

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Operations
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<u>Title of Update:</u>	Independent Review of Qualifications
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On 4th March Professor Louise Hayward published an interim report on the outcome of the early phases of her [Independent review](#) into Qualifications and Assessment. This review is one of a number of Scottish Government Reviews looking at the future of Scottish Education and seeking to build on the best elements of current practice. Other reports include The National Discussion, the Morgan Review (2020), the Career Review and the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape. Cognisance is also being taken of Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022).

Professor Haywards interim report explains the structures and the workings of the review process, the Independent Review Group and the Community Collaborative groups. Phase 3 of the review has just begun and will be reported as part of the final report to Ministers in May 2023.

As a reminder to Members, Phase 1 set out to develop a shared vision and a set of principles to inform the design of future qualifications and assessment in Scotland. The following draft vision and principles are now in place:

Vision

An inclusive and highly regarded qualifications and assessment system that inspires learning, values the diverse achievements of every learner in Scotland and supports all learners into the next phase of their lives, socially, culturally and economically.

Principles

Scotland's qualifications and assessment system should:

- 1. Recognise, value and promote the rights and achievements of every learner.*
- 2. Reflect the Scottish curriculum whilst being responsive to the changing needs of individual learners and of society, creating a positive and sustainable future for learners, their communities and the wider world.*
- 3. Develop and maintain an appropriate range of approaches to assessment including through digital mechanisms.*

4. *Be clear, coherent, credible and easily understood as part of a lifelong learning journey.*
5. *Be adaptable and subject to regular review using the vision and principles as a touchstone against which change can be tested.*
6. *Ensure that all groups* with a stake are involved in future decisions related to design, implementation and practice.*

**This should include learners, parents / carers, teachers / lecturers, national bodies, colleges, universities, employers and the voluntary sector.*

Feedback from the consultation

Phase 2 which sought views on what evidence should be gathered and how evidence might be presented in ways that would be consistent with the agreed vision. Views more commonly reported through the consultation process included that:

- The future qualification system should include evidence on achievements in individual subjects but should go beyond those to include other aspects of Curriculum for Excellence.
- The future system should consider a wider range of ways of gathering evidence related to individual subjects/programmes including for example, project work, teacher/lecturer assessment, examinations, open book tasks, end of module tests, oral examinations, digital assessments, photographic or video evidence. There should be fewer examinations but an external element to assessment was often cited as an important feature of achievement status.
- The system has to be sufficiently flexible to be able to respond to the fact that if it is to be inclusive then what constitutes achievements for individual learners may be very different. In future, this may also mean allowing learners to choose different ways of demonstrating their achievements.
- Information on learners' skills should be gathered as part of qualifications
- The relationship between academic and vocational programmes should be better integrated and the language of 'academic' and 'vocational' reconsidered
- Learners should have the opportunity to gather evidence of achievements beyond the subject/programme curriculum. These should be broadly defined to allow them to reflect different learners' interests in and out of educational settings but all learners should have the right to opportunities that would allow them to demonstrate achievements.
- Manageable ways to share and to promote consistency of standards should be part of any qualification system to ensure that the system is fair and has credibility
- There should be a type of leaving certificate to provide a more holistic record of a learners' achievements. This would offer learners an evidence base, e.g., to construct a cv, and would provide better evidence to colleges, employers and universities and could become the basis of a lifelong learning profile

- Digital approaches to assessment are the future. A profile/leaving certificate should be digital although there were concerns about the capacity of current systems. Examinations should also, in future, be digital.
- Any proposals have to be possible and thus cannot simply be added to teachers' existing workload. Careful consideration will have to be given to the practical implications of proposals made.

It is clear from the responses that there is a desire to look at the totality of achievements and to reduce the number of high stakes examinations. There is also a desire to ensure learners are engaged in more holistic assessment processes and offered an element of choice in how they show they have achieved intended outcomes. These issues mirror ideas reflected in the original intentions of CFE.

What happens next?

The evidence gathered will be used to inform the design of a model which will be tested through consultation . The main areas currently under investigation are

- Subjects and Learning Programmes
- Learning in Context /Interdisciplinary Studies
- Personal pathways

Building on all the evidence gathered to date, Professor Hayward is proposing a:

- significant reduction in external assessment, including examinations, across the senior phase;
- better and more clearly defined integration of academic and vocational qualifications;
- broadening of the evidence collected during the Senior Phase including school and college partnerships to include skills and other competencies (see model below). The qualifications could comprise of three elements – subject, personal pathways and learning in context;
- development of enhanced digital infrastructure that will enable the use of digital assessments and will also support learners to gather and present their achievements consistently no matter the educational setting within which they are based. A greater focus on digital assessments will reflect learning itself and for many will link better with the reality of the world of work and further study. The creation of a digital profile will help learners reflect on their learning and will help build a culture of learner choice. This aspect of the proposal could be made easier if Scotland had a national digital infrastructure.
- A Senior Phase Leaving Certificate, including school and college partnerships to better drawing together aspects of learning into a single form and allow a range of forms of learning to be recognised, valued and articulated. This approach will help a learner articulate their own skills and achievements while also allowing the users of qualifications, employers and further and higher education establishments to more easily develop the sense of an individual.

The final report and recommendations of the Independent Review on the Future of Qualifications and Assessment will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills by the end of May 23.

All schools will be issued with an information pack on Phase 3 of the report. Professor Hayward is asking schools and colleges to host group discussion(s) on the questions contained within Phase Three material and submit their responses by 7th April. Feedback will inform the final report to the Cabinet Secretary by the end of May 2023.