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Council Building  
2 High Street  
Perth  
PH1 5PH

11/05/2023

Attached is a supplementary agenda for the hybrid meeting of the **Executive Sub-Committee of the Learning and Families Committee** being held in **the Council Chamber** on **Monday, 15 May 2023 at 13:00**.

If you have any queries please contact Committee Services on (01738) 475000 or email [Committee@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@pkc.gov.uk).

**THOMAS GLEN**  
Chief Executive

***Those attending the meeting are requested to ensure that all notifications are silent on their device and other devices are in silent mode.***

***Please note that the meeting will be broadcast online and recorded. The recording will be publicly available on the Council's website following the meeting.***

**Members:**

Councillor John Rebbeck (Convener)  
Councillor Steven Carr (Vice-Convener)  
Councillor Michelle Frampton (Vice-Convener)  
Councillor Liz Barrett  
Councillor Dave Cuthbert  
Councillor Noah Khogali  
Councillor Caroline Shiers



**Executive Sub-Committee of the Learning and Families Committee**

**Monday, 15 May 2023**

**AGENDA**

***MEMBERS ARE REMINDED OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO DECLARE ANY FINANCIAL OR NON-FINANCIAL INTEREST WHICH THEY MAY HAVE IN ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT.***

**4      EDUCATION REFORM IN SCOTLAND CONSULTATIONS      5 - 48**  
**UPDATE**

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)  
(copy herewith 23/142)

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## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE LEARNING AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

15 MAY 2023

#### EDUCATION REFORM IN SCOTLAND CONSULTATIONS UPDATE

**Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)  
(Report No. 23/142)**

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Sub-Committee of the Learning and Families Committee with an update on the professional responses provided thus far on aspects of the education reform activity currently underway. It also provides some detail of how education officers, children and young people, parents and school staff are engaging with the range of consultations and activities which are being undertaken relating to the education reform agenda.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee:
- Notes the responses provided on the National Discussion, and Phases One, Two and Three of the Hayward Review; and
  - Agrees the content of a submission to Phase Three of the Hayward Review which will be submitted, as a late submission, on behalf of members of this committee.

#### 3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background
  - Section 5: Update on Consultations to Date
  - Section 6: Further Considerations
  - Appendices

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Government has commissioned a series of consultations on a range of reforms within the Scottish Education system. Education and Children's Services (ECS) submitted the report 'Education Reform in Scotland Update' ([Report No. 23/128 refers](#)) to the Learning and Families Committee on 3 May 2023.

4.2 The three areas of reform are:

- A national discussion on education.
- An independent review of qualifications and assessments.
- Creation of three new national education bodies.

4.3 Each of these areas of reform have been phased to ensure that consultation feedback from stakeholders on the [National Discussion Scottish Education](#) informs the next two phases, and subsequently the review of qualifications and assessment will then inform the creation of the three new national education bodies.

## **5. UPDATE ON CONSULTATIONS TO DATE**

### **National Discussion**

5.1 The consultation process for the National Discussion aimed to capture views on a vision for the future of Scottish education. The vision for the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Article 29 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) were key elements of the National Discussion.

5.1.1 The National Discussion was convened by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and led by Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris. The “Let’s Talk Education” consultation phase took place between 21 September 2022 and 5 December 2022. It invited young people, parents and educators to give their views about what the education system should look like for the next 20 years. Events took place across Scotland, led by schools, community groups and third sector organisations. A series of online national events also took place, and the organisers reported a good response to the consultation part of the process.

5.1.2 All schools within Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) were invited to take part in the consultation, and education officers contributed to the response developed by the Association of Directors of Education (ADES). Headteachers in Perth and Kinross engaged in a session to consider their response in November 2022. The summary of those consultation events from Headteachers within PKC are detailed in Appendix A.

### **Next Steps**

5.2 Consultation and analysis of the responses received nationally is now underway. It is planned that a “Call to Action” will be published in Spring 2023, alongside a vision for the future with short, medium and long term aims.

### **Review of Qualifications and Assessment**

5.3 The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in October 2021 the intention to reform qualifications and assessments to ensure learners’ achievements are fairly recognised. The “Let’s Talk Qualification and Assessment” was launched and Professor Louise Hayward, Emerita of Educational Assessment and Innovation, University of Glasgow, was appointed to lead this.

- 5.3.1 The aim of this work is to reform the qualifications and assessment system to ensure that all senior phase learners have an enhanced and equal opportunity to demonstrate the breadth, depth and relevance of their learning. It has been determined that externally assessed examinations will remain part of any new system.
- 5.3.2 Professor Hayward set up an Independent Review Group, membership of which is drawn from:
- Those for whom qualifications matter most, learners, parents and carers.
  - Those who design develop and deliver qualifications; teachers, Headteachers, examinations boards, regulators, local policy makers and communities.
  - Those who use qualifications, schools, colleges, employers and universities.
- 5.3.3 In addition, Professor Hayward planned a series of phased stakeholder engagement opportunities across the education system as part of this consultation period, and schools were invited to participate directly in this with their school communities.
- 5.3.4 The document 'Review of the Future of Qualifications and Assessment: Consultation on Options For Change' (Appendix E) sets out the process for each of the three phases of the consultation process.
- 5.3.5 Phase One took place from August to September 2022 and focused on the development of a set of Vision and Principles, which were first developed with the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Parliament. Phase One responses have been independently analysed and informed the next phases of the review.
- 5.3.6 Phase Two opened in October 2022 with a public consultation which closed on 13 January 2023. The purpose of Phase Two was designed to lead to a preferred Qualifications and Assessment model. The public consultation received over 700 responses. The consultation analysis reported strong support for assessing all four capacities of CfE, gathering evidence of wider achievement and gathering information on learners' skills and competencies as part of the Senior Phase. Respondents were in favour of introducing a leaver's certificate in the Senior Phase. Calls for consistent standardised approaches to assessing these skills and competencies were made, and for parity of esteem for academic and vocational qualifications. Teacher workload was highlighted as a potential issue, as well as concern that gathering evidence of achievements outside of school could discriminate against those who cannot easily access extra-curricular opportunities.
- 5.3.7 Phase Three commenced in March 2023 and concluded on 7 April 2023. It took into account the findings from Phases One and Two. Phase Three sought views on the proposed approach and the practical steps that are needed for the model to be successful. Phase Three also took into account relevant findings from the National Discussion.

## Next Steps

5.4 Professor Hayward provided an interim report ([Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment](#)) to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills which was published on 3 March 2023.

5.4.1 The interim report sets out the following proposals as part of a possible new approach:

- Significant reduction in external assessment, including examinations in the Senior Phase.
- More clearly defined integration of academic and vocational qualifications.
- Collation of a broader evidence base of achievements in the Senior Phase, which will include skills and other competencies.
- Development of an enhanced digital infrastructure.
- A Senior Phase Leaving Certificate.

5.4.2 The final report will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in May 2023. Any submission agreed at the Executive Sub-Committee of the Learning and Families Committee on 15 May 2023 will be sent with a request that it be considered prior to any final report being produced.

