

Teacher Panel

Meeting 4 – Wednesday 1 March 2017

Room 4ER, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh

Agenda

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| 1. Welcome | 10:00 – 10:10 |
| 2. Pupil Equity Funding | 10:10 – 10:45 |
| 3. Update on changes to National Qualifications (Paper 1) | 10:45 – 11:20 |
| 4. Review of guidance on mainstreaming (Paper 2) | 11:20 – 11:55 |
| 5. AOB and Close | 11:55 – 12:00 |
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Education Scotland Curriculum for Excellence

A Statement for Practitioners from
HM Chief Inspector of Education

August 2016

Re-focusing Curriculum for Excellence

This definitive statement is for teachers and practitioners, including those in early learning and childcare, youth work, colleges and local authorities. It will be important for teachers, practitioners, leaders and local authority staff to consider how it applies in the context of their own stage, phase, sector and local authority.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is transforming learning experiences for children and young people across Scotland. The range of learning opportunities and the breadth of children's and young people's achievements is greater than ever before. In recent years there has been a great deal of very positive improvement work in early learning and childcare, schools and colleges on which we can continue to build. Moving forward, the two key priorities for CfE are:

- ensuring the best possible progression in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for every child and young person; and
- closing the attainment gap.

To deliver this focus, a number of challenges remain. There is currently too much support material and guidance for practitioners. This is contributing to the growth of over-bureaucratic approaches to planning and assessment in many schools and classrooms across the country. Despite the recognition of these issues in the Tackling Bureaucracy report, progress has been far too slow. As a result we are taking action to significantly streamline all our support and guidance materials for the curriculum. This statement and the benchmarks to be published this session are key to this streamlined approach.

This statement is intended to provide clear, practical advice for teachers and practitioners on planning learning, teaching and assessment. It provides key messages about what teachers and practitioners are expected to do to effectively plan learning, teaching and assessment for all learners, and also suggests what should be avoided. Teachers should be empowered to use the flexibility that CfE provides to organise learning for children and young people in ways that best meets learners' needs. Schools should be working in a collegiate way to make key decisions.

The appendix to this statement summarises the key components of the curriculum framework within which teachers and practitioners are now expected to teach. Moving forward, the two key resources which teachers should use to plan learning, teaching and assessment are:

- **Experiences and Outcomes**
- **Benchmarks**

PLANNING LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT USING THE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO DO

- Use long-term plans to outline the structure of the year and the ways in which learning is organised throughout the whole year.
- Keep medium-term planning short and focused on the main learning activities developed from the Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os). Group Es and Os together in ways which best suit learners.
- Short-term planning on a daily or weekly basis should be flexible and be regarded as working notes to help organise learning.
- Take a collegiate approach to moderation of planning learning, teaching and assessment.
- Work together with colleagues to review and reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy. Plan and organise learning in a way which avoids each week at school feeling too cluttered to provide space and time for depth of learning.
- Planning should include consideration of how best the needs of individual and groups of children and young people will be met.
- Prioritise literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum to ensure that all learners make the best possible progress.
- Plan interdisciplinary learning (IDL) to make natural links across learning. Be aware of what is happening in other subjects and make connections.
- All planning must focus directly on enhancing the learner journey. When asked to complete paperwork which does not directly relate to improving the learner journey, challenge this with your colleagues.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid writing overly-detailed plans for the year ahead which limit your flexibility to respond to children's and young people's needs, interests and progression.
- Do not plan for individual Es and Os or spend excessive time writing detailed descriptions of learning activities.
- Do not 'tick off' all of the Es and Os separately.
- Do not spend excessive time completing detailed daily or weekly planning templates or writing detailed evaluations of plans.
- Avoid unnecessary bureaucracy creeping back in over time.
- Stop doing too many things at the same time. For example, in a primary school, covering all eight curriculum areas every week.
- Do not lose a clear focus on helping all children and young people to progress at an appropriate pace and achieve the highest standards in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Do not spend time on IDL which does not provide opportunities to apply and deepen learning or is contrived.

PLANNING LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT USING THE BENCHMARKS

The purpose of the Benchmarks is to set out very clear statements about what children and young people need to learn to achieve each level of the curriculum. Benchmarks streamline and embed a wide range of existing assessment guidance (significant aspects of learning, progression frameworks and annotated exemplification) into one key resource to support teachers' professional judgement.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO DO

- Periodically (from time to time) use assessments to sample and pull together learning in a joined-up way.
- Plan an appropriate balance between on-going and periodic assessment – this will vary from stage to stage.
- Moderate assessment judgements by taking account of a sample of evidence from different sources to discuss standards and the progress of learners.
- As a school, develop simple and effective approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress particularly in literacy and numeracy. Tracking needs to be as easy to use as possible.
- Regularly discuss tracking information with colleagues to plan additional support and interventions to help improve learners' progress.
- Evaluate learners' progress on an on-going basis and keep short concise notes to help planning for next steps in learning. This will include identifying where additional support and challenge may be needed.
- Use the benchmarks to help monitor progress and support overall professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a curriculum level.
- Involve children and young people in leading their own learning and involve them in profiling their achievements.
- Reporting to parents should highlight latest progress, identify next steps in learning and build on profiling. Discussions should highlight ways in which parents can support their child's progress.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid spending time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's and young people's next steps in learning.
- Do not over-assess learners or assess the same content repeatedly in different ways. Do not create large portfolios of evidence.
- Avoid duplication and keeping evidence of every detail within the Benchmark.
- Avoid waiting until learners have demonstrated evidence of every aspect of learning within the Benchmarks before moving on to the next level.
- Avoid undue pressure on learners with too many assessments in different subjects at once.
- Avoid spending too much time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes.
- Do not track and record progress against individual Es and Os.
- Do not track progress and achievement using the terms 'developing, consolidating, secure'.
- Do not spend time writing long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

APPENDIX:

Summary of the Curriculum Framework in Scotland – August 2016

This summary is for teachers and practitioners, including those in early learning and childcare, youth work and colleges. It provides clarity of the main messages.

