

Assessment in a Nutshell: National Qualifications

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) National Qualifications are:

- for young people in S4, S5, S6 and college as part of their Senior Phase in Curriculum for Excellence
- offered in a wide range of subjects and at different levels
- designed to progress learning. Most learners start their journey towards formal qualifications with National 4 and/or National 5 courses progressing from the Level 3 and 4 Experiences and Outcomes in the Broad General Education. Some learners may start at National 1, 2 or 3, or others may progress directly to Higher
- designed and quality assured by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and delivered by schools and colleges, in accordance with SQA guidelines and requirements.

Curriculum for Excellence National Qualifications: Assessment

Assessment is how learners, parents, schools, colleges and the SQA know that pupils have demonstrated the required knowledge and skills to gain their National Qualifications. The table below sets out the CfE National Qualifications and their required types of assessment.

	NATIONAL 1	NATIONAL 2	NATIONAL 3	NATIONAL 4	NATIONAL 5	CfE HIGHER
Unit Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Added Value Unit Assessment				✓		
Course Assessment					✓	✓

Unit Assessment ●●●●●●●

Unit Assessments are required for all National Qualifications. The number of units will vary depending on subject/level.

- They assess the learning within each subject during the course of the year
- Units are assessed as pass or fail by the school/centre, following SQA quality assurance to meet national standards
- They ensure that required skills, knowledge and understanding have been achieved
- Unit Assessments are carried out by schools/colleges in accordance with SQA guidelines and requirements
- One of seven methods of assessment can be used (see right).

Added Value Unit Assessment ●

Added Value Unit Assessments are required for CfE National 4 qualifications (together with Unit Assessments), and assess the application of learning across the course.

- Units are assessed as pass or fail by the school/centre, following SQA quality assurance to meet national standards
- They ensure that required skills, knowledge and understanding have been achieved
- Added Value Unit Assessments are set by the SQA and will use one of the seven methods of assessment (see right)
- They are carried out by schools/colleges in accordance with SQA guidelines and requirements.

Course Assessment ●●

Course Assessments form part of National 5 and Higher qualifications (together with Unit Assessments), and assess the application of learning across the course.

- They usually consist of two components from the seven methods of assessment (see above right). Many courses have an Assignment and a Question Paper (exam) which are marked by the SQA. For practical reasons, other courses have components which are assessed by schools/colleges. A few subjects are entirely assessed by schools/colleges in accordance with SQA guidelines and requirements
- They are graded from A to D or as No Award
- They ensure that required skills, knowledge and understanding have been achieved
- They are set by the SQA.

7 Methods of Assessment

Assignment
Case Study
Practical Activity
Performance
Portfolio
Project
Question paper/test

Please note that in 2014/15 only, there are two types of available Highers - CfE Highers which articulate with National 5s and Highers from the previous curriculum. Check with your school about which Higher courses your child is taking.

Reassessment and SQA Services

Unit Assessment and National 4 Added Value Unit Assessment

- Speak to your school/college which will have an internal reassessment or appeals procedure
- SQA guidance allows one, or in exceptional circumstances, two opportunities to resubmit work for reassessment.

National 5 and Higher Course Assessment

- Speak to your school/college to raise your concern and seek advice
- For internally assessed components, your school will have an internal reassessment or appeals procedure
- For final results, the SQA has replaced its appeals service with Results Services. Only schools/colleges can access these services on behalf of learners. Visit www.sqa.org.uk/resultservices for more information
- There are now two services: the Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service (bereavement, serious illness etc) which requires evidence to be submitted before the results are issued; and the Post-Results Service (a clerical check or a marking review) which can be requested after results are issued. Grades can go up or down.

Results

- National certificates and results are sent out by post by the SQA in early August
- Learners can also sign up to receive their results by text and/or email through MySQA (www.mysqa.org.uk)
- Certificates show both courses and units that have been passed
- Units passed by the learner will appear on certificates, even if the overall course is not passed
- National 1, 2, 3, 4 courses will be recorded as Pass on the certificate; National 5 and Higher courses will be graded A to D
- Grades A to C are a Pass; D recognises achievement
- Details of courses taken but not passed are given in the covering letter that accompanies the certificate.

For Further Information on SQA National Qualifications:

Visit the SQA website: www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment and www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects. The SQA exam timetable is available at www.sqa.org.uk/timetable

The National Parent Forum of Scotland's summary guides to Curriculum for Excellence National Qualifications (Nationals and revised Highers) are available at www.parentforumscotland.org

The series also includes Skills in a Nutshell and Progression in a Nutshell. See also our Learner Journey which sets out the levels of Curriculum for Excellence.

Also visit Education Scotland's Parentzone www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone

Additional Support for Learning

Information about Assessment Arrangements

Young people with additional support needs may be eligible for tailored assessment arrangements such as extra time, use of a computer, digital question papers/tests.

- Speak to your school/college about your child's eligibility and about assessment arrangements
- Visit the SQA's assessment arrangement pages at www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements
- Visit CALL Scotland's website (www.callscotland.org.uk) for information on using technology to support learning
- Visit www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk for details about digital assessment
- Contact Enquire, the national additional support for learning advice organisation, via their website www.enquire.org.uk

Other SQA Awards and Qualifications

Awards give young people more opportunities to demonstrate their achievements and receive recognition for their skills in specialist areas. Many awards are available, including Personal Development, Leadership, Internet Safety and Personal Finance.

Information can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/awards, www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork and www.sqa.org.uk/npa

