

Consultation Questions

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.

Question 1

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:

What we are doing does not preclude ACE

- More detailed information on this update are required
- Some schools, some departments could be more or less prepared for change - consistency is crucial to ensure National Standards
- Higher Still has evolved well and offers pupils choice related to interest and their own ability levels

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.)

Question 2

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 **any other** features in the present Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications which should be included in the new qualification at SCQF levels 4 and 5?

Comment:

Standard Grade - 3 units, pupils could choose 2 from 3

Intermediate - the flexibility i.e unit(s) or course pass or awards retain written exam to prepare Higher and Advance Higher for Art & Design Studies in S5 and S6

Practical Exam to be retained or at least retain marking and assessment externally - to maintain national standards

Question 3

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:

- Staff who currently 'pass' units and submit information to SQA could grade in relation to other pupils' work
- Easier to standardise and grade internally then generate a grade for estimate to SQA when course is complete
- Why not award over a range of ability?

Question 4

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

- Yes
- No

Explanation:

- Unit awards should inform final course award (work from past units could be reviewed before final grade is awarded)

Question 5

Which option for introducing compensatory arrangements would you most support?

- 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 :

- Information on mark and grade would be useful information for staff and pupil to build on, following year - for course completion

Question 6

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 :

- New terms/titles should be clear, simple for pupils, teachers, Further Education and Higher Education, parents as well as employers
- To use any words/terms from past will be confusing (e.g. General Level in Standard Grade) for any of those with previous knowledge/information

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.

Question 7

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:

1. No pupil should be penalised for their future learning - so I agree with this provided that other subjects on curriculum are not queezed out/excluded from the timetables of pupils who might achieve a high level of success in their chosen subjects

2. However English and Maths currently offer literacy and numeracy why introduce as a separate qualification?

Question 8

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:

- Provided there is room on the diet of external exams it might be possible to offer this to a small number of pupils
- See point 1 explanation under Question 7

Question 9

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

Option A - Equal weight.

Option B - More weight to internal assessment.

Option C - More weight to external assessment.

Explanation:

Option A - Equal weight - same as present system

- With more weighting to internal assessment it is a concern re how do we maintain national standards?
- Currently external assessments are relevant and essential to point above

Question 10

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

Please select 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.

Explanation:

Don't know if it should be Option A, Option B or Option C

- Insufficient information - pilot and find out
- Will this not depend on readiness of pupils?

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.

Question 11

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:

- In some subjects the winter diet would make sense, in some subjects some able students could start study for and sit Highers in S4. Art & Design is based on a maturity of skills/techniques and finish which few, even able students could achieve.

- Timetable allocation would be an issue in Art & Design. Currently schools allocate less time in S3/4 Art & Design than in S5/6. 2-3 periods for the former, 5-6 periods for the latter. Shorter or fewer periods than currently, would be impossible to deliver Higher Curriculum.

Question 12

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

Yes

No

Explanation:

Evaluation

- Not easy to implement
- Would that reduce the summer diet or not?
- What are the implications for staff and pupils over a school session with increased number of exams?

Question 13

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

Suggestions:

TIMELINE**Question 16**

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:

- More information is required
- This is too quick
- Some staff are still asking what? how? why?
- Lack of consistency across the nation would be awful and that could happen
if this timetable is implemented too quickly

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Comment

Staff perception of this is that they have not been consulted on these changes - their opinions have not been sought on the changes in lower school i.e S1/S2 course is extended to S3.
It appears to have been decided on without staff contribution.

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