

Tuesday 6 August 2019

Scottish Qualifications Authority publishes results for 2019 National Courses and Awards

- *The number of Course entries for National Qualifications is 636,085 representing an increase of 1,754 compared to 2018 (634,331)*
- *Attainment of SQA Awards, National Progression Awards, and National Certificates has increased from 41,526 in 2018 to 44,744 in 2019*
- *A-C attainment rate for National 5 (78.2%) has increased by 0.7 percentage points compared to 2018 (77.4%)*
- *A-C attainment rate at Higher (74.8%) has decreased by 2.0 percentage points compared to last year (76.8%) and Advanced Higher (79.4%) has decreased by 1.1 percentage points compared to 2018 (80.5%)*
- *More than 60,000 candidates receiving their results by text and/or e-mail*

The Scottish Qualifications Authority today (Tuesday 6 August 2019) announces the results for National Courses, and a range of vocational qualifications for 2019.

Results certificates have been sent to more than 133,000 candidates across Scotland. Candidates have been rewarded for completing coursework, exams and unit assessments for the 2018-19 academic year in a wide range of qualifications and subjects at all levels.

These qualifications include Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers for candidates in schools and colleges. In addition, a range of vocational qualifications such as SQA Awards, Skills for Work courses, National Progression Awards and National Certificates are also being certificated today. These form part of a broad offering of qualifications which support learners to progress into employment, training, further and higher education.

Throughout the year, SQA also awards a number of qualifications such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), which supports the Scottish Government in both its youth employment strategy, and its wider economic strategy. Our qualifications are also being taken as part of Foundation Apprenticeships, which are available to school learners, allowing them to complete elements of a Modern Apprenticeship and spend part of their school week at college and with a local employer.

Fiona Robertson, SQA's Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer, said:

“First and foremost, I would like to congratulate each and every candidate who received results today. Qualifications play an important role in allowing young people to pursue their ambitions, whether that be continued education and training, or entering into employment.

“At the SQA we're encouraged by learners achieving awards through a wide variety of routes. We are proud to offer a broad range of qualifications which ensures educational attainment is as accessible as possible, and provides learners with the right skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of employers, training providers and educators.

“Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all our staff and our appointees who work all year to ensure the smooth and successful delivery of SQA courses, culminating in results day.”

Summary of entries, attainment and attainment rates for each National Qualification type, 2019 and 2018

SCQF level	National Qualification	2019 Entries	2019 Attainment	2019 Attainment rate	2018 Entries	2018 Attainment	2018 Attainment Rate
SCQF 2	National 2†	2,070	1,596	77.1%	2,077	1,655	79.7%
SCQF 3	National 3†	19,285	16,958	87.9%	17,646	16,138	91.5%
	Skills for Work†	13	0	0.0%	11	7	63.6%
SCQF 4	National 4†	104,866	92,845	88.5%	106,033	96,613	91.1%
	Skills for Work†	3,698	2,869	77.6%	3,601	2,855	79.3%
SCQF 5	National 5*	288,552	225,594	78.2%	281,785	218,201	77.4%
	Skills for Work†	8,023	6,633	82.7%	6,632	5,702	86.0%
SCQF 6	Higher*	185,914	138,972	74.8%	191,951	147,419	76.8%
	Skills for Work†	204	160	78.4%	264	215	81.4%
SCQF 7	Advanced Higher*	23,460	18,627	79.4%	24,331	19,585	80.5%
Total		636,085			634,331		
	Scottish Baccalaureate*	157	109	69.4%	155	120	77.4%

*For National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, which are graded, the attainment and attainment rate is based on Grade A-C attainment. The Scottish Baccalaureate attainment is based on the total number of passes (“Distinction” or “Pass” outcomes).

†For National 2 to National 4, and Skills for Work courses, which are ungraded, the attainment and attainment rate is based on entries which have resulted in a pass.

English

There were 45,593 entries at National 5 in 2019, an increase from 44,477 in 2018 with an A-C attainment rate of 86.3% representing an increase from 84.8% last year. At Higher level there were 35,461 entries this year compared to 36,185 in 2018, with an A-C attainment rate of 73.2%, a decrease from 75.9% in 2018.

