

## 9. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the new National Qualifications.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) explained that the new qualifications which were known as “Nationals” had been developed to support Curriculum For Excellence.

From August 2013 new qualifications were introduced by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The final certification of Standard grade at the end of S4 took place in August 2013. The report then provided a table showing how the new National Qualifications would replace previous and existing qualifications.

For 2013-14 the new national 2, 3, 4 and 5 qualifications were being studied by pupils in S4. Learners in S5 and S6 would complete their educations with the existing qualifications at Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher Levels.

For 2014-15 the new Higher would be added to articulate from National 5. This would run alongside Access, Intermediate and the current Higher which would be certified for the last time. The new qualifications would be available for students in S4 and S5.

For 2015-16 the new advanced higher would be available and would take over from the old Advanced Higher.

The report continued to provide information on National 4 and 5 courses and their content and included information on National Literacy Units and the Life Skills Maths that would form part of the new system. It was also noted that with regards to internal assessment teams local authorities had nominated subject specialists to form internal assessment teams and would be supported by Principal Verifiers and Teams Leaders appointed by the SQA.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) also advised that from April 2014 the new “Results Services” would replace the Appeals Service for all National Qualifications where an exam or coursework contributed to a candidate’s final grade. This would be in two parts :-

### 1) Exceptional Circumstances Consideration

This would assist candidates who could not sit an exam or whose performance in the exam could have suffered due to exceptional circumstances and whose school had relevant alternative evidence to support this.

### 2) Post-Results Service

Support would be offered where a school had concerns regarding a student’s result. It would consist of a clerical and/or

working review of the candidate's paper.

The results service would differ from the previous appeals process in that schools would no longer be able to submit evidence in an effort to improve a result. Results would only change if there had been a clerical or marking error.

In conclusion the new qualifications had been developed to support Curriculum for Excellence and the SQA had developed the new qualification which would help students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they had developed and enable them to prepare for further learning, training and employment.

### Decision

Noted the contents of the report.