## 6. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The education service management team, senior leaders and school communities in Perth and Kinross have been actively encouraged to engage in all phases of the consultation process for both the National Discussion and the Hayward Review of Qualifications and Assessments. Education officers held consultation sessions with all Headteachers and collated all of the responses gained into responses which were submitted to the Scottish government on behalf of education professionals within PKC. The consultation responses for each of these consultations provided by engagement with Headteachers are detailed in Appendices A, B, C and D.

### Author

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Sharon Johnston	Head of Education and Learning	<a href="mailto:ECSCCommittee@pkc.gov.uk">ECSCCommittee@pkc.gov.uk</a> 01738 475000

### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)	10 May 2023

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes/None</b>
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	<b>None</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>none</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>none</b>
Workforce	<b>none</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>none</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>N/A</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	
Legal and Governance	
Risk	
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>yes</b>
External	<b>yes</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (ii).

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (ii).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area.

- Learning and Achievement

## 2. Resource Implications

### Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial implications for Perth and Kinross Council in this report.

### Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications in this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 N/A

## 3. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome.

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

The proposals have been considered under the Act however, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt, or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:

- In the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets.
- In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaption programmes.
- In a way that it considers most sustainable.

3.3.1 N/A.

#### Legal and Governance

3.4 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.5 N/A

#### Risk

3.6 N/A

### **4. Consultation**

#### Internal

4.1 The reform agenda for education, the details of which are contained within this report, are the subject of ongoing consultation by the national agencies and consultants who are discharged with carrying them out. Consultees within ECS include education officer and school leaders.

#### External

4.2 Extensive consultation is taking place across all local authority areas with all stakeholders within education on all of the reform areas contained within this report by the Scottish Government.

### **Communication**

5.1 A communication plan will be developed as each of the consultation fundings, and subsequent reforms are decided upon at national level.

### **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2.1 The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report:

- [Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective](#)
- [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future](#)
- [Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000](#)
- [Children's rights - Human rights - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- ['Putting learners at the centre: towards a future vision for Scottish education](#)

- [National Discussion Scottish Education](#)
- [Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment](#)
- [Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland: interim report](#)

### **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1 Appendix A - Consultation summary on the National Discussion  
Appendix B - Consultation summary for Phase One of the Hayward Review  
Appendix C - Consultation summary for Phase Two of the Hayward Review  
Appendix D - Consultation summary for Phase Three of the Hayward Review  
Appendix E - Review of the Future of Qualifications and Assessment:  
Consultation on Options For Change

# National Conversation PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22



Q1. What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future and how do we make that a reality?

**Children and young people are valued and listened to.**

**Pupil Voice** - Childs voice is prioritised and actioned.

**Physical Environment** -Review and evaluate school building - being fit for purpose.

**Community focus** – all children and young people are a part of it.

**Partnerships working** - Provision of education – who else can be involved.

**Digital** - Greater use of online offers.

**Skills for Life Learning and Work-** development of thinking skills - preparing young people for work and further study. Problem solving, resilience and reflective of society.

**Digital** - More flexibility-not all children learn best in a classroom – e-sgoil to be expanded.  
Digital independence, creative thinkers

**Training** Training for all staff in behaviour management and ASN support strategies.

**Conditions** Greater freedom and flexibility to bring about changes in a short space of time.  
Communication. Increased staffing across the board.  
A 4-day week?  
Raise value of education nationally.  
Sustaining ‘people’ resources.

**Partnerships** Working in a co-ordinated way with parent/families and partner agencies.

**Wellbeing**  
Resilience, adaptability, perseverance  
Communication, emotional literacy, collaboration, global awareness.  
Focus on mental health wellbeing,  
Children who are confident in their faith

**Early Years** More active/play style learning with improved responsive planning.

FEEDBACK FROM:

PARENT AND FAMILY  
LEARNING TEAM

HEADTEACHERS

DHT/PTS

CENTRAL TEAM STAFF

**Digital skills, equity of access** (1-1 devices), internet safety/social media, infrastructure with clear benefits of digital skills understood by all.  
Essential staff training available.

**Understanding of play pedagogy** – for all staff, P1 curriculum to meet needs.

**Meta-skills/skills for the future-** creativity, strong numeracy/literacy skills (including financial education)

**Mental Health and Well Being** - resilience, nurture, mental health support.

**Environmental awareness** – sustainable living.

**Broad and evolving curriculum**

**Ring fenced time for professional learning,** teacher confidence to apply play pedagogy, ECPs in early years, specialist speech and language.

**An education that builds resilience, self-worth, confidence.**

**Life skills** – larger emphasis on vocational/practical industries.

**Play and outdoor learning.**

**School universal and targeted offer** includes parenting and family learning throughout 3-18 and beyond school hours.

**Better alternative provision for children with ASN.**

# National Conversation

## PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22



**Q2. How do we ensure that children and young people in Scotland feel supported in their learning in the future?**

### **Training and staffing**

Ensure universal supports are well embedded in all classrooms.  
Need to skill staff up so that targeted support can also be in place even while waiting for diagnoses.  
Find solutions to staffing issues.  
Allow higher tariff interventions to get off the ground in a timely fashion.

A balance of support and pupil ownership of their own learning.  
Robust support for ASL, continue counselling/CLW.  
Joint services for families from birth.

### **Pedagogy**

Involve them in their learning  
Enough time that children can feel cared for/supported.  
Value their voice, reflect it back to them.  
Provide a scaffold to work from.  
Give them choices of how to learn.

Using evidence-based programmes and early intervention as this will save funding in the long run.

Most of the services that offer this are non-statutory so at risk of being under regular budget savings.

Change temporary funding to permanent funding.

**Transitions** - Enhanced support for young people and families during transition from secondary to positive destinations.

**Choice and flexibility**- Responding to HWB census in allowing children greater choice in their learning e.g. virtual classes where subject choices are not available.

**HWB** - Sense of belonging and feeling understood.

**Universal approaches** to needs -  
Normalising needs – planning/  
L & T to meet overall needs.

Early intervention.

Providing opportunities for learning and applying skills (including digital).

Clear/ evolving skills development  
Awareness/ understanding of mental health /Trauma informed.

Listening to learners and supporting choices they make.

Build community links.





# National Conversation PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22

**Q3. What is one thing that  
needs to stay and why?**

**Literacy, Numeracy, HWB need to stay.**

**Core skills.**

**Routines in school and at home.**

**Self-Regulation.**

**I.T.**

**Bring back specialists!**

**Extra-curricular clubs.**

**Attainment.**

**Reducing the gap.**

**Equity.**

**Supporting families early will save money in the long run.**

**Families will have better relationships and outcomes for both parents and children, who are our future parents.**

**Staffing - Staffing ratios in ELC.**

**Collaborative Working.**

**Building capacity at community level.**

## **Curriculum**

literacy, numeracy, HWB, 4 capacities and SLLW.

High quality early interactions.

Focus on literacy/numeracy, skills for learning, life and work.

4 capacities.

'4 capacities' to create 'good people'.

## **Relationships**

Values based and child centred approaches.