Mathematics

There were 41,586 entries at National 5, which is in line with 2018's figure (41,590), with an A-C attainment rate of 65.5%, an increase of 0.8 percentage points compared to the 64.7% observed last year. At Higher level there were 18,626 entries this year compared to 18,753 in 2018, with an A-C attainment rate of 72.4% compared to 74.5% in 2018.

Applications of Mathematics (Formerly Lifeskills Mathematics)

There were 4,458 entries at National 5, compared to 2,482 in 2018, representing an increase of 79.6%. An A-C attainment rate of 58.5% represented an increase from 57.8% last year.

National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates (NCs)

Attainment figures for National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates (NCs) are also included. In total, 13,136 NPAs and 4,873 NCs have been achieved compared to 12,474 NPAs and 6,201 NCs in 2018. NPAs are designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas, such as Construction and Childcare.

National Certificates are designed to prepare people for employment, career development or progression to more advanced study in areas such as Sound Production and Fabrication and Welding Engineering.

SQA Awards

Attainment figures for SQA Awards are included in the statistics. In total, 26,735 have been achieved in 2019, compared to 22,851 in 2018, representing an increase of 17.0%.

SQA Awards are designed to develop and provide evidence of specific skills that will help learners in the world of work and everyday life. Awards include Modern Languages for Life and Work, Employability, Scottish Studies and Enterprise.

Summary of attainment for Awards, National Progression Awards and National Certificates, at each SCQF level, 2015 to 2019

	Attainment				
	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
SCQF level 1					
Awards	439	386	290	283	207
SCQF level 2					
Awards	1,004	664	1,167	750	493
National Progression Awards	69	121	88	77	64
SCQF level 3					
Awards	4,428	3,937	4,303	3,863	3,205
National Certificates	7	0	1	18	7
National Progression Awards	100	142	177	135	119
SCQF level 4					
Awards	10,292	9,851	10,834	11,391	9,673
National Certificates	223	213	345	371	273
National Progression Awards	4,371	4,759	4,803	4,958	4,336
SCQF level 5					
Awards	5,184	3,755	3,662	2,907	1,952
National Certificates	1,809	2,450	2,691	4,103	3,219
National Progression Awards	5,252	4,604	4,395	4,958	4,120
SCQF level 6					
Awards	5,388	4,258	3,523	2,710	1,305
National Certificates	2,834	3,538	3,585	4,920	3,989
National Progression Awards	3,344	2,848	1,619	1,611	969
TOTAL	44,744	41,526	41,483	43,055	33,931

Skills for Work

Skills for Work courses – available across SCQF levels 2-6, are also included in the attainment statistics. In total, 9,662 Skills for Work courses have been achieved, representing an increase of 10.1%.

Skills for Work courses focus on the world of work and the generic employability skills needed for success in the workplace. The courses offer opportunities for learners to acquire these critical generic employability skills through a variety of practical experiences that are linked to a particular vocational area such as construction, hairdressing, and hospitality.

Young people taking one of these Skills for Work courses will normally spend some of their time at a local college, other training provider or employer.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Entries	11,938	10,508	10,341	10,008	11,883
Attainment	9,662	8,779	8,665	8,513	9,980
Attainment rate	80.9%	83.5%	83.8%	85.1%	84.0%

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

Candidates with active MySQA accounts will receive their results by text message and/or by email from 8am on Tuesday 6 August. This year, nearly 61,000 candidates have opted for this service, a 3.4% increase from last year (2018 – 59,000 candidates). All candidates will receive their certificates by post. Candidates anticipating their results by text and/or email are reminded that:

- they should ensure their mobile phones are charged, have credit on them, and that the correct phone number has been registered;
- email delivery may take longer depending on the candidate's email service provider and they should check their spam folder in case the email has gone there

2019 results

Percentage point changes in this document are calculated by subtracting the figures from the respective years prior to any rounding. The presented figures are then rounded to one decimal place.

In academic year 2018-19, there are a number of National Courses (National 2 to National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers) taken by candidates in schools and colleges.

Nationals replaced Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications as part of the evolution of qualifications and represent a natural continuation in the way pupils have learned under CfE, as they have moved from their broad general education, in S1 to S3, through to their senior phase, in S4 to S6.

The National Courses are designed to test a broader range of knowledge and skills in learners, to enable them to be better prepared for the modern world – whether moving onto further or higher education, training or employment.

