

Highland Qualification Scotland Presentation Policy March 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Highland schools have a consistent approach in their presentation in the Senior Phase that is aligned with setting the highest expectations and aspirations for our learners. Presentation in the Senior Phase should build on the secure foundations of the Broad General Education and should always allow young people to achieve at the highest possible level.

This policy should provide a reference point for pupils, parents/carers and staff with regard to the various aspects related to presentation within courses at National, Higher or Advanced Higher in line with Qualifications Scotland's guidance to schools.

Aim

The overall aim of this policy is aspirational and is to enable pupils to be presented, and achieve success, at the highest appropriate level for them.

The specific aims of this policy are twofold:

1. To ensure that all pupils are assigned to complete, to the best of their ability, courses of study which offer them appropriate challenge and the potential for success.
2. To ensure all pupils have the opportunity to build up a profile of attainment, which will allow them access to the next levels of study appropriate to their ability.

Course Choice / Presentation Levels

Within Curriculum for Excellence, each pupil's pathway is confirmed at the end of S3. Schools need to use robust assessment information from the Broad General Education to ensure that learners make appropriate choices and are presented at the right level for qualifications.

Young people should be encouraged to select the subjects which will provide the chance for them to succeed at the highest, and most appropriate, level possible. The potential levels of achievement for every child will be different. This approach allows us to help young people maximise their potential and in time, achieve a positive destination when leaving our school.

All pupils should be encouraged and supported in planning for relevant pathways through the Senior Phase and beyond. Choices should be made based on rigorously moderated assessment in the BGE with pupils able to base their choices on their achievement of a level in each of their subjects in the BGE years. Literacy and numeracy data can also be used to help pupils make informed course choices.

Decisions about presentation levels should always be positive and aspirational. All staff should encourage young people to aim high and maximise their potential and decision-making around levels should reflect this.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all pupils in S4 sit minimum of six National Courses; in S5, five National Courses; and in S6, a minimum of four National Courses or if appropriate three Advanced Higher Courses.

Monitoring and Assessment

All assessment for regulated qualifications must be drawn up and administered in line with the Qualification Scotland publication “*Assessment: A guide for Centres offering Regulated Qualifications*” (updated May 2025).

https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Assessment-AGuideforCentresofferingRegulatedQualifications.pdf

Progress in all Qualification Scotland courses should be continually reviewed. Interventions must be timely, documented, and shared with parents/carers, Pupil Support, and Senior Leadership Teams as needed. Principal Teachers of Guidance have a key role in monitoring pupil performance as they have a broad overview of how each pupil is performing across their subjects by monitoring tracking data.

Formal assessments should not be used to discover whether a student is ready but to confirm the teacher’s judgement that the student has reached the required standard in the work concerned. This decision will be based on the department’s/Faculty’s policies for assessment and student performance and progress.

Quality Assurance / Internal Verification

Verification is a crucial element of quality assurance. The purpose of internal verification is to ensure that all assessments that contribute to a Qualification Scotland qualification are valid, reliable, practicable, equitable and fair and that assessment standards have been applied uniformly and consistently.

Faculties should have quality assurance procedures in place in line with the Qualification Scotland publication ‘*Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres Offering Regulated Qualifications.*’ (Updated March 2025)

https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforCentres.pdf

Every Qualification Scotland centre is responsible for operating an effective and documented internal quality assurance system.

Supporting Pupils to Achieve Their Potential

As a young person progresses through a course, it may become evident that they could benefit from additional or targeted support, tailored to their individual circumstances. Schools should have tracking systems in place to allow early identification of young people who could benefit from tailored support.

To meet the needs of all learners it is important that schools have procedures to capture the attainment of those young people who are at risk from disengaging from education and not achieving.

Schools should have a range of supports in place to ensure all young people leave school with the minimum qualifications and skills required to ensure they enter a positive destination. It is our aspiration that all young people in Highland leave our school with a minimum of 5 qualifications at a level appropriate to their skills and aspirations.

In our pursuit of the highest quality learning experience for every pupil in Highland, pupils are supported to make appropriate course choices. Where a change is required, for example post-results, pupils are supported to make alternative course choices, prioritising attainment and the achievement of a positive destination. Once any changes post results are agreed, there is no option for a young person to 'drop' or withdraw from any subject completely. Our aim to maximise the attainment and achievement of every pupil and allow them to reach their potential means that we expect every young person to attain positively in every subject they choose. Departments must aim to ensure that an alternative qualification can be gained within their current class. It is expected that in most circumstances, courses selected at the start of an academic session will be completed by the pupil for the whole session.