Relationships/learning together – introductions/connections.

People – financing people.

People-PSA, PSTs, expressive arts etc.

All children supported and challenged to be the best they can be to be able to function as an individual member of society.

Support networks to ensure that the child is at the centre.

High expectations by schools and society.

# National Conversation PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22



**Q4. What are the most important priorities for a future Scottish education system?**

**Early Years** - Establishing a kindergarten stage with meaningful consultation and planning to ensure it is delivered in line with the core values of a true research and theory informed kindergarten stage.

**Parents** involved in children's attendance in ELC setting e.g. compulsory family learning for families accessing funded SS2 to ensure positive family attachments to compliment ELC.

**Wellbeing.**

**Skills** development framework.

**Preparation for life, learning and work-**

Positive and equal post destination opportunities, skills expected from employers.

**Curriculum pathways for all.**

**Culture – valuing all.**

**Equity -**  
close the gap – ensure equity.

Fit for purpose, not just education for education sake.

Transitions – primary to secondary.

Appropriate mental health support.  
Early intervention.  
Digital literacy for all.  
Shorter waiting times.  
Quicker access to support/ more joined up thinking and referral system.

Better recruitment and retention of support staff - more secure contracts.  
PSAs need to be retained and be used effectively to support the children.  
Staffing- more staff - ECPs, PSA.

Equity in distribution of IT across schools particularly for pupils with ASN.  
Appropriate infrastructure for IT - decent Wi-Fi. Having resources to meet expectations.

Higher expectations in teacher training.

More input from PSTs in rural schools.  
Consistency of Outreach staff - regular visits.  
More involvement from Community Link Workers.

Need for more nurseries/schools as most of Scottish schools are at capacity, with little space for smaller group work or class sizes.

Every community is expanding which means not enough places for children in their local school.





**Q5. Overall, what is your vision for the future of education in Scotland?**

# National Conversation PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22

**Skills - Refresh in skills required for future and employment alongside equal opportunities.**

**Renewed value/status.  
Professional pride recognition  
Self efficacy**

## **Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Flexible approaches to curriculum.

Transferable skills that will survive change.

A return to focus on the Four Capacities.

An assessment and qualifications suite that properly equips our young people.

High quality teacher training – needs refreshed; more school based.

Review current model of RCCT – what impact have we seen?

Successful learners – the focus on exam results needs to change. Transferable skills portfolio.

Creative, innovative teachers.

## **Partnerships**

Effective parental engagement where parents play an active role.

Teach real skills e.g., ‘parenting’ before they become parents – program at secondary school.

Utilise what is available in local area, be able to talk about learning.

Happy “folk” with wellbeing and family coming together.

## **Equity**

Investing in an expanded, skilled workforce (including support staff and teaching staff)

A greater focus on Relationships.

More people! PEF has helped to fund essential support staff.

Move away from current measures of poverty - they are currently not reflective of the need

Individualised pathways.

# National Conversation

## PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22



Q6. How can we make that future vision for education a reality in Scotland?

### Strategy Clarity Investment

Further development and training:

- to fully understand who our children and young people are.

Understanding our partners and carers and empathise with their circumstances.

Teacher training better aligned with aims, visions and values expected in education.

Rights and Responsibilities Shared understanding of rights and responsibilities across society.

Decluttering of priorities across Scotland, LA and individual schools.

Funding, time, training.  
Longer term measurement of impact.  
For example, some interventions will have an impact that is cumulative and take longer to close any gap eg cultural.

Review of presumption of mainstreaming, need to look at inclusion and impact on schools and children's learning.

Working more collaboratively across schools and local authorities.

Clarity of vision.

We need to be clear about purpose of school, if everything is a priority then nothing is.

Be very focused on what will make a difference to children.

A highly skilled workforce.

Local flexibility/empowerment.

Initial Teacher Education.

Effective leadership at all levels and masters level learning for all staff, intensive training e.g. play.

IT.

Supporting the most vulnerable.

Working with our communities.

**HOW CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BE CARED FOR AND SUPPORTED IN THE FUTURE? (I.E., PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING)**

Parents having a better understanding of how to nurture their children and the changes through the life span of their child (different developmental needs and changes, teen brain development).

School staff having a better understanding of how to support children, YP and parents, and communicate effectively with them. Education for physical and mental health should be mainstream not just for those experiencing difficulties.



# National Conversation PKC Key themes Oct-Nov 22

**Q7. What are the most important steps we need to take to achieve the future vision for education in Scotland?**

## **Partnerships**

Education should involve whole families as school cannot do it all!

Clearer understanding of the shared responsibility. Takes a village!

Funding- review in individual schools adequate funding and resources.

## **Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Streamline the curriculum, key focus on literacy/numeracy/HWB.

Review the professional learning structure in schools.

Develop distributed leadership opportunities, collaboration, discussion and ACTION!

Effective leadership.

Initial Teacher Training - increase the standard please.

Masters level learning for education staff.

The effective use of IT and the upskilling of staff and children.

A highly skilled workforce  
Appropriate support at the correct time.

More trained support staff in schools.

More funding.

Smaller class sizes.

Support for part time timetables.

Support and challenge for parents.

IT for all (equity across the authority).

## **Communication**

Clearer and more effective.

Communication of the role of education Consultation.

Properly funded and sustained.  
RCCT review.

RCCT time for teaching staff and collaboration within schools.

Consultation and balanced representation across all communities.  
Need to get parents on board – help them to understand and to be brave enough to 'bin' exams.

Funding.

Curriculum review.

Policy changes – RCCT, starting school consultations.

## **Time management**

Allocate Time.

Stop, take time to review.

## **Trust**

Empowerment.

Treat education staff as professionals, there is so much scrutiny.

Listen to those who are working in schools.

Being bold and brave.

**Q8. How can we ensure that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say in future decisions and actions?**

Supporting the most vulnerable.

Working with our communities.

Wider model of leadership within school.

Engagement with educational research - and sharing this with parents and the wider community.

A public consultation that is listened to,

Feedback to stakeholders.

This should include everyone involved in the education system.



## Appendix B

### **The Future of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland.**

#### **An Independent Review**

#### **Consultation Response - Phase One**

### **Introduction**

Professor Hayward has been appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, to undertake an Independent Review, looking at how the current system could better recognise the achievements of all learners.

### **Consultation Questions and Responses**

**Thinking about the Future of Qualifications and Assessment, does the draft Vision Statement accurately reflect what matters most to your community/ies?**

#### **Draft Vision**

**Qualifications and Assessments in Scotland should reflect what matters in the curriculum, recognise every learner's achievements and provide evidence to inspire the next steps in their learning journey.**

**This Vision for the Future of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland will.**

- Recognise the diversity of achievements of every individual learner.
- Provide a solid foundation to the future for all learners, that will support the next step in their life journey be that in employment, further education, higher education, or through other contributions to society; for example, volunteering.
- Promote a wide range of opportunities that meet the needs of all learners.
- Recognise the rights of children, encourage well-being, and support the lifelong development of citizens, creating a positive future for Scotland and the wider world; and
- Be recognised and valued by all learners, schools, colleges, universities, employers and by society generally.