CORE INFORMATION	KEY MESSAGES
<p>Purpose (four capacities)</p> <p>The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to help children and young people to become:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Successful learners;</i>• <i>Confident individuals;</i>• <i>Responsible citizens; and</i>• <i>Effective contributors.</i>	<p>Developing the capabilities and attributes of the four capacities is embedded across all learning.</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to raise standards, to close the (poverty-related) attainment gap, and to prepare children and young people for their future.</p>	<p>Building on the messages of Building the Curriculum 3, the National Improvement Framework, Scottish Attainment Challenge and Developing the Young Workforce gives a greater focus to our aim.</p>
<p>Values</p> <p>The Scottish approach to the curriculum is values based. Wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity define the values for Scottish society.</p>	<p>Apply and reinforce these values at every opportunity to ensure children and young people develop understanding and respect for others and a sense of their personal and collective responsibility.</p>
<p>The curriculum framework</p> <p>The curriculum includes all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education. It includes four contexts for learning: curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, ethos and life of the school and opportunities for personal achievement.</p> <p>The Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) for each curriculum area illustrate the learning within each level.</p> <p>Curriculum for Excellence provides flexibility for schools and settings to plan learning suitable for their own context. The school community and partners should be involved in deciding how to use this flexibility.</p> <p>Children's rights and entitlements are at the heart of the Scottish Curriculum.</p>	<p>The curriculum framework, as laid out in the Building the Curriculum Series, remains the same.</p> <p>Teachers and practitioners provide a curriculum that is coherent and flexible, takes account of the local context and ensures appropriate progression and levels of attainment for all children and young people.</p> <p>The National Improvement Framework increases the focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and highlights the need to close the poverty-related attainment gap.</p> <p>The Developing the Young Workforce Programme increases the focus on recognising children's and young people's skills, the links between learning and positive destinations, and access to learning pathways that meets their needs and aspirations.</p>
<p>Moderation</p> <p>Moderation is the way in which practitioners arrive at a shared understanding of standards and expectations.</p> <p>Moderation takes place at local, regional and national levels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teachers and practitioners at the same curriculum level;• across a school or setting;• across a group of schools/settings;• within local authorities;• through regional groups; or• via national groups.	<p>Moderation is integral to planning learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>The process of moderation is not an activity that happens only at the end of a block or year.</p> <p>Teachers and practitioners, with senior leaders, regularly consider a range of assessment evidence which demonstrates how well children and young people are making progress and achieving their potential.</p>

CORE INFORMATION

KEY MESSAGES

Principles of curriculum design

These apply at all stages of learning with different emphases at different times.

- *challenge and enjoyment;*
- *breadth;*
- *progression;*
- *depth;*
- *personalisation and choice;*
- *coherence; and*
- *relevance.*

Responsibility of all

- literacy;
- numeracy; and
- health and wellbeing.

There should be a continuous focus on these from the ages of 3 to 18.

Children and young people are entitled to two hours of quality physical education per week.

The principles are taken into account when planning learning for all children and young people.

Teachers and practitioners identify what will be taught and how to best meet the needs of all learners. This is underpinned by a clear, shared understanding of progression and high quality learning and teaching.

When planning learning, teaching and assessment Experiences and Outcomes are grouped or bundled together.

Building the Ambition provides guidance to those working in the early learning and childcare sector. It should be used in parallel with CfE guidance.

Assessing progress and achievement

Assessment is integral to learning and teaching. It is an ongoing process.

Achievement of a level:

Achievement of a level is based on teachers' overall professional judgement, informed by evidence.

Benchmarks:

The Benchmarks are designed to support teacher professional judgement of both, progress towards, and achievement of, a level.

A range of assessment evidence is used to plan next steps in learning.

Assessment judgements should be based on the Benchmarks for each curriculum level.

The Benchmarks embed the significant aspects of learning and progression frameworks. They provide a single streamlined resource to supporting teachers' professional judgement.

This document can be downloaded at: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/CfE-delivery-plan.aspx>

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y: www.youtube.com/user/educationscotland

CHAIR'S BRIEF

Teacher Panel

Meeting 4, 10:00 am, 1st March 2017

Room 4ER, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

1. Welcome and Introductions [10:00]

Welcome attendees.

To note, apologies have been received from Deborah Davidson.

Please note that [REDACTED] a Modern Apprentice in the Curriculum Unit, is attending the meeting today to assist with minute taking. You may wish to introduce [REDACTED] and note that she is a former pupil of Stephen Ross' school, Craigroyston Community High School.

Introductory remarks:

- We have a lot to get through on today's agenda. The topics we will discuss are varied, but demonstrate the breadth of work going on in education right across Government.
- All the actions that we are taking are aimed at ensuring we add the most value to the learner journey for all our young people, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of background or circumstance.
- Grateful as ever for the honest, frank and open views which Panel members bring to these meetings.

Invite attendees to agree minute for Meeting 3. You may wish to make Panel members aware that all minutes of meetings will shortly be made available through the Scottish Government website.

2. Pupil Equity Funding [10:10]

[REDACTED] from the Raising Attainment Unit will be in attendance and you can call on her, if helpful, to expand on the issues raised in this discussion.

- The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to closing the attainment gap. It is underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.
- As part of this a £750m Attainment Scotland Fund was created with the aim to provide a targeted initiative focused on supporting pupils in the local authorities of Scotland with the highest levels of deprivation.
- This funding includes £120m of Pupil Equity funding in 2017-18 which will benefit every council area in Scotland. It will be available for Headteachers to use for additional staffing or resources that they consider will help raise attainment. (£50 million a year continues to provide targeted support to

CHAIR'S BRIEF

specific Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities and schools in areas of greatest need as well as a number of national programmes including staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and school leadership.)

- Every head teacher in Scotland was invited to one of eight events which took place all over Scotland in February. Draft guidance has been produced and online tools are being provided to schools to help teachers drive up pupil attainment. The wide range of guidance gives teachers access to effective interventions based on practice examples from around Scotland.

Invite reflections from the Panel. To prompt discussion it might be helpful to ask:-

- *What local arrangements are you making to make use of the funding? What challenges and opportunities are emerging?*
- *What support do you now need from local and central government?*

A list detailing the amount of funding each Panel member's school will receive is attached at Annex A. This has not been shared with the Panel.

3. Update on changes to National Qualifications [10:45]

- We have previously discussed the removal of unit assessments from National Qualifications. At our last meeting, concerns were raised about the mixed messages which were being disseminated in relation to the removal of unit assessments.
- Since then, the ANQ Working Group has met to further discuss the implications of the removal of unit assessments. In January, SQA published high level guidance on the implications for individual National Courses.
- However, it is clear that further work is need to clarify and communicate the changes. I am clear that this needs to be done with urgency, but that it also needs to be done correctly.
- Officials shared a draft paper with you which seeks to provide teachers, schools and local authorities with greater clarity around these changes. Interested to hear views on this and how the changes are being viewed by the profession in practice.

You may wish to ask [REDACTED] to briefly summarise discussions of the ANQ Group for the Panel, before inviting comments from attendees on the draft guidance which was circulated to members. [REDACTED] will also be in attendance to listen to the discussion.

4. Mainstreaming guidance review [11:20]

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from the Support and Wellbeing Unit will be in attendance and you can call on them, if helpful, to expand on the issues raised in this discussion.

- The review of the presumption of mainstreaming guidance will aim to refresh the current guidance in light of legislative and policy developments. It will also

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provide practical guidance on inclusive practice and outline the decision making process for placements, noting where mainstream is appropriate and the other options available when it is not. The draft guidance will go to public consultation in due course.

