

## 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:

This is a qualified 'yes' - we need more details before we can comment fully, and to be assured that there will be a genuine consultation before these changes are made.

### 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:

*English specific:*

- The creative writing element of Standard Grade should be maintained
- Talk how to be included somehow.
- Some 'open book' element to literature exams could be useful.

### 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:

*This will increase teacher workload and the units are not at present of the same difficulty as the exam. Consistency/accuracy across schools is also an issue.*

### Question 4

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

Yes

No

Explanation:

See above - specifically the validity of internally assessed units.

### 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:

Compensatory awards devalue the success of candidates who have been presented at the lower level.

### 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:

'Advanced General' sounds like an oxymoron.

### 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

} Neither.

No

Explanation / suggestion:

We need more information before we can respond. Exactly what is being tested? Who prepares pupils for this qualification? If there is no external exam, who assesses them?

#### 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:

See above. An additional concern is that this will result in simply teaching to the exam rather than genuinely improving the quality of literacy and numeracy.

### Question 9

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.

Option A – Equal weight.

Option B – More weight to internal assessment.

Option C – More weight to external assessment.

Explanation:

Well, we think there shouldn't be an external exam! But if there is, Option C is more rigorous – meaning a higher value award for pupils.

### 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:

Pupils can focus on other subjects in S4.

#### 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:

Allows pupils to work at their own pace. However, this may not be practical.

#### Question 12

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

Yes

No

Explanation:

Yes - as above, qualified by our concerns about the logistics of winter diet 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:

This might work well for subjects with a practical / performance element to the external exam - PE, music, Art and Design, Craft and Design and Home Economics subjects - at all levels.

### Question 14

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:

### Question 15

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

Suggestions:

Increased staffing levels are likely to be needed.

## 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:

Where to begin? At the very least, these new qualifications should be trialled, running parallel to the current ones in schools that agree to participate. This should form part of a rigorous evaluation process that should at least minimise 'bedding in' problems. Doing this well takes time.

## ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Yes

No

Comment:

Much more detailed information is needed before we are able to make informed comment - we have been asked to respond before we have been given the facts. Is this really genuine consultation?

Thank you.

Please remember to cut and paste your answers onto the Scottish Government website

and

return this to

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