### **Response:**

*The vision should be explicit that the curriculum is what then drives the assessment process which in turn informs any future qualifications suite. Assessment should be designed to take full cognisance of the diversity of achievements referenced above.*

**What, if anything, would you remove?**

**Response:** *Nothing*

### **Draft Principles: Your Views**

#### **Individual Principles**

**Please read and provide feedback on the draft Principles below:**

### **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 1:**

**Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Be responsive to the fast-changing needs of individual learners and Scotland in an increasingly complex and globalised society while articulated with a clear and easily understood qualifications framework.**

**Please share your thoughts on Principle 1.**

**Response:**

*We agree with this principle, in particular that the qualifications system should be articulated with a clear and easily understood framework.*

### **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 2:**

**Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Be inclusive both in design, delivery and development involving:**

- those to whom qualifications matter most (all individual learners and, as appropriate, their parents and carers).
- those who use qualifications (colleges, universities, employers, wider organisations); and
- those who design and deliver qualifications (teachers, lecturers, qualification boards, accrediting agencies, local authorities).

**Please share your thoughts on Principle 2.**

**Response:**

*We agree with this principle and recognise that the delivery of the system requires careful consideration.*

### **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 3**

**Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Reflect the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence.**

- What is required for learners to participate fully in Scotland as a 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy?

**Please share your thoughts on Principle 3.**

**Response:**

*Agree with this principle, however it could be more explicit around those aspirations/capacities.*

### **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 4**

**Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

## **Recognise the achievements of every learner**

- Should support and enable the future goals of all.
- Should have learner pathways that best fit future aspirations including academic and vocational courses.

### **Please share your thoughts on Principle 4.**

#### **Response:**

*The distinction between academic and vocational is unhelpful as it suggests a binary choice and lack of parity.*

## **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 5**

### **Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Be clear, coherent and understood by all as part of a seamless lifelong learning journey.**

- Should provide clear and trusted evidence of a wide range of achievements to date and act as a foundation for future learning whatever path an individual learner chooses to take.

### **Please share your thoughts on Principle 5.**

#### **Response:**

*Agree with this principle*

## **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 6**

### **Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Support flexible approaches to assessment.**

- Allowing different forms of evidence to contribute to the recognition of achievement.

### **Please share your thoughts on Principle 6.**

#### **Response:**

*Agree with this principle*

## **DRAFT PRINCIPLE 7**

### **Scotland's Qualifications system should:**

**Be adaptable and kept under review to ensure that the needs of all learners and wider society continue to be met.**

**Please share your thoughts on Principle 7.**  
**Response:**

*Agree with this principle.*



## Appendix C

### The Future of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland.

#### An Independent Review

#### Consultation Response- Phase Two

#### Introduction

This phase seeks to consult on proposals for potential options on the future of Qualifications and Assessment.

#### Questions and Responses

##### Question 1. Should information be gathered across all four capacities?

##### Response:

*If we are true to the principles of CfE then the ultimate aim must be to ensure that we develop and ultimately assess the totality of the curriculum throughout the learner journey and in particular at the point of exit.*

##### Question 2: Please consider each of the capacities in turn. What kinds of information should be gathered on learners' progress and achievements in each capacity?

##### Response:

*As a consequence of meaningful learning experiences, the development of attributes beyond successful learning should be evident. This should not only be a feature of senior phase programmes leading to qualifications but be included in a deliberate and planned way in learning in the BGE.*

*Scottish Education should support young people with a portfolio/passport of progress and achievements encompassing each of the four capacities. All does not need to be awarded by a central body but there must be a cohesion in terms of the totality of assessed achievement. Careful consideration should be given to the relative value we give to each of the capacities under any new assessment and qualification framework.*

##### Question 3: What, if any, information on learners' achievements obtained outside school and college should be gathered? Please explain your response.

#### Skills and Competences

During Phase one and through Professor Ken Muir's 2021 consultation we have heard the view that senior phase qualifications ought to focus more on developing learners' skills and competencies.

There are many different definitions of skills and competencies.

#### Skills

Skills are sometimes referred to as 'core skills', 'meta skills', or 'soft skills'. In this review when talking about skills, young people, parents, colleges, employers and universities have told us that learners need to be able:

- to work together as part of a team
- be creative.
- problem solve.
- have resilience.
- maintain their wellbeing.
- develop critical learning skills.
- to communicate effectively

### **Competencies**

A competence is another term which can have different meanings. Academic competencies like written and verbal communication, attention to detail and active listening are soft skills essential for almost every job. These skills benefit students and ensure success in college and the workplace. A competence is more than knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to put different skills into practice in a particular context.

For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competence that may include an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating. Interdisciplinary learning offers learners one kind of opportunity to bring together knowledge and skills to demonstrate competences.

### **Response:**

*This provides a number of challenges for schools.*

*Firstly, there is a tension in schools being asked to collect and collate information and evidence that they are not in control of. Who would take overall ownership of such an approach?*

*Secondly there are issues around equity in terms of factors of deprivation as well as location and individual circumstances.*

*Thirdly there is a question around who would manage and curate this area ensuring that weightings, fidelity of engagement by young people etc would be appropriate in an area that would provide almost limitless options and permutations.*

### **Question 4: Should information be gathered on learners' skills and competencies as part of their senior phase?**

#### **Response:**

Yes, this would be a welcome addition to the assessment of skills and competencies achieved by young people throughout their learner journey. Similar to Q1 this is absolutely a worthwhile aspiration.

### **Question 5: Considering how we gather evidence on achievements, awards and qualifications - Exams and other forms of assessment.**

The qualifications available for learners to undertake in the Senior Phase provide a variety of learning and assessment experiences including different learner pathways and have been designed specifically to support the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The majority of Senior Phase qualifications are internally assessed and provide flexible approaches to assessment including opportunities for interdisciplinary learning; for example, National 1 to National 4 Courses (SCQF 1 to 4), Awards (SCQF 1-7), Skills for Work Courses (SCQF 3 to 6), National Certificates (SCQF 2 – 6), National Progression Awards (SCQF 2 – 6) and the Scottish Baccalaureate (SCQF 7). National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses (SCQF 5 – 7) are largely externally assessed and pre-COVID had been designed to have a balance of coursework and examinations. This was intended to provide opportunities for depth, breadth and personalisation and choice in learning as appropriate to the subject area.

However, regarding national qualifications, we have heard many calls for there to be a 'better balance' between exams and other forms of assessment. We have heard the view that often subject based senior phase qualifications rely too heavily on end of year exams. In some countries teacher assessment counts for a significant proportion of a learner's grade. [Professor Gordon Stobart's 2021 report](#) includes discussion of how other countries approach a balance between external and internal assessment. Professor Stobart also noted that in comparative terms, Scottish upper-secondary school students are 'more frequently' examined than those in other jurisdictions, i.e., in S4, S5 and S6.