- The paper which has been sent to you reflects on the issue of inclusion, a fundamental part of the ethos of Scottish education. It is about making sure that every child is able to be involved in the life and work of the school and the educational experience and that they're fulfilled as a consequence of that interaction. The starting point is the right to be present – it is then up to us to make sure those children are included.
- There is no universally accepted definition of inclusion, but research has shown that providing clarity on the definition of inclusion is one of the most important factors in the success of an inclusive education system. The paper includes a draft Scottish definition of inclusion, which is an attempt to capture the strategic vision for Scottish education and to reaffirm our commitment to developing a more just and equitable society.

Invite reflections from the Panel. To prompt discussion the Panel have been asked to consider three questions:-

- *What do you want to see in this guidance?*
- *What would you not want to see in this guidance?*
- *Are there any practical measures that would help in your day to day work? [It would be particularly useful to have views on this.]*

This topic is controversial, with strong and often emotive accounts for and against mainstreaming as a concept. The definition of inclusion gives the Panel an opportunity to buy into the strategic vision underpinning the presumption of mainstreaming.

If time for this item is short, you may wish to invite the Panel to send any comments they may have to [REDACTED] who will ensure these are passed on to relevant colleagues.

5. AOB and Close [11:55]

None received in advance. If none offered then close meeting.

We suggest that the next Panel meeting takes place in June, prior to the end of the school term. You may wish to ask the Panel for views on whether this is suitable. If so, we have identified a slot in your diary on 14 June.

CHAIR'S BRIEF

ANNEX

PUPIL EQUITY FUND ALLOCATIONS OF TEACHER PANEL MEMBERS (2017)

	Name	School	PEF Allocation
1.	Andrew Travis	Meldrum Academy, Inverurie	£24,000
2.	Clare Bryden*	Inverary Primary School, Inverary	£7,200
3.	Jenny Kerr*	Craighdu Primary School	£10,800
4.	Lynne Doyle*	St Flannan's Primary School	£70,800
5.	Stephen Ross	Craigroyston Community High School, Edinburgh	£115,200
6.	Pauline Walker	Royal High School, Edinburgh	£18,000
7.	Deborah Davidson	Dulloch Primary School and Calliswood Special School	£34,800
8.	Gareth Surgey*	Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline	£122,400
9.	Scott Duncan*	The Waid Academy, Anstruther	£45,600
10.	Gerry Lyons	St Andrew's Secondary School, Glasgow	£354,000
11.	Catriona Chaimbeul	Glasgow Gaelic School, Glasgow	£46,800
12.	James Cook	Crown Primary School, Inverness	£21,600
13.	Ellen Turnbull	Our Lady and St Joseph's Primary School, Coatbridge	£20,400
14.	Sabrina McCready*	Ardrossan Academy, Ardrossan	£124,800
15.	Annette Beaton	Crieff Primary School, Crieff	£56,400
16.	Louise Sanders	Ayton and Reston Primary Schools, Scottish Borders	£24,000 (£10,800 and £13,200 respectively)
17.	John Reilly	Holy Cross High School, Hamilton	£100,800

*Members which are not Headteachers or Deputy Headteachers

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Changes to National Qualifications

[REDACTED]

General View

The opening paragraphs state that the purpose of the note is "to provide guidance to schools and local authorities to ensure that the benefits of removing unit assessments are achieved across the system".

Unfortunately, the unintended consequences of that decision are a disappointing set of significant changes to the national qualifications, which potentially disadvantage a significant group of young people and potentially lead to schools taking a less aspirational approach to presentation where, instead of erring on the side of young people and giving them an opportunity to gain qualifications at a higher level, schools will "play it safe" and young people will be presented at a lower level, reducing levels of attainment.

Schools which have made most significant improvements through the introduction of the new qualifications, have partly done so by giving young people the opportunity to sit on the basis of, if all conditions are right, then they could pass. This was supported by the fact that they achieved Unit passes as they progressed through the course. Had there been clarity that this option to "give young people a chance" (which was built on the philosophy of Achievement for All, one of the core principles of Curriculum for Excellence and the Scottish Examination system for the last 30 years) would be removed as a consequence of the removal of "mandatory" unit assessment, then I do not think it would have gained wide support from the profession, and certainly not from headteachers. I believe that, within the current system, it actually may provide an additional obstacle to Closing the Attainment Gap, again one which was never intended.

Unfortunately, it also will appear to many that the decision is driven by reducing teacher workload to the detriment of young people and their chances within our examination system. That is hugely unfortunate. I am not certain when the specific implication of that decision became apparent. However, as it emerged, the decision should have been delayed to allow consideration of how that might have been avoided, or for the actual decision to be rethought.

I also believe that, with more focused consideration, there could have been restructuring of courses which would have maintained the opportunity for young people to be presented for courses, while gaining credits for units completed. This was, and remains, worthy of further consideration and discussion.

It seems, though, that this paper represents final decisions which I find highly regrettable.

Progression into the Senior Phase

The early statements in this section restate the current position in terms of levels achieved by the end of the BGE and the focus on attainment by the end of the senior phase. Unfortunately, one of the features of the current system which has yet to be fully realised, is the focus on attainment by the end of the senior phase. I would suggest that in most schools, that is not the focus and in the eyes of many parents, that is not the focus.

Allowing for my general view, for the guidance to achieve the anticipated outcome, there needs to be a major increase in emphasis on the message of achievement at exit point, and a national push to ensure that every school has that focus as a driver for its approach to National Qualifications and the senior phase more widely.

The example of a young person undertaking a two year National 5 highlights one of the major concerns about these changes to the qualifications. In this example, as described, a young person could undertake a two year course and then fail at the end, without gaining any credit in the process, surely something we would all want to avoid. There should be consideration given to how credit can be given for units within this and all structures of course presentation.

In this section, there is the first major mention of National 4. Everything in this paper emphasises and highlights urgent need for a restructuring and relaunch of National 4, with the facility to give more credit for different levels of achievement within the qualification.

Units that were previously part of National 5

Again, it is highly regrettable that the removal of Mandatory Unit Assessment has become the removal of units from the National 5 course. My understanding was that this was never the intention and when it became apparent in discussion with SQA that this would be a consequence of the removal of mandatory unit assessment, then time should have been taken to consider how this could be avoided.

Unfortunately, the status of units is not high enough within our system for a unit only programme to be viewed by pupils and parents as a positive option. I restate a view that we should be seeking to find a way for schools to present young people for both units and for full courses.

SQA Data Entry Requirements

This seems to be again a restatement of current position. However, it seems that it should be possible for the SQA to serve the system properly that changes made beyond November should easily be certificated in time for August. This flexibility from SQA would also support a more pupil centred management of the qualification, where schools could present young people for the course or units and based on observation in the first term, alter the presentation again giving greater opportunity to young people within the system.