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications include final exams and course assessments to allow candidates to demonstrate a broad range of skills and knowledge.

In addition to the Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers, SQA provides a suite of qualifications that meet a wider range of learners' interest and abilities, including awards in areas such as leadership, employability, and personal finance, as well as a range of Skills for Work courses and National Certificates. These are part of a broadening of the curriculum and also support the Developing the Young Workforce programme.

We have also certificated 25,253 Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas, between 01 July 2018 up to and including 30 June 2019. Many of the Higher National Diplomas will be used to gain entry to university courses, via the UCAS admissions process, or, to prepare people for entry into employment.

Our qualifications are also being taken as part of Foundation Apprenticeships, in a range of subjects including engineering, financial services, information technology, and social services.

This wide range of qualifications will help young people reach their full potential as they progress from their broad general education through to college, university, apprenticeships, other learning, training and employment.

Presentation of attainment statistics

SQA presents the data on candidate attainment by [SCQF level](#). The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is the flexible 'ladder' of qualifications, which allows candidates to progress at a pace and in a direction to suit their needs.

The data will provide a breakdown of how many candidates have taken each qualification at which stage of their education, for example in S4 of secondary school or at a Further Education College.

For National Courses that are not graded - for example National 4 - the total attainment figure in each subject will be provided along with the total number of entries for the subject. National 4 entries include those awarded through the Recognising Positive Achievement (RPA) process.

For National Courses that are graded - for example National 5 - the total attainment figure for each subject will be provided, A-D and No Award rates. In addition, the total number of entries for the subject will be provided.

As a result of the changes made to the assessment of Higher courses in 2019, units and unit assessments were removed and each course assessment was adjusted accordingly. The standard of the qualifications has not changed. Full details of the changes to each Higher course are available on the SQA website - <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/78398.html>

In addition, in 2019, grade D has been extended for all Higher courses, from a notional 45–49% to a notional 40–49%. This reflects a similar change at National 5 last year.

As a consequence, grade D attainment (and No Award results) from 2017/18 and previous years are not directly comparable.

The extension of grade D is intended to recognise the achievement of a wider group of candidates at SCQF level 6.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries are the marks needed to achieve a particular grade for a course. We take our responsibility to uphold the high standards of Scottish qualifications very seriously, and we review the grade boundaries each year to ensure that exam results are fair and consistent for candidates across Scotland, year on year. In instances where assessments are judged to have been harder or easier for candidates than intended, grade boundaries will then be adjusted accordingly.

Each year after certificates have been sent out to candidates, we post information on our website to show what grade boundary decisions were made for each subject.

Exceptional Consideration Service

This service ran prior to results being published. If a school or college believed that a candidate suffered as a result of exceptional circumstances (such as bereavement or illness during an exam) staff could inform SQA of the circumstances and submit alternative evidence of attainment demonstrated by the candidate, which would be considered. Alternative evidence could be sourced from coursework, class assessments or mock exams.

Post Results Service

This service runs after candidates have received their certificates. If a school or college is concerned by a candidate's result, they can request a clerical check and/or a marking review of the candidate's material which is submitted to SQA for marking. If this check/review of the marking of the candidate's material, leads to a change of grade (either up or down), this will be amended on the system and a new certificate will be issued to the candidate. There will be no consideration of 'alternative evidence' with this service. If the original grade remains unchanged after the check/review of the marking of the

candidate's material, the school or college will be charged.

More information on these services can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices.

Developing the Young Workforce

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) initiative looks to enhance the options on offer and support the journey to positive destinations for young people. DYW is aligned to Curriculum for Excellence.

SQA is uniquely placed to support Scotland's young workforce by working together with training providers, employers, colleges and schools to ensure young people have the skills and qualifications employers are looking for. Find out more – www.sqa.org.uk/journeys

SQA Candidate Advice Line

SQA's Candidate Advice Line will be available from 8am to 6pm on Tuesday 6 August and from 8.30am to 5pm on Wednesday 7 to Friday 9 August. Candidates can ring 0345 279 1000 for advice on the content and layout of their certificate.

SDS Results Helpline

Skills Development Scotland is offering a helpline for candidates who have questions about their next move – 0808 100 8000.

For further information from the SQA Communications team, please contact

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