#### **Response:**

*Given that skills and competences are evident throughout the Broad General Education these could be articulated more carefully into a senior phase curricular offer. Where those skills are currently taught and evidenced in the senior phase this is most often currently evidenced by learners writing about those skills- in an examination; internal assessment or learning log for example. In general, it feels incongruent that skills and competencies are assessed in an examination in particular.*

**Question 6: Please share your thoughts on what a 'better balanced' assessment system would look like. As well as considering the balance between external examination and internal assessment you may also wish to comment on the frequency of examinations.**

#### **Response:**

*This is probably the most critical issue to consider. The Alternative Certification Model showed that there was capacity in the system to generate a viable alternative to one-off summative examination. However the impact of assessment collection on teacher and system time and capacity would need to be carefully considered. At the moment learning and teaching is often skewed by peculiarities in the final*

*examination- particular phrasing that is rewarded for example- so it is beneficial to lose that but not at the cost of over-assessment.*

*There may still be a place for a question paper within a broad range of assessment possibilities but the current system is creaking under the weight of the number and range of alternative assessment arrangements in place during the examination diet. This is a sticking plaster to an archaic approach.*

*There should be flexibility in the timing of any assessment approach- when the learner is ready- and digital technology should be utilised to provide secure and flexible assessment opportunities.*

*Most crucially the assessment approaches should reflect what sits within an explicit and transparent senior phase curriculum that can be traced clearly from the BGE model. Current assessment approaches- assessment of practical skills; dissertation/folio; project work and question paper- are all valid but there should be a rebalancing between these in all subject areas.*

### **Considering how evidence should best be presented – Achievement at the end of the Broad General Education (BGE)**

In other jurisdictions, learning culminates in a certificate of achievement. We have heard views that it would be helpful to have the learning of all young people recognised when they complete the [BGE](#) phase (this is usually at the end of S3).

There has been a suggestion that this should be a digital profile where a young person is able to show the skills, experiences, learning and qualifications they have accumulated to date, before they go into the senior phase. For most learners, the BGE award would lead into the senior phase although could constitute a leaving certificate if an individual leaves school or college.

### **Question 7: Please share your thoughts (advantages/disadvantages) on the idea of introducing an achievement, award or qualification at the end of the BGE.**

#### **Response:**

*Given that one of the biggest issues in the secondary curriculum at the moment is the lack of coherence between the senior phase and the BGE there is little appetite for this. If the senior phase curriculum is reviewed to be more consistent with the BGE experience it may seem like an arbitrary decision to introduce a qualification/award at this stage.*

*We would also need to think about the rationale for such an initiative at this stage given that it is not needed in terms of school leavers. If it is to introduce a motivational or credibility factor to the BGE that would be better achieved by better articulation between the BGE and the Senior Phase.*

### **Recognising Achievement in the Senior Phase**

We have also received suggestions that there should be a leaving certificate available as part of the Senior Phase. This could potentially include a broader range

of evidence of achievements than subject based qualifications. For example, a leaving certificate could include achievements, in individual curriculum areas, evidence of skills and competence development, contributions to communities and wider achievements.

**Question 8. Please share your thoughts (advantages/disadvantages) on the idea of introducing a type of leaving certificate at the end of the Senior Phase.**

**Response:**

*There is widespread support for this as an approach. It would obviously need to be transparent, flexible and easily understood by all stakeholders. The idea of this being a digital award or passport with layers of information and detail that can be accessed from a landing page is attractive.*

*The language of “Highers” is decades old and is unhelpful in the public consciousness when trying to design 21<sup>st</sup> century assessment and qualification. A change to the current range of qualification nomenclature to talk only in SCQF level with the awarding of “extra” credit depending on depth of course would be essential in ensuring that any change “sticks”*

*This digital leaving certificate could also capture those skills, competencies and achievements that a young person experiences in their school journey.*

**Technology and Assessment - The Potential of Technology**

Scotland has learned a lot from the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, including how technology can be used to support learning. However, we are also mindful that we cannot assume that everyone has equal access to technology or has the skills they need to use it effectively.

Some countries make much greater use of technology in assessment and qualifications. For example, some have a system whereby learners' achievements in their senior phase are assessed online. Others use technology to give learners different styles and types of assessment e.g., on-line simulations. Some countries use digital profiles to gather and present information on learners achievements.

**Question 9: How should Scotland's qualifications and assessment system make best use of digital technologies?**

**Response:**

*It is encouraging that we are being asked how to make best use of this rather than whether or not we should. The role of the digital world in learning, teaching and assessment should be reflected fully in the more formal assessment and qualification approach. This is an area of significant research and innovation but at the moment it is not central enough in the debate around Scottish Education. We should seek to engage with best practice and research internationally to plan a digital approach that is seamless and flexible enough to evolve as required.*

*Some of the other key benefits, as outlined earlier, are assessment approaches that are inclusive and more bespoke to learner need and a qualifications suite that has a user interface allowing for as much or as little detail as is required to be extracted.*

*The potential risk in a digital approach is that it is under-funded or does not develop alongside other planning around development in assessment or qualifications. This could have the consequence of a system that does not create confidence through a number of bugs or ongoing fixes applied retrospectively. Consideration will also need to be given to the digital infrastructure in schools.*

### **An approach that benefits all Learners' - Equity**

One of the Review's proposed principles for the future of qualifications in Scotland is that it should benefit all learners. A future system of qualifications and assessment should fairly reward learners no matter their age, disability, gender identity, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

### **Question 10: How can we make sure that proposals for a future qualification system will uphold the rights of all learners to demonstrate their achievements?**

*It is crucial that we spend some time thinking carefully about the unintended consequence of any alterations that we make. For example, could it be that a reduction in examination assessment unduly benefits those who are able to engage with private tutoring thus disadvantaging those who cannot? How will the security and integrity of any new system be maintained while delivering the flexibility that disadvantaged learners most need.*

*Equity Impact Assessment of all proposed change must be in place and some of the current language ("vocational" and "academic") is archaic. SQA currently have a range of qualifications developed but bringing all of these under one assessment framework or umbrella denoted through SCQF Framework would bring greater parity of esteem and give a starting point to how any future qualification suite could look.*

*If we can design our assessment approach correctly much of ASN that is currently met through Additional Assessment Arrangements should be able to be assessed without any additional alteration to the process.*

*While this review is only addressing assessment and qualification it would be crucial that the curriculum that sits behind this reflects the full range of characteristics of the learners that it serves.*

### **Question 11: Is there anything else in relation to the reform of qualifications and assessment which is not covered in this consultation which you would like to raise?**

*A carefully planned route map for any such radical (but long overdue) change will be essential to ensure both that the pace of change is manageable and also that it does not get bogged down by those with no wish for change. We must also protect the credibility of outcome for all young people, in particular those who are at some stage of transition in the process*

## Appendix D

### The Future of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland

#### An Independent Review

#### Consultation Response- Phase Three

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this third and final phase of the Independent Review on Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland. This stage is final in that following consultation, a series of recommendations will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary. However, the work on the Future of Qualifications and Assessment will continue long after this Review is completed. The partnerships developed during this review will remain crucial to ensure that the vision for the future of qualifications becomes a reality of every learner in Scotland.