Recognising Positive Achievement

Not for the first time, it is highly regrettable that, as more schools are becoming better at managing the system for Recognising Positive Achievement, the option is removed. Again, had it been anticipated that this would have been a potential outcome of the proposal to remove mandatory unit assessment, then it would at the very least been worthy of further consideration and discussion.

This is not to legitimise approaches to pupil presentation, which are not robust where young people are presented at the wrong level, because fall back is available. This is something which undermines the exam system and schools should be working on ensuring that it is not their approach.

For the alternative to be effective, there has to be strong messages about the value of Grade D and a continuing focus on ensuring that the credit given within Insight makes it a positive choice for schools to offer young people, rather than presenting at a lower level.

Frequently Asked Questions

I recognise that that the statistics supporting inappropriate presentation patterns are something that should be addressed and should be challenged within the system. However, the system was a positive one when applied properly, the same areas of concern apply here as expressed earlier in this response.

It would be very helpful if the extension of Grade D could be docked effectively within the system to be a positive outcome for borderline candidates, the work within Insight referred to later is critical for this to happen

Why is it not possible to present candidates for both units....?

I do not accept the assertion in the first paragraph in this answer. There was an intention that young people who were clearly achieving at a level could be presented for courses without "jumping through the hoops" of mandatory unit assessment. Alongside this, an alternative pathway for young people, who were legitimately borderline and for whom schools were being realistically aspirational, could be maintained within the system which allowed these young people to be presented for Unit Assessments to give them achievement even if they did not achieve a course award.

This system would have meant a significant reduction in the number of young people being presented for Unit Assessments and a reduction in teacher workload, while retaining a process to encourage schools to be legitimately aspirational in their presentation policies, thus maximising opportunities for young people.

The flexibility that exists to allow young people to study at National 4 and gain units at National 5 illustrates that there were approaches possible which could have been applied in a different way.

It should have been possible to achieve this, the outcome is (it bears repeating) unfortunate and very disappointing.

Conclusion

It seems that this paper is a final statement of the new position. I am hugely disappointed about that. I also feel discouraged that my input (albeit as part of many important contributions to a much wider debate) has contributed to this new position, which has the impression of reducing teacher workload at the expense of positive outcomes of young people something which goes against everything I stand for in education.

On a personal level, I need to think about how I work within this new system to maximise outcomes for my young people, when there is a significant possibility that these changes will lead to a notable reduction in those outcomes.

 February 2017

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2017 12:34
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Communication on changes to the National Qualifications

Dear [REDACTED]

I think generally the paper is clear about how we will take this forward and recognises the need for 3 year consideration (senior phase) when looking a final achievement for pupils. However there are a couple of issues with the paper which perhaps need exploring further to make sure this will work for all pupils.

Firstly the pathways suggested rely on teacher judgement from the BGE. While this has greatly improved there will always be ambiguity around what levels pupils are moving forward with from S3. This is a lot to do with the very nature of the BGE which focusses clearly on skills development. This is very different from the Senior Phase which is more content based and pupils use the skills they acquired in the BGE to demonstrate their learning. This makes assessment in the BGE by its very nature less summative or formal opening up margins for discussion around the edges about where pupils are with their learning in levels 3 or 4. Generally there is much more confidence in this around definite Nat 3,4 or 5 presentations but there are still a number of pupils who will be borderline. This in particular affects borderline National 5 pupils.

In the paper there is an expectation we will definitely decide who is following a units pathway or course presentation. However this is a grey area and has in the past been dealt with through RPA. In our case there are a small but significant number of pupils who are on this borderline. They demonstrate this through their ability to pass the Nat 5 units. However they may struggle with the final exams; but may pass -- more than a few do. We are very aspirational with pupils -- this is not through inappropriate presentation but rather through ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to perform to the highest level possible. I have given an example of this below:

English 8 out of 194 pupils were awarded through RPA. Some of these 8 would still be recognised through the lowered D band 40% but a few would not. They had passed Nat 5 units and hence were demonstrating competence beyond Nat 4 but were not quite there yet -- they missed out by 2/3 marks. Under the new pathways they would complete the year with no recognition of their competence.

I firmly believe we do need to look at how these borderline pupils have their competence recognised. Could a system be looked at? For example, an administrative additional presentation in September where we could present these pupils for Nat 4 Course award including any Nat 5 units they have evidence for? This would only be required for pupils who are not progressing any further with this subject i.e. wont upgrade the presentation award during S5 or S6.

I think this needs fleshed out a little as its really important we do not lock pupils in to pathways to their detriment. The reality is the most vulnerable learners are often those in the margins as with support, scaffolding and lot of TLC they will often outperform expectations and blossom.

I do believe we need a root and branch review of the national qualifications. There are many nuances throughout the subjects which present barriers to our young people for example non-hierarchical units in Science subjects. This can close off aspirational presentation for the pupils who need it the most. If we are serious about raising attainment for all then our national curriculum and qualifications must match that agenda without compromising excellence.

I hope this helps but happy to debate further at the meeting as I am sure colleagues will have many and varied views about how we get this right.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 20 February 2017 15:06
Subject: Communication on changes to the National Qualifications

Colleagues

We have had a number of discussions at Teacher Panel meetings on the changes to the National Qualifications associated with the removal of unit assessments. It is clear that further work is need to clarify and communicate the changes and that this needs to be done with a fair degree of urgency given that the changes are to be applied to National 5 for the 2017-18 school year.

I am attaching a draft communication that is intended to provide teachers, schools and local authorities with the necessary clarity around these changes. This is currently with the various members of the Assessment and National Qualifications Group for views. However, I would greatly appreciate any comments you had on this note, if at all possible by the end of the week. The next meeting of the Teacher Panel will of course provide an opportunity to discuss this further. I'm sending this to all the members of the Teacher Panel, although I appreciate it is likely to be of most relevance to those working in the secondary sector.

Finally, I would appreciate it if you could treat the attached as confidential and not circulate it any further.

