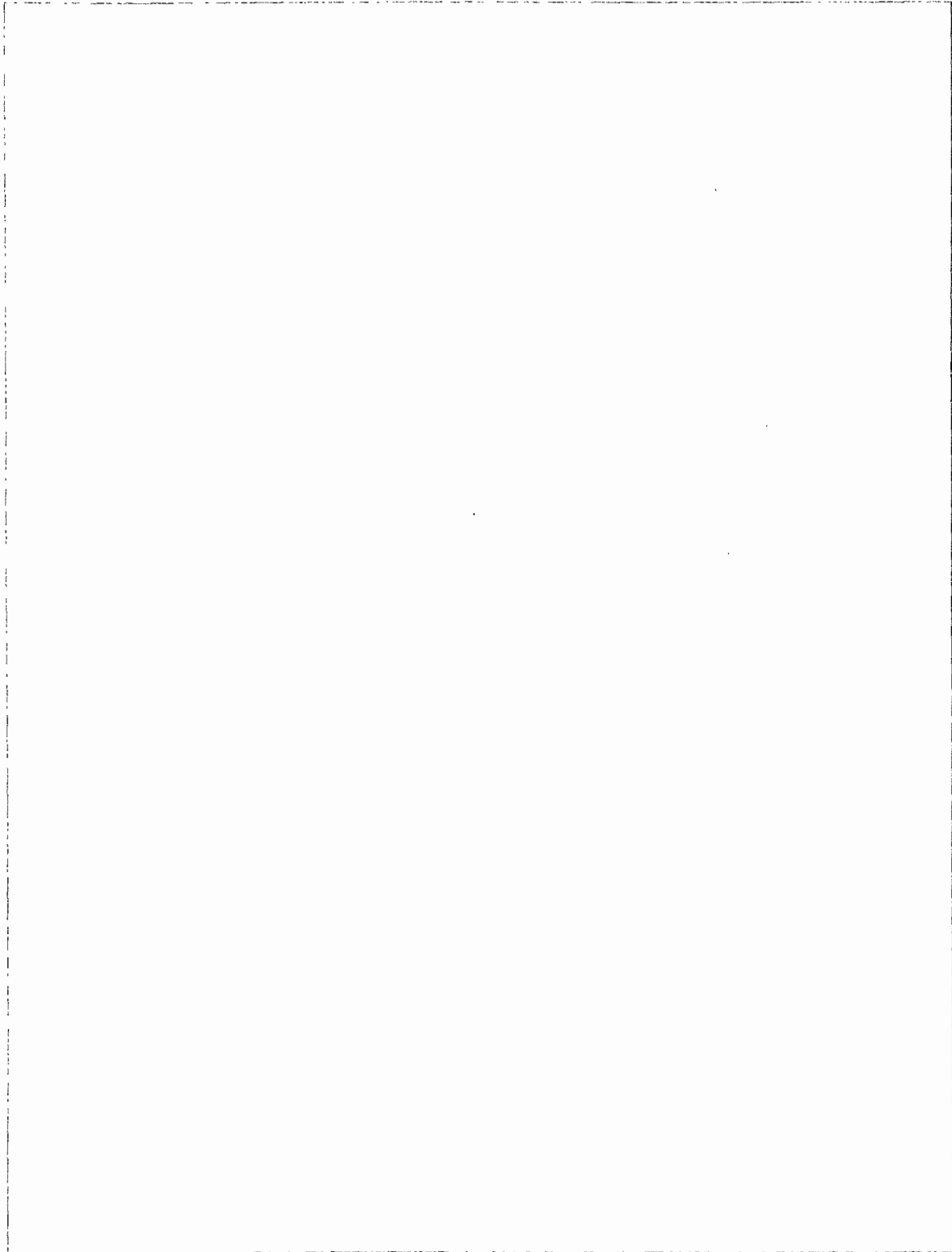
YES

NO

Comment

This makes sense in line with ACE timeline i.e. S1 in 2009/10 will be in S4 in 2012/13. There will either need to be phasing in or dual running while S4 are presented off a year ahead two year course and an initial one year course. The provision for resits will also have thought through.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?



ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