In support of Phase Three we have developed a potential new model for qualifications and assessment in Scotland that reflects the consultation findings.

#### Questions and Responses

**Question 1: Do you think the three areas described in the SDA offer learners the potential for a broader range of their achievements that are important for their future progression? Is there anything you would like to add or delete? Why?**

##### Response:

*The three areas provide a broad range of areas and achievements to be captured and recognised. It is imperative that all three areas are given parity of esteem going forward and that no one area becomes the focus for measuring schools or drawing comparisons between learners. It will be too easy to focus on the Subjects or Curricular Areas and it is important that colleges, employers and other partners do not prioritise this area while neglecting the importance and value of the other two areas.*

**Question 2: What are your views on the proposals for recognising achievements in subjects/curricular areas?**

##### Response:

*The proposed change which will stop young people experiencing and being presented for external examinations in the same subject, 3 years in a row, is welcomed. Our experience of the Alternative Certification Model during the COVID pandemic demonstrated that we can capture learners achievements without compromising standards or rigour. Providing the opportunity for learners to capture learning and achievement in subjects over a period of time via a combination of internal coursework, project- based tasks, presentations and open book assessments would be very welcome. It is important that the nuances of each subject/curricular area are recognised, however no one subject or curricular area should be assessed in a completely different way than any other. For example, currently there is no internal component for Maths qualifications, we cannot maintain*

*this. All subjects/curricular areas should be made up of a balance of internal and external assessment approaches. We welcome the two-year approach to capturing qualifications, so long as there are appropriate opportunities for young people who initially embark upon a two-year journey to exit after one year of that journey and have their achievements recognised and most of all valued by colleges, employers and universities. We must ensure our new system for recognising achievement in subjects/curricular areas does not return to an all-encompassing high stakes external exam at the end of the year and/ or two-year programme.*

**Question 3: What are your views on the proposals for recognising achievements in knowledge and skills in action?**

**Response:**

*Allowing learners the opportunity to demonstrate and apply skills and knowledge across a context, via an interdisciplinary approach is welcomed. The challenges will be around the assessment of this and the value it holds both within and beyond school. It is our understanding that this element will be a case of achieving the standard or not and young people will be able to specialise/choose an area of importance to them. It is important that key areas are suggested with a range of exemplar assessment instruments and methods of capturing achievement provided nationally. National exemplification, agreement and quality assurance processes are important in order to prevent similar pitfalls that have been experienced by schools and local authorities in trying to ensure and implement consistency in the Broad General Education. It should be made explicit to those outwith and beyond school, the key skills that young people are developing through engaging in this type of study, and the benefit of being able to demonstrate what they can do as a result to contribute to life beyond school.*

**Question 4: What are your views on the proposals designed to recognise achievements in respect of personal learning?**

**Response:**

*This is what provides young people with additional evidence of skills and attributes when it comes to applying for jobs, college or university. The 3 main areas; social, cultural and economic are appropriate pillars to capture the four capacities. There is however a danger here that this model continues to benefit those more affluent learners and will further widen the poverty related attainment gap. How will we ensure that those from more socially deprived areas, where perhaps there is less capacity for parental support, will be given the same opportunities to widen their social, cultural and economic experiences? If this becomes an entitlement, then it cannot be left to individual Guidance teachers to be working with caseloads in excess of 300 pupils and ensuring that this is captured appropriately. This will result in little support for learners and those more able or supported at home given distinct advantages over those experiencing poverty or less supported at home.*



*This part of the proposal is exciting and reads well on paper, however it will require careful planning and a restructuring of pupil support if we truly are going to provide every young person in every school with high quality support and opportunity. There is a real danger that this becomes an inequity in the system, providing advantages for those young people already well equipped and exposed to a range of opportunities and experiences, while others are disadvantaged through not having access to such experiences.*

**Question 5: (A) What do you think of the idea of introducing a Scottish Diploma of Achievement (SDA)?**

**Response:**

*The SDA is a good idea and capturing and recoding this digitally would be beneficial. It is important that no single element is viewed as more important than the others and all three should have parity in order for young people to be recognised as having achieved the SDA. Much work will have to be done in educating employers, colleges and universities on the SDA and what each element means, as well as communicating that excelling in one area of the SDA to the detriment of any other area indicates less balance and potential gaps in achievement and/or skills/knowledge/application. We would not want an SDA to be awarded on the basis of a young person excelling in subjects/courses, detailing lots of wider achievement opportunities via the pathway but not having demonstrated a particularly strong Learning in Context experience for example.*

**Question 5: (B) If you support this idea, what actions should be taken to make this approach work in practice? What alternative would you propose that would be consistent with the Vision and Principles identified in Phase One of the Review?**

**Response:**

*There is broad support for this idea but a clear national framework on what the SDA looks like as well as what it means to achieve it is important. Perhaps there may be room for gaining an SDA and then gaining an SDA with Merit or Distinction? It certainly should take cognisance of the development and achievement across all three areas equally and there should be some form of national benchmark or standard for this.*

**Question 6: What changes to existing practice, if any, would you recommend to support the development of a new qualifications and assessment system? For example: Accountability - the ways information is gathered on the relative success of educational settings; Inspection, Professional Learning, Initial Teacher Education, Professional Standards, College and University Entrance, Recruitment procedures for employers.**

**Response:**

*There must be more opportunity for young people's learning and achievement to be captured throughout their study and we must avoid high stakes external exams as being the only or the main way of assessment. The Alternative Certification Model in 2020/2021 demonstrated that with clear guidance and internal rigour within and across Local Authorities alternative assessment and gathering evidence of learners achievements is possible.*

*We must guard against the subjects/courses part being the only focus of any potential SDA. If we are serious about transformational change then tools like INSIGHT must also be able to measure and demonstrate performance within both the 'Learning in Context' and 'Personal Pathway' aspect of the SDA. Attainment and achievement of all three areas should be a clear focus for National Standards and targets going forward. We already have Interdisciplinary Learning as a feature within our curriculum as one of the four contexts for learning, however how much has that been challenged or its success measured or tabled? We value what we measure and therefore all aspects of the SDA must be measured, challenged and compared consistently.*

*Clarity and parity of esteem needs to be communicated with colleges, universities and employers. It is important that all stakeholders are engaged in this consultation and contribute to these developments. However, If Colleges and Universities ignore the Learning in Context and Personal Pathway elements, in terms of entry requirements then ultimately nothing will change and we will revert to a rebranding of the current system, where attainment in individual subjects is what ultimately counts. This will lead to the full opportunities and transformational impact of what is being suggested not becoming reality and once again leave our young people short changed.*

**Question 7: To promote parity of esteem across all qualifications, academic or technical and professional, should all qualifications at a particular SCQF level have the same name?**

**Response:**

*Having a similar name would help however much more needs to be done to educate all stakeholders with regard to the content of each programme of work/course, the skills developed and the impact that undertaking each specific course will have on learners.*

**Question 8: Do you have any additional comments about the proposed approach to qualifications and assessment set out in this presentation?**