Many thanks

[Redacted]

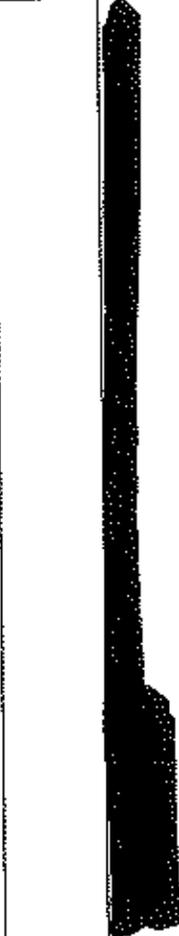
DRAFT COMMUNICATION ON CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE TEACHER PANEL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently too much focus on year on year attainment – these changes could force the system to adapt• Concern about removal of RPA – will force schools down two year (S3 and S4) Nationals to ensure readiness by November of S4, a reversal for those schools that have embraced the full BGE.• SOA Data Entry requirement para "heavy-handed". Interprets it as an SQA issue (when, of course, it is designed to encourage appropriate presentation).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No issues – clear and helpful
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact of RPA – “disappointing set of significant changes”, “potentially disadvantage a significant group of young people and potentially lead to schools taking a less aspirational approach to presentation”. Schools will play it safe – will provide an additional obstacle to Closing the Attainment Gap)• Removal of mandatory assessment not the same as removal of units• RPA – had implications been clear, then more consideration would have been given to supporting the option• Doesn't accept that dual presentation, for unit and course, would necessarily create workload issues• Changes driven by teacher workload issues to the detriment of learners – “goes against everything I stand for in education”.• Courses could be restructured so that there can be presentation for courses but also gaining credit for units.• Senior Phase vision (attainment at end of three years still not in place – need for national push and messaging to ensure that this

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<p>focus is in every school)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two year Nat 5 – could still fail and would then have nothing to show for two years work. • SQA Data entry requirements too system focused, and not learner focused. • Should be strong messages about value of grade D and no perverse drivers within Insight 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes clarity of statement, and its focus on Senior Phase as a three-year programme • Still some uncertainty around teacher judgement of a learner's level by end of BGE • Removal of RPA may reduce aspirational presentation • Need to recognise borderline National 4/5 candidates (e.g. through a post August results presentation for a Nat 4 course award?) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes the focus on Senior Phase pathways and suggestion of two-year Nat 5 courses. Need for dual presentation, i.e. presentation for National 5 units and the National 4 course • Concern that November presentation cut-off date (i.e. whether a candidate will be presented for a National 5 or National 4 course, or just for N5 units) too early in S4 to make effective decision. • Teachers will still have to assess, even without mandatory unit assessment – main challenge was the way in which the units were originally designed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anecdotal evidence that some schools still making presentation of decisions based on "league tables", rather than interests of learner. • Inconsistency across country re. Whether learning for NQs can be undertaken in S3. Some schools still driving a many young people as possible towards National 5. • Credibility of National 4 – more emphasis on its merits required to 	

	<p>be communicated nationally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to clarify and support progression for learners who get a D• Need to communicate the removal of RPA to all schools• English: happy with changes (clearly need on ensuring coverage of literacy without units)• Maths: Time required to update resources following changes• Maths: No reduction in workload with removal of units at N5• Hospitality: exam best possible outcome as it strengthens credibility of the qualification• Languages: external assessment required for N4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome removal of RPA – will encourage presentation at the correct level• Removal of mandatory unit assessment means that, in some subjects, teachers will not undertake necessary assessment• But there may be merit in teachers using some of the units, e.g. in Gaelic helpful to continue to use the Analysis and Evaluation Unit.• Proposes that learners might be able to present for one N5 unit and the course)

Introduction

This communication provides further detail to local authorities, schools and teachers on the implications of the decision to remove unit assessments from the National Qualifications. It supplements the material released by the SQA on 31 January providing the headline details of the changes to the assessment framework for each National 5 course following the removal of unit assessments.

It should be read in conjunction with guidance from the Chief Inspector of Schools issued in May and August 2016. Schools and local authorities should consider the recent changes to assessment within the qualifications in relation to the strengthening of the Broad General Education to ensure that young people experience the appropriate pace, breadth and depth of learning that will prepare them for the Senior Phase:



UpdatedGuidanceNot
e_tcm4-876075.pdf



cfstatement.pdf

Changes to the National Qualifications

Whilst there are a range of factors that have contributed to over-assessment in schools, the main purpose of this note is to provide guidance to schools and local authorities to ensure that the benefits of removing unit assessments are achieved across the system.

The removal of mandatory unit assessments has the distinct purpose of reducing the amount of assessment experienced by young people taking national qualifications and the teacher workload created as a result of administering the units. This reflected proposals by the teaching profession, whose judgement was that the cumulative impact of typically having to undertake three unit assessments, course assignments, prelims and a final exam for each course was too great and was detracting from providing sufficient time for high quality learning and teaching.

Progression into the Senior Phase and presentation decisions

Schools need to make important judgments about the most appropriate National Qualifications pathway for each learner. These decisions must be informed by close tracking and monitoring of learners' progress through the Broad General Education (BGE). A clear understanding of the curriculum level achieved in each subject area at the end of BGE is a critical piece of information to inform this decision and to ensure a smooth progression in learning for all learners as they move into the Senior Phase.

During the Senior Phase, there must be sufficient time for learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that learners' breadth, depth and ability to apply learning maximises their attainment by the end of the Senior Phase. This means that the

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level of attainment at the end of the Senior Phase becomes the main focus for all schools, rather than on individual year on year attainment that is currently prevalent. *Decisions about learning pathways will require a reliable assessment of whether a young person has achieved the third or fourth curriculum level by the end of S3 before embarking on a course leading to National 4 or National 5, respectively.* The benchmarks shortly to be published for each curriculum area by Education Scotland will provide teachers with the necessary information to inform this judgement.

There will be a small group of candidates nationally who will be presented for National 1 to National 3 courses. However, for the majority of candidates, schools have several presentation options for learners moving on to National Qualifications in the Senior Phase:

- **progression onto National 4 (for those who have achieved third curriculum level)**
- **progression onto National 5 (for those who have achieved fourth curriculum level)**
- **progression onto Higher, bypassing National 4 and 5 (for those who have achieved fourth curriculum level)**

A decision on the appropriate qualification level will also need to be supplemented by a decision on whether the qualification pathway should be undertaken over one or two years. *For example, a young person may gain a better learning and teaching experience by undertaking a National 5 over two years, rather than being presented for a one-year National 5 for which they are not well prepared and potentially results in a negative learning experience.*

National 4 was designed to provide a clear progression pathway from the third curriculum level either into National 5 or into college or training and other qualifications such as National Certificates, Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships. Schools will want to discuss these options with parents and young people to ensure the most appropriate pathway for each learner.

The learning and pathways within Curriculum for Excellence are designed to be centred around the individual learner. There should therefore be no occasion where a full year group is being presented for National 5 unless every learner has achieved Fourth curriculum level.

Units that were previously part of National 5

These national units will also remain available as free standing units at SCQF level 5. The units will no longer form part of the National 5 course. They are available as an alternative to presentation for the full National 5 course award. The decision to retain units as free-standing qualifications is intended to support flexibility in meeting the different needs of individual learners. Some learners may for instance be presented for a number of full courses and additionally for a number of free-standing units in different subjects.

