

# NATIONALS IN A NUTSHELL

The National Parent Forum of Scotland Summary of Assessment

National  
Qualifications  
ASSESSMENT

## Assessment in a Nutshell: National Qualifications

### 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 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.

ITEM 11.1

### 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 National Qualifications and their required types of assessment.

|                             | NATIONAL 1 | NATIONAL 2 | NATIONAL 3 | NATIONAL 4 | NATIONAL 5 |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 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 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 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

# NATIONALS IN A NUTSHELL

The National Parent Forum of Scotland Summary of Assessment

National  
Qualifications  
ASSESSMENT

## 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 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/resultsservices](http://www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices) 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](http://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 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.

## 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)
- Visit CALL Scotland's website ([www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)) for information on using technology to support learning
- Visit [www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk](http://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](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

## Other 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/awards), [www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork](http://www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork) and [www.sqa.org.uk/npa](http://www.sqa.org.uk/npa)



For more detailed information on the National Qualifications and Assessment:

Visit the SQA website: [www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment) and [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects)

The SQA exam timetable is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/timetable](http://www.sqa.org.uk/timetable)



The National Parent Forum of Scotland's 'Nationals in a Nutshell' summarise National Qualifications. They are available at [www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)

Also visit Education Scotland's Parentzone [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone)



the National  
Parent  
Forum of Scotland

[www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)  
[enquiries@parentforumscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@parentforumscotland.org)

 [parentforumscotland](https://www.facebook.com/parentforumscotland)  
 [parentforumscot](https://twitter.com/parentforumscot)



## Top Tips for Learners

- Make sure that course content information is complete and is organised into Units (topics)
- Plan work so that deadlines are met comfortably
- Make a realistic and achievable revision timetable for exams and include breaks and rewards
- Stick to the revision timetable
- Work out how you learn best: reading aloud? Recording and playing back information? Explaining topics to others? Writing out key facts? Being tested by others?
- If you find gaps in your understanding or knowledge, ask your teachers
- Do practice questions and papers under timed conditions and ask your teachers to mark them and give you feedback
- Keep healthy with plenty of nutritious food, water, fresh air, exercise and sleep
- The SQA offers online study guides to support preparation for exams at [www.sqa.org.uk/studyguides](http://www.sqa.org.uk/studyguides)
- The National Parent Forum website at [www.parentforumsotland.org](http://www.parentforumsotland.org) has more revision tips for learners.



## Supporting Learners

Learners are entitled to receive appropriate support to help them reach their potential. Schools do this in a variety of ways to suit the needs of young people:

- Personal learning planning
- Study groups
- Homework clubs
- Drop-in revision sessions
- Online support sessions
- Quiet areas.

Some young people are entitled to tailored strategies, plans and assessment arrangements where there is evidence of an additional support need. These strategies may include:

- Input from a range of professionals
- Photocopied or digital course notes
- Extra adult support with learning
- Use of ICT for typing and spellchecking
- Extra time for assessments
- Visual supports (eg large typeface; coloured overlays)
- Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)



**Communicating with parents is an essential part of supporting learners**

## POINTERS FOR PARENTS & PUPILS

### RESOURCES FOR LEARNING & REVISING FOR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS



## WELCOME

We hope that parents/carers and young people will find this guide to learning and revising for National Qualifications in the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence useful. It will help you to:

- ▶ Find out more about the new National Qualifications
- ▶ Think about learning and revision
- ▶ Discover resources to support learning and revision

With very best wishes,

Iain Ellis

CHAIR, NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND

## The National Qualifications

National Qualifications are designed and quality assured by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and are delivered by schools and colleges.

For more information on the National Qualifications, visit:

[www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents)  
[www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforyoungpeople)



View our 'Nationals in a Nutshell' at [www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org) for summaries of the course requirements for National 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 qualifications.



## Essential Information

▶ Ask your school/college for deadlines and important dates for completion of coursework or tests. These may be spread throughout the year.

### National Qualifications are comprised of Units (topics)

Units must be passed to gain National Qualifications. These are assessed by schools/colleges, to SQA specifications. Units can be assessed in different ways during the year - pieces of work undertaken at school or at home may count towards assessment.

- Ask your school/college for course descriptions, information about Units (topics) and Unit Assessments
- Information on course content, organised by subjects, can be found under 'Course Specification' on the SQA website at [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects)
- Course content is available in commercially-produced revision guides; BBC Bitesize ([www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)) also covers material relevant to some Units.



**National 4 qualifications also have an Added Value Unit which must be passed**

This is assessed by schools and colleges, in accordance with SQA guidance.



**National 5 qualifications have a Course Assessment**

For most subjects, there is a Question Paper (exam). Question Papers are scheduled in the SQA's exam timetable, available at [www.sqa.org.uk/timetable](http://www.sqa.org.uk/timetable). Most subjects also have another assessment component (eg an assignment or a portfolio), with deadlines well in advance of exams.

- Ask at your school/college for more information about Course Assessments
- See the National Parent Forum of Scotland's 'Nationals in a Nutshell' and 'Assessment in a Nutshell' for subject and assessment information at [www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)



## FROM DR ALASDAIR ALLAN MSP

I am happy to support this very useful resource from the National Parent Forum of Scotland, which provides parents with information to help their child through the new qualifications. We all want to support Scotland's children to do the best they can, which is at the very heart of Curriculum for Excellence.

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP

MINISTER FOR LEARNING, SCIENCE AND SCOTLAND'S LANGUAGES



[www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)  
[enquiries@parentforumscotland.org](mailto:enquiries@parentforumscotland.org)  
[parentforumscotland](https://www.facebook.com/parentforumscotland)  
[parentforumscot](https://twitter.com/parentforumscot)

This leaflet has been produced by the National Parent Forum of Scotland with support from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Education Scotland January 2014

## Revision Resources for Learners



- Your school/college is your first stop. Many subject teachers will provide revision guides, clubs or drop-in sessions
- Ask your school or local librarian for research skills and tips
- The SQA has a Specimen (sample) Question Paper (exam) for each National 5 subject. The SQA recommends paying particular attention to the marking instructions. Visit [www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfesubjects) and click on the subject, National 5 and then 'Specimen Paper'
- Use search engines to find teachers' blogs with study tips eg Miss Leslie's English blog
- BBC Bitesize ([www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)) covers a range of National 4 and National 5 subjects. It has colourful material with video clips, course information and revision tests, including listening tests for English
- Check [www.parentforumsotland.org](http://www.parentforumsotland.org) for details of school websites with useful homework and revision resources
- Search 'National 5' on YouTube for teachers' revision materials

- Commercially-produced revision guides feature model question papers and/or cover core course content. Some guides are endorsed by the SQA. Ask your teachers to identify the most relevant ones for you
- SCHOLAR ([www.scholar.hw.ac.uk](http://www.scholar.hw.ac.uk)) runs free live online sessions for National 5 languages. Revision material for maths is also available; check the site regularly for new resources
- Search 'revision' on the Education Scotland website [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk) and you will find a range of subject options. Ensure that material is relevant to your courses
- Some revision materials from Standard Grade and Intermediate 2 courses may be relevant but check with your teacher before using these.

Please always check with your teachers to ensure that revision resources are appropriate for you.

### Useful Websites

[www.pianitplus.net](http://www.pianitplus.net)  
[www.learningatschool.net](http://www.learningatschool.net)  
[www.parentforumsotland.org](http://www.parentforumsotland.org)  
[www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeassessment)