**Response:**

*There is a real structure and sense that the proposed approach can make for transformational change which will better challenge and prepare our young people for the future. However, the same feeling occurred when CFE was initially designed and introduced. The much-promised hope and transformation failed to become the reality as time progressed. This was due to a lack of National guidance, exemplification and standardisation as well as a lack of clarity. The system did not, in terms of progression beyond school, take a considered and joined up approach.*

*The current standards and processes as well as tools for measuring remain too focussed on exam results and performance in course assessment and qualifications. We need to ensure that going forward, any comparison tools or Virtual comparators take into consideration all three areas of the SDA in a more balanced way.*

**Question 9: Given we are now in the final phase of the Review, we would be interested to receive any feedback on our approach to this important exercise.**

**Response:**

*There has been ample opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved in this process. However, in a world of increasing workload for teachers the opportunities for them to feel that their voices are heard remains a challenge. The timescales for responding to the consultations, allowing time for engagement with stakeholders was extremely tight. We would also like to see further engagement and get a sense of feedback from colleges, universities, employers, and other training providers to ensure we have a system that is recognised, valued and accepted by all.*



# **Review of the Future of Qualifications and Assessment: Consultation on Options For Change**

## 1. Review of the future of Qualifications and Assessment: Consultation on Options for Change.

### 1.1 Why is there a need for an Independent Review?

Recognising the need to look to the future, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in October 2021 the intention to reform qualifications and assessments. This reform process will seek to ensure that all learners' achievements are fairly recognised to afford every learner an enhanced and fair opportunity to demonstrate the breadth, depth and relevance of their learning. The review covers English Medium and Gaelic Medium Education.

This was influenced by:

- recommendations in the [OECD's independent review of Scotland's school curriculum](#)
- the COVID-19 pandemic and a renewed debate around assessment following the cancellation of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams in 2020 and 2021
- [Professor Gordon Stobart's OECD paper](#) setting out possible options for Scotland's future approach to assessment and qualifications
- Professor Ken Muir's Report (2022) – [Putting learners at the centre](#)
- Angela Morgan's Report (2020) [Support for learning: all our children and all their potential](#)

The Review's [Terms of Reference](#) are available here.

The Review is independent from the Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies. Emerita Professor Louise Hayward will provide recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary in March 2023.

### 1.2 Who is involved in the Review?

We have designed the Review to provide opportunities to all those who are interested in the future of Qualifications and Assessment. We want to ensure that our recommendations make the most of the opportunities open to us to transform the way we approach qualifications and assessments. To do this we need to engage and listen to as many people as possible. This consultation is part of that process. It will promote extensive engagement with the public alongside continued widespread engagement with learners, schools, and colleges.

The Review is being led by Professor Hayward supported by an Independent Review Group (IRG) comprising of:

- those for whom qualifications matter most (learners and parents/carers),
- designers, developers and those who offer qualifications (extended profession and policy and

- those who use qualifications (colleges, employers, universities, voluntary sectors).

You can see the [members of the Independent Review Group](#) which meets monthly.

The Independent Review Group works with 13 Collaborative Community Groups (CCGs). These CCGs act as a link to a wide range of communities and will ensure an inclusive and participatory approach which recognises and embraces the diversity of Scotland's learners and communities. These groups specifically seek to involve people whose voices are seldom heard in policy discussions.

### 1.3 What is the Review doing?

The Review will progress through three phases. We are currently in Phase Two.

#### Phase One: Engagement on Vision and Principles

The first phase invited feedback on a draft Vision and Principles statement. These draft statements were first developed with colleagues from the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Parliament. Phase One received 260 responses from schools and colleges alongside detailed comments from Collaborative Community Groups.

The feedback received during Phase One is being analysed by an independent researcher. The Review has however been able to develop the draft Vision and Principles and the current version follows below. This will be developed further in the coming months before being finalised at the end of the year.

Following an analysis of views expressed in relation to the Vision it has been redrafted and is currently as follows.

Qualifications and awards in Scotland should:

- reflect the broad curriculum
- recognise every learner's achievements, and
- provide evidence to inform the next steps in their learning journey.

Following an analysis of views expressed in relation to the Principles have been redrafted and are currently as follows.

Scotland's qualifications system should:

- reflect the aspirations of the curriculum and be responsive to the changing needs of individual learners and Scotland locally and as part of global society.
- recognise the achievements of every learner.

- be clear, coherent and understood by all, as part of a lifelong learning journey.
- be inclusive both in design and development.
- support flexible approaches to assessment.

We are now in Phase Two of the process. This phase seeks to consult on proposals for potential Options on the future of Qualifications and Assessment.

The Review is:

- exploring different Options for the future of Qualifications and Assessment
- continuing to work closely with our IRG and CCG members and encouraging responses from every school and college in Scotland and
- asking for views on different ways that the Vision and Principles might be put into practice

The evidence from responses to this phase will be independently analysed and used to identify a preferred proposal.

Phase Three. In January 2023, the third phase of the Review will begin and we will seek views primarily through the CCGs and schools and colleges on the preferred proposal for the future of Qualifications and Assessment. In this phase the focus will be concerned with practical implications.

Following completion of the three phases we will produce a final report and recommendations which will be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in March 2023.

#### 1.4 What is the Relationship between the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment and the National Discussion?

Arising from recommendations in the Muir Report (2022), *Putting Learners at the Centre*, the National Discussion is focused on gathering views from the public on a future vision for Scottish Education. Our Review, on the future of Qualification and Assessment, is focussed on the review of qualifications and assessment in the senior phase. Whilst there are close links and regular communication with colleagues in the National Discussion our Review is independent of Scottish Government. The National Discussion is being jointly led by Scottish Government and COSLA. The Independent Review will also report after the National Discussion allowing time to consider the findings from that piece of work before reporting to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills by the end of March 2023. You can find out more information about the [National Discussion](#) here.

#### 1.5 Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 16 December 2022. It is important to note that in responding there is no need to provide an answer to every question in



this document. It may be that some areas of the consultation are of more interest to you or your organisation than others and the Review is grateful for any views you may wish to share.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/education-reform/professor-haywards-independentreview/> You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 16 December.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form to:  
Secretariat: Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment  
Scottish Government  
2B North  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh

#### 1.6 Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

#### 1.7 Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or email [qualificationsreform@gov.scot](mailto:qualificationsreform@gov.scot)

#### 1.8 Scottish Government consultation process

This is a consultation on behalf of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment that is being hosted by the Scottish Government. Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives the Review an important opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of

this analysis for every consultation. While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully to inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Considering Options: what information should be gathered on learners' progress and achievements. (For the purposes of its overall package of work and this consultation the Review takes a broad definition of 'learners'. A new approach to qualifications and assessment must benefit individuals no matter who they are or where their learning takes place)

## 2. Consultation Questions

### 2.1 Topic: Curriculum for Excellence - Four Capacities

Background: The 3 – 18 curriculum in Scotland is underpinned by the [Curriculum for Excellence \(CfE\)](#). CfE currently sets out four areas important for every learner. These four areas are often called the four capacities. They are that: Everyone should become a 'Successful Learner', 'Confident Individual', 'Effective Contributor' and a 'Responsible Citizen' and should be able to do what is set out in the more detailed exemplification of each of the capacities.