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Schools will, therefore, have to take a decision for any given National 5 course on whether a young person is presented either for units or for the full course award. They should not be presented for both.

At the end of each session, schools, local authorities and Education Scotland will review the unit and course entry data to understand how learners are being presented across the country.

SQA Data Entry Requirements

As under current arrangements, centres will need to provide SQA with an accurate indication of their presentation patterns for the upcoming exam diet by **November**. SQA needs this information to plan, recruit and train markers and other appointees to undertake the necessary quality assurance processes and to ensure successful delivery of certification in August. Schools can make small adjustments to entry data for individual candidates by removing their unit entries or course entries. Any changes to entries must be submitted by **March**. However, any change to the numbers of candidates entered for units by a centre beyond November risk the prospect of these units not being certificated in time for August, due to insufficient time being available to undertake the necessary quality assurance processes.

Recognising Positive Achievement (RPA)

One of the most significant impacts of the removal of units and their assessments from National 5 is that the possibility of fall back to National 4 – under the current mechanism of recognising positive achievement - will no longer be available.

There will be candidates, aspiring to attain a National Course, who do not achieve an A-C Grade. In order to recognise their positive achievement, the achievement of Grade D attainment will be broadened from the current position (notional 45%-49%) to notional 40%-49%. This move is intended to ensure that young people who do not perform as well as predicted in the course assessment receive credit for their achievement at SCQF level of the qualification for which they were entered.

This will apply to National 5 from 2017-18, Higher from 2018-19 and Advanced Higher from 2019-20.

Conclusion

Schools should now consider the implications of the changes on potential presentation decisions for candidates. Decisions about progression pathways and curriculum models for learners through the Senior Phase remain a matter for local authorities and schools in order to ensure they best meet the needs of young people.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is fallback to National 4 no longer available?

The current RPA mechanism is founded on the hierarchical relationship between the units at National 4 and National 5. This meant that successful completion of the National 5 unit assessments in any given subject could be taken as suitable evidence of having achieved the requirements of the equivalent units at National 4. Since unit assessments will no longer form part of the National 5 course, it will no longer be possible to award National 4 qualifications through this mechanism.

It is also clear that the availability of RPA, whilst intended to support aspirational presentation, has contributed to inappropriate presentation patterns, with young people being presented for a course award which they have little realistic prospect of achieving. For example, of the 295,083 entries for National 5 in 2016, 41,214 (14%) candidates received no award. However, a National 4 Award was secured for 23,551 of those entries through RPA, which represented 20.5% of the 114,635 National 4 qualifications awarded in August 2016. These figures suggest an inappropriate balance in presentation for National 4 and National 5.

Under the new arrangements, the broadening of the D grade range from 49-40% is intended to recognise the positive achievement of learners who do not perform as well as predicted in the course assessment.

Why is it not possible to present candidates for both units and the full course award?

The purpose of removing unit assessments was to reduce the burden of over-assessment, not just for teachers, but also for young people. Presenting young people for both units and the full course award would clearly do nothing to address this issue.

Furthermore, following the removal of unit assessments, it has been necessary to expand the final course assessment in order to ensure full course coverage. This would mean an *increase* in the amount of assessment for any candidate presented for both units and the full course award.

What approaches should schools take with borderline N4/N5 candidates under the new arrangements?

Choices about learning pathways leading to qualifications need to be informed by reliable assessment information. Schools need to monitor and track young people's progress carefully and have clear evidence of their current level of attainment. Based on this evidence, schools will make decisions about whether young people should be presented for N4 or N5. Schools need robust evidence from assessment on which to base decisions about borderline candidates. Such evidence will support schools in explaining their decisions about presentation to young people and their parents. The broadening of Grade D to a notional 40% to 49% reduces the risk of borderline candidates getting no award. Schools should be aware of the potentially detrimental

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impact on young people's wellbeing if they are presented for qualifications clearly beyond their current level of attainment.

However, in order to support a genuinely aspirational approach to presentation, schools should consider alternative learner pathways through the Senior Phase. This may include candidates studying for and achieving a N4 course award along with one or more units at N5 in that subject in S4, which will support their progression into N5 in S5. Alternatively, it may involve learners undertaking a N5 course over a 2 year period.

The point at which decisions are made about presentation level will be a matter for the school, cognisant of SQA data entry requirements, based on a range of evidence about the learner's progress.

Why has there been a need to expand the course assessment following the removal of unit assessments?

Overall assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher is currently based on a combination of unit and course assessment. Removal of the unit assessment means that the overall course assessment has to be strengthened to ensure appropriate course coverage. This will also ensure that courses maintain their current breadth and SCQF points.

The changes will allow SQA to remove duplication of assessment and to reduce the overall volume of assessment within each course, giving more space for learning and teaching. As a result, updated and condensed National 5 course documents will be available for teachers at the end of April 2017. The course aims, content and rationale are not changing. The skills and knowledge currently addressed through unit assessment will simply be incorporated in the course assessment.

The starting point for this process was to consider how to extend the course assessment to take account of the removal of units. Some activities had been placed into the units as they were more easily assessed within the classroom. Units were also used to ensure breadth of learning. As a result of their removal, SQA have had to ensure these activities and topics are captured in the overall course assessment through coursework and/or in the question paper.

An example of this is in Music where composing is currently assessed in the units and is a vital aspect of the course. The best way to assess this skill is by adding it to the course assessment.

In other cases, such as Practical Woodwork or Hospitality: Practical Cookery, the current course assessment comprised 100% coursework. However, assessment of the underpinning knowledge and understanding occurred through unit assessment. To sample that knowledge and understanding, it is logical to add a small question paper while ensuring that coursework still forms 70% of the final grade.

For other subject areas, the intention is to extend the existing question paper to sample more of the course content and maintain the breadth of learning of the

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current course. For example in History, an extended question paper will require a sample from all four issues, instead of a sample of three from four.

Why do the changes tend to show an increase in weighting towards the final exam?

One of principles of Curriculum for Excellence is about ensuring breadth, depth and application of learning. This is carried through into the assessment approach for each course through the rationale for the course and the aims of learning for each course. The enhancements that SQA has announced to National 5 subjects took account of the skills and knowledge previously assessed within units and sought to preserve the integrity of the qualification in terms of validity, reliability, practicability and equity.

There was not an automatic expansion to the exam; each National Course was looked at separately. In several subjects, including high uptake subjects such as English, Modern Languages and Music, there has been no change to the exam and instead the enhancement is in the coursework.

In mainly content-based subjects, such as business subjects, social subjects, Sciences and Maths, the units provided an assurance of breadth of coverage of content and skills. For example, in Economics the units ensured coverage of content around micro-economic issues, macro-economic issues and global/international aspects. The coursework (assignment) in these areas is more about personalisation and choice (in Economics, the candidate selects a specific economic topic/issue of interest, researches it, analyses key features, and presents their findings). In these cases, following the removal of units, there is a need to sample more breadth of content overall in the course assessment. The obvious way to do that is to extend the question paper.

