

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 X NO

Comment

Continue to ensure progression and fit with other levels of National Qualifications.

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

Ensure there is recognition for work experience and employability skills

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 X

Explanation

This would create a large assessment burden and would be difficult to aggregate into a final grade.

If you are assessing competence then this is difficult to grade and it would make the new qualification structure complicated.

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

YES NO X

Explanation

Difficult to aggregate into a final grade – we would prefer confidence statements

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

Option B We would prefer students were guided after prelims if they should sit the exam

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

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

It would be good if these were integrated with work experience or other vocational subjects. These should be embedded rather than timetabled separately.

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

Ensure the assessment is rigorous – could be integrated with another subject.

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

Having said No to above then there would only be internal assessments

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

The learner should be assessed when they are ready.

Do we assume they can't miss these as has been proposed for other awards?

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 X NO

Explanation

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

YES X 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 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 X

Explanation

This would not enable the opportunity to develop breadth and would leave some pupils without a cushion if they failed those exams. It should be in exceptional circumstances only.

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

Suggestions

Have greater collaboration with other learning communities including FE colleges and Universities

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 X NO

Comment

This will have to be carefully planned to ensure that qualifications continue to fit with each other and seamless progression is still available.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Winter Diet exams – does this mean pupils could leave school in December and be looking for college courses to start in January? This would have a significant impact on recruitment, college induction etc.

There is some concern at other additional qualifications being brought in e.g. literacy certificates and Baccalaureate – could this cause additional confusion.

How do these qualifications match to the college curriculum and the NQ awards for vocational areas?
There is no reference to other awarding bodies.