

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: McLAREN HIGH SCHOOL -
FACULTY OF SCIENCE + TECHNOLOGY
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

In principle. More clarity needed. How much updating envisaged? Would it substantially alter the existing courses at these levels? Might be major workload considerations, especially if changes were to be brought in at the same time as the new 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 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

Some discussion as to the status of individual units with employers, etc. For some courses, assessments are very subjective.

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

Unit grades would not be consistent with course grades. There would be pressure from pupils and parents for re-assessment to improve grades, even when a pupil had already passed a unit.

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

YES

NO

Explanation

This would exacerbate the points made re Q3.

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

Only option B generally accepted. All others rejected; D might be regarded as a very poor second best, and would be open to accusations of unfairness in some circumstances.

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

No alternative suggestions offered. General + Advanced General would create confusion with parent terms.

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 proposal was approved. But the contribution of assessments from across curricular areas would be impractical. Level N should be approached through subject, but can't collate for award.

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

No external examination at level 3.

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

} uncertain.

Explanation

As for Q7. No objection to internal assessment, in principle, but it would not be practicable to try to derive any such assessment from work done in a series of subjects. But the meeting was still in favour of promoting L + N through subjects, as well as their being subjects in their own right.

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.

Explanation

No strong preference from educational standpoint. But options would be limited by staffing + resources, which do not seem to form a part of ACE.

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

In principle. But once again the lack of resources was highlighted. In many schools, subjects cannot even now be offered readily at all levels, even without such flexibility as is suggested. Re-organisation of schools into S1-SS and S4-S6 groups might help a bit. The prospect of the provision differing across schools and authorities raises difficulties re pupils who might move between establishments.

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

N/A

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

No outright rejection of this, but there would be major organisational and staffing implications, especially in smaller schools. As in Q11, re-organisation of school year groupings might make this more feasible in some cases.

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

No.

Suggestions

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.

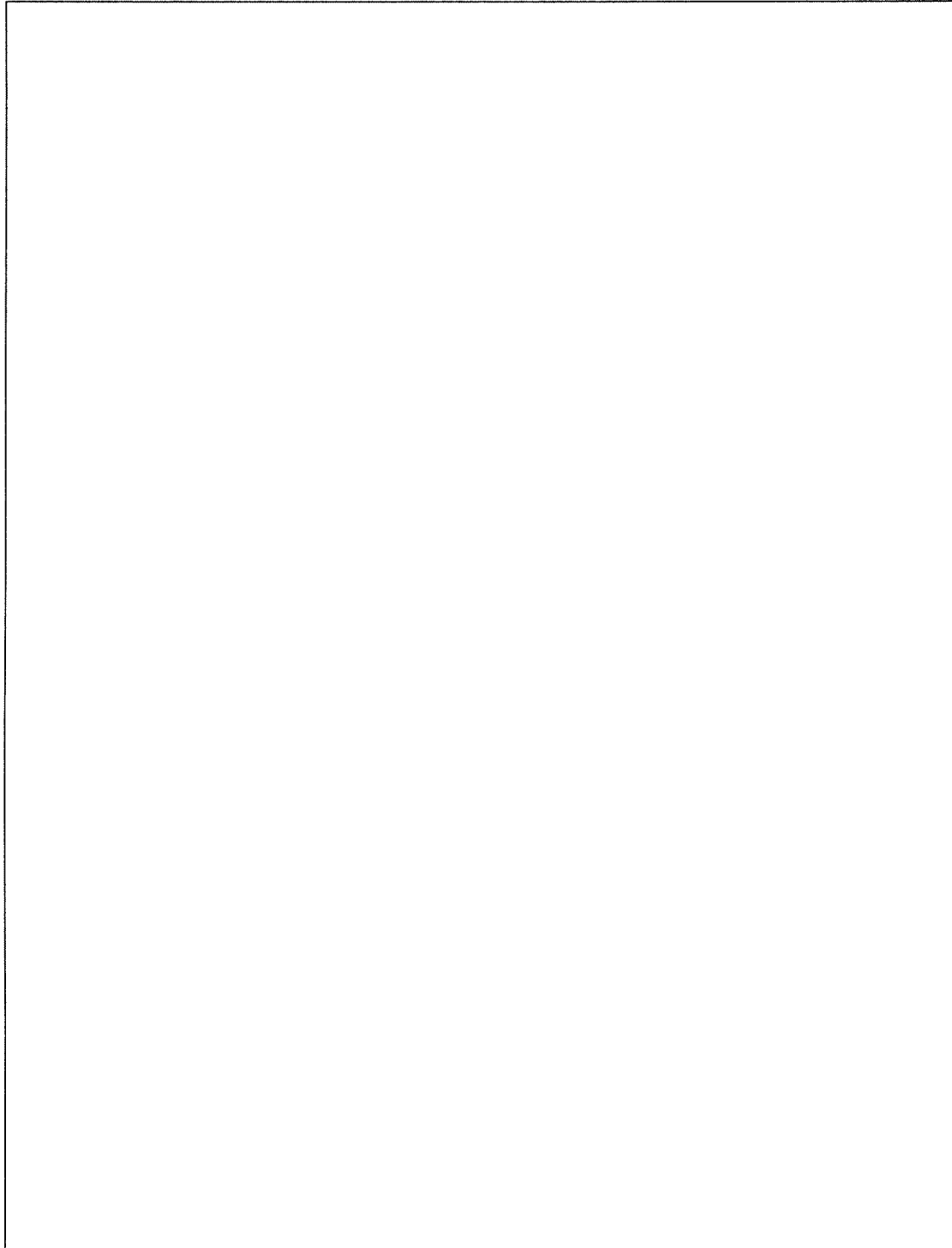
YES

NO

Comment

We cannot say whether the timeline is realistic. We do not know what, if anything, is happening in other schools, including primaries; or what plans and resources will be available for preparing the ground at any level.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

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