In general, exams are often used to assess breadth, some aspects of depth, ability to integrate learning across the course and the ability to apply learning, knowledge, understanding and skills to new problems - for example, to look at a range of data generated from an experiment, interpret the data, do calculations, and draw conclusions. Within the current model of courses, breadth was often supplemented by the units of the course. Once the units are removed, the question paper needs to be extended to ensure that breadth of learning is retained and to guard against any narrowing of learning.

Within some subjects the weightings of exam to coursework have remained unchanged – for example, the Sciences have retained current weightings of 80:20 (exam:assignment). In other subject areas there has been some small adjustments to the weightings – for example, within the social subjects the weightings have moved from 75:25 to 80:20 (exam:assignment).

Why not increase the coursework rather than the exam?

In several subjects, including high uptake subjects such as English, Modern Languages and Music, there has been no change to the exam and instead the enhancement is in the coursework. This is because some specific skills were

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previously assessed only in the units – for example, talk in English, discursive writing in Modern Languages and composing in Music. The review process confirmed that the development of these skills is still essential to meeting the aims of the National Course and they therefore needed to become part of the course assessment. As these skills often involve drafting, testing, reflection, presentation and other process-based classroom activities, they are not suitable to be assessed in an exam. They were, therefore, included in the coursework requirements of the subject and the exam arrangements were left unchanged.

In many subjects coursework is used to allow candidates to study something of their own choice in depth - for example, in Sciences or social subjects. Extending the coursework in these areas becomes a much bigger task and one that would lead to increased workload for candidates and teachers.

Who was involved in discussions about the changes?

The Deputy First Minister (DFM) announced in September 2016 the decision to reduce workload for young people and teachers by removing units and unit assessment from the National Courses. This was a result of concerns being raised by teachers and young people about the workload associated with the units in courses. These issues were also highlighted in SQA's research into how the new qualifications were performing, which identified concerns with the units, as well as other factors across the education system contributing to workload for teachers and young people.

The decision to remove unit assessments was agreed with both the Assessment and National Qualifications Group and the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board. The Assessment and National Qualifications Group was established by the Scottish Government in January 2016 to consider and make recommendations on: the policy framework within which national qualifications are developed and operate; and assessment policy and practice from 3 to 18, and the best means of supporting improvements. The group is made up of representatives from organisations involved in Scottish education: Scottish Government, Education Scotland, SQA, COSLA, ADES, GTCS, NPFS, SLS, AHDS, EIS, SSTA, NASUWT, Further and Higher Education representatives and other education experts.

How did the SQA decide on the changes that had to be made?

Since the DFM's announcement, SQA has been planning the necessary structural changes to the courses and course assessment. The common goal is to reduce workload for candidates and staff, while maintaining the standards and integrity of the qualifications.

The advice of the professional associations and other stakeholders on the Ministerial Assessment and National Qualifications Group was that the changes to National 5 needed to be made quickly to address workload concerns. The timescales within which SQA is being asked to make these changes are challenging. Broad consultation with the profession about the changes to subjects was simply not possible against the timescales. SQA has therefore used its National Qualifications Support Teams for each subject. These teams are made up of subject teachers,

lecturers, professional associations and Higher Education representatives. SQA has used these groups to help explore options and decide on the best way forward. SQA has also informally engaged with a range of subject teachers on the proposals and in some cases modified proposals based on their feedback.

How will these changes be reflected in Insight?

The Insight Project Board is aware of these changes, including the extension of grade D. The project team will consider what modifications may be necessary to ensure the Insight tool is able to present an accurate and consistent picture of young peoples' attainment.

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Presumption of mainstreaming – guidance review

Background

1. The original guidance on presumption of mainstreaming was first published in 2002, following the establishment of the presumption of mainstreaming in Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act (2000) and its exceptions. The guidance has not been updated in the interim.
2. The Additional Support for Learning Act (2004), changed the basis for the provision of support to pupils. Statistical information between 2005-2010 reported on pupils learning in special schools and those receiving formally planned support through co-ordinated support plans and Individualised Educational Programmes only.
3. Since 2010, the statistical collection has included those receiving additional support in any setting and via any planning mechanism (including child's plans and other plans). This ensures that the statistical picture reflected more accurately the support provided to pupils. This change has meant that a greater number of pupils with additional support needs are now reported on. Crucially, these needs have always been catered for and the statistics fully recognise children and young people have an additional support needs.

The review of presumption of mainstreaming guidance

4. The review of the presumption of mainstreaming guidance seeks to recognise the strengths of inclusion and set out the practical steps that can be taken to ensure your school, your class and your approach is as inclusive as possible.
5. It also recognises the role of specialist provision, and the role that special schools and extended support provision can play. Whilst 95% of children with additional support needs learn in mainstream education, the services provided to those with the most complex additional support needs is necessary.
6. Finally, the review proposes a definition of inclusion that sits within the wider strategic vision for Scottish education of Equity and Excellence for each and every child and young person. This definition is:

'Education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. An inclusive approach, with an appreciation of diversity and an ambition for all to achieve to their full potential, is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all. **Inclusion is the cornerstone to help us achieve equity and excellence in education for all of our children and young people.'**

Your influence

7. To aid our development of the guidance, particularly in the final section on practical implementation, we need a better idea of what would be most helpful for you. To facilitate discussion, we have 3 simple questions:
 - a. What do you want to see in this guidance?
 - b. What would you not want to see in this guidance?
 - c. Are there any practical measures that would help you in your day-to-day work? (an example of this might be a service like Enquire, where parents and

teachers can access the information that they need, for example on accessible outdoor learning opportunities, from a knowledgeable provider).

Learning Directorate, Scottish Government, Feb 2017

Progression from the Broad General Education (BGE) to the Senior Phase – updated guidance

This guidance is for schools, local authorities and their partners. It has been produced as an action from the Ministerial Assessment and National Qualifications Group. It is designed to help to support improvements in learning for young people and secure reductions in workload for teachers.

The Working Group highlighted that assessment-related workload has often become unacceptably high for both teachers and learners. There are a number of contributory factors.

Some of these factors relate to the design and operation of the National Qualifications. These issues are being addressed by the SQA. Following actions detailed in the Working Group report, the SQA has also published [detailed subject-by-subject plans for changes in 2016-17 and beyond](#).

