

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Children and Family Services
<u>Date:</u>	19.12.24
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Curriculum structure
<u>Report Author:</u>	Shona Milne
<u>Chief Officer:</u>	Shona Milne
<u>Contact Details:</u>	shmilne@aberdeencity.gov.uk

UPDATE:

At the November 2024 meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee, the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning committed to issuing a service update on the curriculum structure across the senior phase within secondary schools.

Building The Curriculum 3 sets out the principles for curriculum design in Scotland; *challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence; relevance.*

Further Education Scotland guidance (including *Progression from the Broad General Education (BGE) to the Senior Phase* contained [here](#)) sets out that:-

- The Broad General Education (in Secondary Schools) is from S1-S3.
- Schools have flexibility in determining the design of learning and teaching which includes the number of courses learners typically follow in the Senior Phase.
- Schools should ensure that S3 provides a smooth transition into the Senior Phase.
- Formal qualification courses will not begin before S4, but that learning which takes place in the BGE can and should contribute to learning for qualifications.

Young people in S3, who have concluded the breadth of Curriculum for Excellence fourth level outcomes, will progress in preparation for National 5 in keeping with national guidance. Each school has a unique context and there is variation of

models to support young people to achieve their full potential. This includes but is not limited to:-

Stage	Year	Range of Choice / Specialisation		
Broad General Education	S1	No Choice	Limited Choice (e.g. Electives, Language Choice)	
	S2	No Choice	Some choice within Curriculum Areas (e.g. Social Subjects, Sciences)	
	S3	No Choice	Choice of between 4 and 7 options, in addition to Core Subjects	
Senior Phase	S4	6 Courses	7 Courses	8 Courses
	S5	5 Column Options		6 Column Options
	S6	5 Column Options		6 Column Options

Each school, based on the unique context it has, has created a curriculum rationale and structure to support young people's attainment, achievement and progress.

In [How Good is Our School 4](#), the guidance document for schools around improvement, Quality Indicator 3.2 is *Raising Attainment and Achievement*. The themes contained in this area are: *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*, *Attainment over time*, *Overall quality of learners' achievement* and *Equity for all learners*.

There are a number of ways in which attainment is measured. For example, under just one of these themes, *Attainment over time*:-

- Attainment can be measured through *Breadth & Depth* (further detail [here](#))— this means the number of passes at a particular level that a young person achieves in a single year or across their Senior Phase. Typically, this might be the number of L6 passes (Higher equivalent) that a young person achieves in S5.
- Attainment can also be measured through *Attainment for All*— this converts both the level and quality of pass (e.g. A, B, C etc.) into tariff points (explanation [here](#)) and then calculates the average tariff points for a particular group. For example, the Middle 60% of young people in S4 in a particular school might achieve an average of 319 tariff points. This would be equivalent to three National 5 B passes (74 points each), one National 5 C pass (64 points) and one National 4 pass (33 points).

Education Committee Response

National 5 over two years



Aberdeen schools offering six course options in S4	Aberdeen schools offering seven course options in S4	Aberdeen schools offering eight course options in S4
6*	3*	2*
<i>Even within this, there needs to be caution applied. For some young people, additional support is provided in lieu of a column and so they might do less. For others, their column option might allow them to 'bundle' an additional qualification with another and so be doing more. In other schools, there is an opportunity to 'opt-in' to voluntary qualifications that can be attempted as part of 'core subjects' (e.g. Physical Education, Personal & Social Education, Religious Moral & Philosophical Studies).</i>		

Scottish Government guidance exists and is used alongside context to develop the curriculum model which best supports the young people in a school. There is no need to issue further guidance to schools however the central team will continue to quality assure the curriculum models adopted by schools to ensure they meet the needs of the school community.