



Denny High School

QUALIFICATION JARGON BUSTER

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The SQA is the national body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment, and certification of qualifications other than degrees.

SQA functions are to:

- devise, develop and certify qualifications, and keep them under review
- accredit qualifications
- approve schools, colleges and other providers as being suitable for entering people for the qualifications
- arrange for, assist in, and carry out the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications
- quality assure schools, colleges and other providers which offer SQA qualifications
- issue certificates to candidates

ACC	Access Course
AH	Advanced Higher
H	Higher
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
Int1	Intermediate 1
Int2	Intermediate 2
NAB	National Assessment Bank
NQ	National Qualification
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SG	Standard Grade
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SQC	Scottish Qualifications Certificate
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications

National Qualifications (NQs)

NQs are qualifications for students in secondary schools and some are also offered in colleges of further education. NQs are Standard Grades, National Courses and National Units.

Standard Grades	National Courses / Units
	Advanced Higher
	Higher
Standard Grade – Credit	Intermediate 2
Standard Grade – General	Intermediate 1
Standard Grade – Foundation	Access 3
	Access 2
	Access 1

Standard Grades (SG)

These qualifications were introduced in the 1980s to replace Ordinary (O) Grades. They are generally studied over two years in S3 and S4 in secondary schools although some schools allow pupils to study the courses in S2 and S3 and sit the end of course exam at the end of S3.

Students generally study 8 subjects including Maths and English. There are 3 levels of study and students - usually take exams at two levels - Credit/General or General/Foundation to make sure they have the best chance to achieve the highest level possible. The level of study followed will usually be determined by a student's performance in the subject.

Level	Grade
Credit	1 or 2
General	3 or 4
Foundation	5 or 6
Course incomplete	7

National Courses / Units

National Qualifications were launched in 1999 to replace previous qualifications. These Courses or Units can also be studied by adult learners without having to complete the relevant Standard Grade first.

Access 1 / Access 2 / Access 3

Access 1 is designed for students who need considerable support with learning, while Access 2 meets the needs of students with more moderate support needs. Access 3 is comparable to Standard Grade Foundation level. Access courses are assessed by the school or college and do not involve sitting a final exam. These courses may be offered in some subjects in S3/4 and S5.

Intermediate 1 / Intermediate 2

Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 are comparable with Standard Grade at General and Credit levels respectively. These National Qualifications are usually studied in S5/6 although some schools may offer Intermediate 1 and 2 courses in S3/4 in place of the corresponding Standard Grades.

Intermediate 2 acts as a stepping stone towards Higher for students who have not studied the subject before. It is also a good course for those students who are progressing from a General or Credit pass at Standard Grade who would find studying for a Higher in one year very demanding.

Highers

These qualifications are aimed at students who have passed subjects at Standard Grade Credit level or completed Intermediate 2. Highers are the main qualifications needed for entry into University or College to study for degrees or Higher National courses (HNCs or HNDs) and are usually studied in S5/6.

Advanced Highers

Advanced Highers are aimed at students who have passed Highers and are usually taken in S6 at school or at college. They extend the skills and knowledge needed for further study or entry to the workplace.

Baccalaureate Awards

The Scottish Government has introduced Baccalaureate awards in Science and in Languages which will be first examined in 2010. These awards will require students to study successfully a group of Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications and to undertake a related interdisciplinary project in either Science or Languages.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is a national framework which brings all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework: HE, SQA National Qualifications (eg, Standard Grade, Higher), SQA Higher Nationals (HNC, HND) and SVQs.

The SCQF is designed to make the relationships between qualifications clearer, and to clarify entry and exit points and routes for progression within and across education and training sectors. It is also designed to maximise the opportunities for credit transfer.

SCQF Level	SQA National Units, Courses and Group Awards	Higher Education	Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ)
12		Doctorates	
11		Masters	SVQ 5
10		Honours degree, Graduate diploma	
9		Ordinary degree, Graduate certificate	
8		HND, DipHE	SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher	HNC, CertHE	
6	Higher		SVQ 3
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade		SVQ 2
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade		SVQ 1
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade		SVQ 1
2	Access 2		
1	Access 1		

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

The Curriculum for Excellence will reform the curriculum for all learners from 3 years to 18 years. The first examinations within the new certification structure will take place in 2014.

Flexible Curriculum and Access Arrangements

Secondary schools in Falkirk Council operate planned curriculum links across the area, including links with Forth Valley College in Falkirk. These managed 'Consortia' links allow senior students to access certain subject courses, and a developing range of vocational courses, through attendance at another school or the College.

These arrangements enable access to subjects which may not be available in every school, have a low uptake, or where the nature of the course requires specialist facilities or expertise not normally available in schools e.g. certain Advanced Highers or Construction, Psychology or Tourism courses.

Whilst the classes for these courses will be held out with the student's school, there will be additional study or preparation work that requires to be undertaken by the student as part of their school timetable, working under supervision in their school. This timetabled time is an essential study element of such courses and must be undertaken. Schools will receive progress reports from other schools or the College, and these will be shared with parents in the normal way.

Unit Assessments / External Assessments (exams)

Unit Assessments are tasks set by teachers and drawn from the National Assessment Bank (NAB) and form the internal component of the assessment of Intermediate 1 to Advanced Higher Courses. Each Unit in the course (usually 3) must be passed as well as the final external assessment (usually an exam) to gain the full course award. Grades are awarded according to performance in the final external assessment and all students in Scotland are assessed in the same way.

Useful Websites

Organisation	Address	What information will I find there?
SQA	www.sqa.org.uk	Information about Standard Grades, National Qualifications and Exams.
Parentzone	www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk	Information for parents, carers and others responsible for school age children about all education issues.
Careers Scotland	www.careers-scotland.org.uk	Careers information, advice and support for young people, parents and adults.
Continuing Education Gateway	www.planitplus.net	Information about subject choices, careers, learning and work in Scotland.
Virtual Teachers Centre	www.falkirkvtc.org.uk	Information about individual subjects and help with homework.



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