However, the Group's report highlighted other key factors that are contributing to workload and this note directly addresses these. It focuses on :

- curriculum and programme design;
- assessment in the Broad General Education (BGE) phase; and
- arrangements for tracking and monitoring learners' progress

This guidance builds on a range of previously-published [advice](#) and [guidance](#), including [CfE Briefings 6, 7 and 8](#) on Progression from the Broad General Education to the Senior Phase. However, this update now takes full account of good practice and lessons learned from experience of implementing the new Senior Phase in schools and local authorities across Scotland.

As schools and local authorities make use of the flexibility they now have in designing learning, teaching and assessment arrangements (including the number of courses learners typically follow at each year in the Senior Phase), great care needs to be taken to ensure that these local arrangements do not create unnecessary workload demands for teachers or learners.

Schools should be clear that applying this guidance will assist directly in reducing workload. All schools have a responsibility to do so.

1. Transition from the Broad General Education to the Senior Phase

During S3, schools should prepare young people to make a smooth transition from BGE Experiences and Outcomes into courses leading to qualifications, [other awards](#) and work-based learning, as appropriate to their needs. New National Qualifications have been designed to build on the Experiences and Outcomes of the BGE.

In many cases, key aspects of learning at CfE third and fourth levels during the BGE will be directly relevant to learning which will need to be demonstrated to gain a qualification. Schools should take this explicitly into account in planning their BGE provision.

In S3, young people should therefore have opportunities to:

- complete their entitlement to a BGE, including all of the Experiences and Outcomes to third level, across all curriculum areas;
 - specialise and extend their learning into fourth curriculum level Experiences and Outcomes and beyond wherever they are capable of doing so; and
- experience learning and make progress which paves the way to success in qualifications and other learning in the Senior Phase. (Learning in S3 can and should contribute to the '160 hours of directed study' associated with a national qualification – see below.)

2. Ensuring appropriate course choice and presentation

Schools must ensure that young people are placed at the right course level as they enter the Senior Phase. It is not appropriate to start young people off on a course leading to a qualification they are not expected to achieve. Equally, it is important not to slow learners' progress by placing them on courses at too low a level.

- Schools need to use robust assessment information from the BGE to ensure that learners make appropriate choices and are presented at the right level for qualifications. This will avoid excessive workload for teachers and unnecessary assessments for learners.
- Courses for National 5 qualifications, in particular, are built on the assumption that learners have achieved relevant CfE fourth level Experiences and Outcomes before beginning the N5 course. Schools should take careful account of this, when options for S4 are being agreed. Choosing courses at N4 or less advanced levels will be more appropriate for some, potentially with further progression to higher levels thereafter.
- Schools should not present young people for the N4 Added Value Unit if they are predicted to achieve well at N5 level. Doing so adds unnecessarily to the workload of both teachers and learners.

3. Numbers of courses in S4 and beyond

Concern has sometimes been expressed that Curriculum for Excellence places tight constraints on the numbers of courses which can be studied by young people in S4. This relates in part to the fact that SQA National Courses are based on 160 hours of directed

study and a mistaken assumption that no learning occurring before S4 can contribute towards this notional time allocation.

Although formal qualification courses will not begin before S4, learning which takes place in the BGE can and should contribute to learning for qualifications. This can and should be done without compromising the entitlement to a Broad General Education in S3.

- The number and range of courses undertaken in S4, S5 or S6 is a matter for schools, local authorities, parents and young people to decide, taking into account young people's individual needs.
- **Schools should provide learning in S3 which rounds off effectively the BGE phase and, at the same time, covers learning which will prepare young people well for qualification courses they may follow in S4.**
- This means that some National 4 or National 5 Unit Outcomes or Assessment Standards may well be overtaken in S3.
- During S4, learners may be studying for some qualifications which will result in presentation at the end of S4. They may equally continue studying over two years in some subjects until the end of S5 before being presented for a qualification. The same may apply across S5 and S6, with qualifications being taken over one or two years.
- **With this in mind, schools should plan for young people to progress smoothly on to following anything between six and eight qualification courses from S4 onwards, with certification of each over a mix of one or two years, as appropriate to their individual needs.**
- In all cases, smart and streamlined tracking and monitoring of young people's progress is essential to ensure that they are making appropriate progress for the qualification by key dates.

4. Progression pathways to meet learners' needs

Schools should ensure that young people's needs, interests and aspirations inform the decisions that are made about the progression pathways they follow through BGE and into the Senior Phase.

- Effective approaches to assessment and to tracking and monitoring young people's progress throughout the BGE and Senior Phase are essential to informing these decisions.

Schools should be using the flexibility of Curriculum for Excellence to develop new progression pathways to ensure they can meet the needs and aspirations of all young people, to raise attainment and to ensure all their learners move into sustained and positive destinations beyond the Senior Phase. That includes developing new pathways to motivate groups of learners who may have been less well served by secondary school provision in the past.

- To meet the range of young people's needs, the Senior Phase curriculum should be developed with partners which may include neighbouring schools, colleges and other education providers. This will help to ensure a broader range of progression pathways and access to a wider range of qualifications, including those with a direct application to employment.

Where schools are designing provision to meet the needs of individuals or groups of learners with additional support needs they will often develop more customised curricular programmes through the BGE and Senior Phase, designed to ensure these learners receive their full entitlement and achieve their potential.

5. Effective assessment 3-18

Schools must have effective assessment throughout the BGE, as well as in the Senior Phase. This is central to effective decision-making about preparation and presentation for qualifications. As part of our commitment to supporting implementation of the National Improvement Framework, Education Scotland is currently providing advice and support for local authorities and schools to improve teachers' confidence in assessing learners' achievement of CfE levels in [literacy and numeracy](#).

By the end of 2016, Education Scotland will provide similar advice and support on assessing whether learners have achieved a CfE level in particular curriculum areas. This will help ensure teachers and parents have the right information available to ensure young people are following appropriate progression pathways as they move from S3 into the Senior Phase.

6. Effective self-evaluation

Schools and local authorities should use the newly revised [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) to evaluate their work, to support professional discussion and reflection, and to help plan for improvements.

In particular, Quality Indicator 2.2 Curriculum has key features of effective practice and challenge questions which will help with planning, evaluating and improving the curriculum.

* Below are full URL to the above links

Title	Link
SQA	http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45625.html
Building the Curriculum 3	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/building_the_curriculum_3_jms3_tcm4-489454.pdf
Building the Curriculum 4	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/BtC4_Skills_tcm4-569141.pdf
Curriculum for Excellence Briefing 6	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CfEBriefing6BG_EtoSeniorPhase_tcm4-742053.pdf
Curriculum for Excellence Briefing 7	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CfEBriefing7_tcm4-744859.pdf
Curriculum for Excellence Briefing 8	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CfEBriefing8_tcm4-748091.PDF
Amazing Things	http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/resources/amazing-things.htm
NIF materials - literacy & numeracy	https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/assess7-achievement-of-a-level.aspx
How good is our school	http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533.pdf