Successful Learners with:

- enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- determination to reach high standards of achievement
- openness to new thinking and ideas

and able to:

- use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- use technology for learning
- think creatively and independently
- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

Confident Individuals with:

- self-respect
- a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- secure values and beliefs

and able to:

- relate to others and manage themselves
- pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- be self-aware

develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world live as independently as they can assess risk and take informed decisions achieve success in different areas of activity

Effective Contributors with:

- an enterprising attitude
- resilience self-reliance

and able to:

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- make informed choices and decisions
- work in partnership and in teams
- take the initiative and lead
- apply critical thinking in new contexts
- create and develop
- problem solving

Responsible Citizens with:

- respect for others
- commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

and able to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it understand different beliefs and cultures make informed choices and decisions
- evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

Whilst most courses in the Senior Phase have been designed to support the realisation of the four CfE capacities, in Phase one of the Review we have heard from many that qualifications taught in the senior phase of Scotland's schools and colleges 'focus too much' on 'only one' of the four capacities namely 'successful learners. This view was also shared with Professor Ken Muir and is discussed in his 2021 report [\*'Placing Learners at the Centre'\*](#).

Question 1:

- Should information be gathered across all four capacities? Yes/No/Unsure
- Please consider each of the capacities in turn. What kinds of information should be gathered on learners' progress and achievements in each capacity?

2.2 Topic: Out of school and college achievements or awards

Background: In Phase One of the Review, we have heard the view that learners should be able to evidence awards and achievements obtained outside school and college.

Question 2: What, if any, information on learners' achievements obtained outside school and college should be gathered? Please explain your response.

### 2.3 Topic: Skills and Competences

Background: During Phase One and through Professor Ken Muir's 2021 consultation we have heard the view that Senior Phase qualifications ought to focus more on developing learners' skills and competencies.

There are many different definitions of skills and competencies.

Skills: Skills are sometimes referred to as 'core skills', 'meta skills', or 'soft skills'. In this Review when talking about skills - young people, learners, parents/cares, colleges, employers and universities have told us that learners need to be able:

- to work together as part of a team
- be creative
- problem solve
- have resilience
- maintain their wellbeing
- develop critical learning skills
- to communicate effectively

Competencies: A competence is another term which can have different meanings. Academic competencies like written and verbal communication, attention to detail and active listening are soft skills essential for almost every job. These skills benefit students and ensure success in college and the workplace. A competence is more than knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to put different skills into practice in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competence that may include an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating. Interdisciplinary learning offers learners one kind of opportunity to bring together knowledge and skills to demonstrate competences.'

Question 3:

- a) Should information be gathered on learners' skills and competencies as part of their [senior phase](#)? Y/N/Unsure
- b) If you have views on how this might best be done please provide them here.

3. Considering how we gather evidence on achievements, award and qualifications

### 3.1 Topic: Exams and other forms of assessment

Background: The qualifications available for learners to undertake in the senior phase provide a variety of learning and assessment experiences including different learner pathways and have been designed specifically to support the aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The majority of [senior phase](#) qualifications are internally assessed and provide flexible approaches to assessment including opportunities for interdisciplinary learning for example, National 1 to National 4 Courses (SCQF 1 to 4), Awards (SCQF 1-7), Skills for Work Courses (SCQF 3 to 6), National Certificates (SCQF 2 – 6), National Progression Awards (SCQF 2 – 6) and the Scottish Baccalaureate (SCQF 7). National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses (SCQF 5 – 7) are largely externally assessed and pre-COVID had been designed to have a balance of coursework and examinations. This was intended to provide opportunities for depth, breadth and personalisation and choice in learning as appropriate to the subject area.

However, regarding national qualifications, we have heard many calls for there to be a ‘better balance’ between exams and other forms of assessment. We have heard the view that often subject based senior phase qualifications rely too heavily on end of year exams. In some countries teacher assessment counts for a significant proportion of a learner's grade. [Professor Gordon Stobart's 2021 report](#) includes discussion of how other countries approach a balance between external and internal assessment. Professor Stobart also noted that in comparative terms, Scottish uppersecondary school students are ‘more frequently’ examined than those in other jurisdictions, i.e., in S4, S5 and S6.

Question 4: Please share your thoughts on what a ‘better balanced’ assessment system would look like. As well as considering the balance between external examination and internal assessment you may also wish to comment on the frequency of examinations.

## 4. Considering how evidence should best be presented

### 4.1 Topic: Recognising Achievement at the end of the Broad General Education

(BGE)

Background: In other jurisdictions, learning culminates in a certificate of achievement. We have heard views that it would be helpful to have the learning of all young people recognised when they complete the [BGE](#) phase (this is usually at the end of s3). Some people have suggested that this should be a digital profile where a learner is able to show the skills, experiences, learning and qualifications they have accumulated to date, before they go into the senior phase. For most

learners, the BGE award would lead into the senior phase although could constitute a leaving certificate if an individual leaves school or college in S4.

Question 5: Please share your thoughts (advantages/disadvantages) on the idea of introducing an achievement, award or qualification at the end of the BGE.

#### 4.2 Topic: Recognising Achievement in the Senior Phase

Background: We have also received suggestions that there should be a leaving certificate available as part of the Senior Phase. This could potentially include a broader range of evidence of achievements than subject based qualifications. For example, a leaving certificate could include achievements, in individual curriculum areas, evidence of skills and competence development, contributions to communities and wider achievements.

Question 6: Please share your thoughts (advantages/disadvantages) on the idea of introducing a type of leaving certificate in the Senior Phase.

### 5. Technology and Assessment

#### 5.1 Topic: The Potential of Technology

Background: Scotland has learned a lot from the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, including how technology can be used to support learning. However, we are also mindful that we cannot assume that everyone has equal access to technology or has the skills they need to use it effectively.

Some countries make much greater use of technology in assessment and qualifications. For example, some have a system whereby learners' achievements in their senior phase are assessed online. Others use technology to give learners different styles and types of assessment e.g., on-line simulations. Some countries use digital profiles to gather and present information on learners achievements.

Question 7: How should Scotland's qualifications and assessment system make best use of digital technologies?

### 6. An Approach to Benefit all Learners

#### 6.1 Topic: Equity

6.2 Background: One of the Review's proposed principles for the future of qualifications in Scotland is that it should benefit all learners. A future system of qualifications and assessment should fairly reward learners no matter their age, disability, gender identity, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background.

Question 8: How can we make sure that proposals for a future qualification system will uphold the rights of all learners to demonstrate their achievements?

7. Have we missed anything?

Question 9: Is there anything else in relation to the reform of qualifications and assessment which is not covered in this consultation which you would like to raise?

8. Next Steps

Thank you for your views. We will provide feedback on the responses we have received and the information will be used to inform phase three of this Review.



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EH1 3DG

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