

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: Social subject principal teachers from Renfrewshire Council.

PROPOSAL 1

National Qualification 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 of 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 Neither – difficult to make valued answer when not sure what is being asked.

Comment

- Viability of advanced higher in today's climate for financial constraints;
- If changing S1-3, upgrading/reviewing of access, higher and advanced higher should be postponed and the courses left as they are as this would decrease the workload for teachers;
- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is still a vague notion so to comment on this is not a true reflection;
- What content/aspects of the structure – to what is being referred – the upgrade/review?; and
- Smooth transition in the timescale proposed not viable

PROPOSAL 2

A new qualification will replace the present Standard Grade 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 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

- The fact that standard grade (SG) was not unitised;
- More Assessment is for Learning (AifL) strategies should be included ;
- Access courses must articulate with all other courses;
- There must be a better way of recognising achievement other than death by assessment; and
- Formative assessment of standard grade allows young people to learn from their mistakes and how to improve rather than feeling a failure because they have not passed a NAB – again highlighting the non unitised benefit of SG

√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

- Contradicts learning as part of learning process;
- The passing of unit assessment will result in a curriculum driven by assessment once again;
- Prevents holistic approach to the curriculum;
- Has administration implications;
- Over assessment has impact on young people and can result in illness through stress; and
- Will result in a disjointed approach to learning

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

Yes No (Explanation below is applicable only if we have to have units)

Explanation

- Not toward final award but to have a value in their own right – only for young people to have them recognised in final certificate

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 that studied.

Explanation /other suggestion

- With provision that access to appeal process still continues

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

The names will result in confusion between SG general and advanced higher. Would be better to move away from these terms and introduce completely new 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 (Cannot agree or disagree because do not know what assessment looks like nor do we know the mechanisms of assessment.)

Explanation/other suggestion.

- Who delivers the literacy and numeracy assessments?

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

- For consistency throughout access level in other subjects

Q9. Should the weighing 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

- Cannot comment – do not have enough information

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

Please pick one option.

- Option A At the end of S3 as part of the summer diet of examinations
- Option B In December as 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

- As above for Q9
- Assumes winter diet will go ahead regardless.

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

- Not realistic in present financial climate;
- Would possibly work in subjects with larger uptake;
- Parents would pressurise school to do higher in one year regardless; and
- All the following difficulties -administrative, management, staffing and resource - would be encountered

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

Q14. Would you agree with the 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

- This would be difficult in social studies where there are only 1 or 2 classes of students studying the higher; and
- Difficult to have group start in S4 – putting staff and students under pressure

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

Suggestions

- Consideration must be given to funding, staffing and resources required

TIMELINE

Q16 It is intended that planning for the new curriculum should commence in 2008/2009, with approaches based on the new curriculum introduced from school year 2009/2010. This suggests that the new and revised qualifications and any increased flexibilities would be required from 2012/2013 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

- Staff require time to become familiar with the new system of assessment and with the implementation of the experiences and outcomes for CfE.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

- Consideration must be given to one person departments and the implications for them of introducing new assessment framework. This is linked to workload implications for these departments.
- Funding
- CPD is essential especially in the area of supporting creative thinking
- P14

“A new qualification will replace..... SG general and credit and intermediate 1 and 2 ..”

What does this new qualification look like? There are resource implications in today's climate of financial constraints. Will extra funding be available?

“New awards in Literacy and Numeracy will be available...”

Who administers examination? When are awards taken? Will this result in the labelling our young people as failures early in their school career?

“Increased flexibility...”

Difficult for small schools and one person departments.

Timescale – 2012/13 is not realistic – too soon. Will there be parallel examinations for young people on “old” system?

- P15

Updating of the content of all NQs – by whom? Working groups, teachers on their own?

Why change content if focus is not on “what” but on “how”?

Proposal 1

- P17

How can one comment on the implications when we do not know what the examination at SCQF level 4/5 looks like?

Content of course at SCQF level 4/5 may have knock on effect for higher and advanced higher courses and thus impact on resources. In today's financial climate of “efficiency savings” cannot afford to change books, AV resources etc.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Proposal 2

- P18 point 2

Only because some local authorities decided that intermediate 1 and 2 should be used in S3/4.

One of the original aims of SG was to provide an exit qualification the other was to recognise achievement for all and to offer a means of benchmarking.

The fact that SG totally inhibits the provision of more progressive programmes is not totally correct in some cases Sg prepare the young people better for higher than intermediate especially at S3/4

Most intermediate courses relied of differentiation by outcome to decide on attainment.

- P19

Need to move away from "death by assessment"

- P20

Point 10 – short term goals must be meaningful. Unit based structure does not make learning more manageable – it results in a wide range of stages and has implication for teacher/pupil time for interaction and can result in less not more motivation as frustration ;eads to indiscipline

Point 11 – is this a return to the days of SCOTVEC – credibility issue?

Point 12 – consistency of grading?

- P21

Point 13 – need to ensure that assessment is not open to abuse – how can one be sure that the work is solely that of the candidate? Sounds as though the system envisaged is similar to that in England where questions of authenticity of pupils coursework are constanly being raised.

Point 15 – has work load implications. May result in pressure for staff to pass pupils.

Point 17 – four unit assessment - too many

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Proposal 3

- P24

Point 3 - to achieve wider vision of improved attainment and generally improved outcomes for young people consideration should be given to the removal of the "date of birth" barrier to apprenticeships and work experience and move towards four years of secondary education.

- P25

Point 6 – amount of assessment young people are expected to undertake should be decreased not increased.

"... basis if internally assessed evidence..." – by whom ; using what?

- P26

Point 9 – would it not be better to do as at present with core skills and have these assessed as part of the external assessment?

Proposal 4

- P30

Point 5 - not sure if the two term dash will be avoided – dependent on human resources – implications for multilevel and multi-age classes?

Point 7 – why still have "Christmas leavers"? Why penalise young people because their date of birth?

Point 8 – financial implications of introducing winter diet of exams

Point 9 – parental pressure will dictate whether young people bypasses examination or not. Not sure if more higher /advanced higher will be on offer – may be that there is a decrease due to financial constraints and staffing.