

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence provides a general education up to S3, followed by a senior phase when pupils take qualifications. There is national guidance, but schools will decide exactly what to teach. A key theme is to show how subjects can link together and that one theme can be used to teach different subjects. As such, an aim is to bring learning to life. There is also an emphasis on making sure the curriculum fits with what individual pupils need. There will be new qualifications introduced in 2013/14 and existing exams will be revised to fit in with the new curriculum.

Broad, general education up to S3

Up to S3, the curriculum is divided into eight subject areas – sciences, languages, mathematics, expressive arts, social studies, technologies, health and well being and religious and moral education. In addition, health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy are to be taught across the whole curriculum. In each subject, there are a number of experiences and outcomes which describe expectations for learning. Each of the experiences and outcomes are described at five levels from ‘early’ to ‘fourth’ and learners will progress through the levels at different rates. The table below shows which school year relates to which curriculum level. All pupils will study up to the third level by the end of S3 and some will study up to the fourth level in some subjects.

Curriculum levels and stage of education

Level	Expected stage for most children and young people
early	in pre-school and primary 1
first	by the end of P4 but earlier for some
second	by the end of P7, but earlier for some
third	in S1 to S3, but earlier for some. (Fourth level is at the same level as National 4 qualifications).
fourth	

The curriculum is not about moving through the levels as quickly as possible. Achieving a ‘level’ means that a teacher thinks that a pupil has achieved a breadth of learning within that subject, has tackled some of the more challenging aspects of it and can apply what they have learnt to new situations. A pupil might work at different levels in different subjects.

Assessment and Reporting

In addition to an annual report to parents on pupils’ progress, teachers will also prepare ‘profiles’ at key points – such as at the end of P7 and S3. These profiles will sum up and report on pupils’ progress and achievements including achievements beyond the formal curriculum.

The Senior Phase in S4-S6

When pupils move into S4, most will be expected to start work on National 4 and 5 qualifications, although some might be ready to start Highers. Pupils might take up to 8 subjects in S4, but it is up to the school and local authority to decide how many subjects are offered. Young people can complete the senior phase in school, college or through work based training. There are two new qualifications and existing qualifications are being revised. The last standard grades will be run in 2012/13 but the last year of Access and Intermediate will be run alongside the new exams in 2013/14.

- A revised Access 3 qualification will replace standard grade ‘foundation.’ Access 1 and 2 will also be revised. These will be available in 2013/14.

- National 4 will start in 2013/14. It replaces standard grade 'general' and Intermediate 1. It will be based on internal assessment and will not be graded.
- National 5 will start in 2013/14. It replaces standard grade 'credit' and Intermediate 2. It will include some external assessment such as exams and coursework and will be graded.
- The revised Higher will be introduced in 2014/15 and the revised Advanced Higher in 2015/16.

Literacy and Numeracy Units will form part of English and Mathematics Courses at Access 3 and National 4 levels. At National 5, some, but not all, literacy and numeracy skills will be included within English and Mathematics Courses.

Further information

- Learning and Teaching Scotland fact files at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/toolkit/readymade.asp>
- Learning and Teaching Scotland – 'How is progress assessed' <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/howisprogressassessed/index.asp>
- Building the Curriculum 5 – A framework for assessment <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/buildingyourcurriculum/policycontext/btc/btc5.asp>
- SQA progress on developing qualifications at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34714.html>
- SPICe Briefing Curriculum for Excellence (February 2010) (n.b since this was published the separate portfolio of literacy and numeracy has been dropped but it will still be reported on in the S3 profile). <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-10/SB10-10.pdf>

SPICe
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