

# curriculum for excellence senior phase

management board discussion paper



SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS



CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS



EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS



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This paper is relevant to all those involved in the planning and delivery of learning for young people<sup>1</sup> in the Senior Phase. It sets out the vision for the realisation of the *Curriculum for Excellence* principles for these young people and offers information on the ways in which partners are working together to contribute to the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* in the Senior Phase. Those principles are:

#### CfE Principles for Curriculum Design

Challenge and Enjoyment  
Breadth  
Progression  
Depth  
Personalisation and Choice  
Coherence  
Relevance

## Background

The Senior Phase of young people's education follows their broad general education, which takes them to the end of S3 or equivalent. The Senior Phase can be characterised as that which takes place in the final stages of compulsory education and beyond, normally around age 15 to 18. For many young people school will continue to be the main deliverer of the Senior Phase. However, in order to make real the *Curriculum for Excellence* principles this will increasingly involve partnerships with a range of other providers.

Not all young people will be in school during this phase of their education and it is essential that all young people have the opportunity to realise their *Curriculum for Excellence* entitlements regardless of where their learning is taking place. Learning providers including schools, colleges, work-based training providers, community learning and development and other non-formal learning settings will continue to develop relationships over time with new and existing partners to assist young people in this process.

In the Senior Phase **all** young people can expect the entitlements set out in *Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum 3: A Framework for Learning and Teaching* to be delivered, whatever their individual needs and wherever their learning is taking place. Specifically these are:

- > a curriculum which is **coherent**;
- > the opportunity to obtain qualifications as well as to continue to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities;
- > opportunities to continue to develop **skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work** with a continuous focus on **literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing**;
- > **personal support** to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide; and
- > support in moving into **positive and sustained destinations** beyond school.

The Senior Phase of young people's education builds firmly on the broad general education which went before. The values, purposes and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* will flow through from earlier phases of education and continue to be delivered for young people at this particular point in their educational journey.

<sup>1</sup> Some sectors may refer to this group as learners rather than young people.

The Senior Phase will offer young people the opportunity to extend and deepen their education as they build their portfolio of qualifications which recognises their learning, enables them to continue to develop skills and offers pathways to the next stage – whether that is further or higher education, training or employment.

### Reflective Questions

- > What challenges do you face in ensuring that you can deliver the entitlements referred to above for all young people in the Senior Phase?

## Implementation – where are we in the process?

### Designing a Framework for the Senior Phase

The curriculum in the Senior Phase should be designed to meet the *Curriculum for Excellence* principles of design, the entitlements set out for all learners in *Building the Curriculum 3* and should include the four aspects of the curriculum (*the ethos and life of the school, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement*). Curriculum design should ensure articulation with prior learning and experiences in the broad general education and should be planned in a coherent way with partner agencies to provide a full range of opportunities to meet the needs of all young people. The principles and practice set out in those parts of the Experiences and Outcomes that are the responsibility of all – health and wellbeing across learning, literacy across learning and numeracy across learning – should continue to inform curriculum planning in the Senior Phase.

The Senior Phase will be the period when most young people engage with the qualifications framework. It will be of particular importance to ensure that the learning undertaken through the Experiences and Outcomes during the broad general education is built upon and developed during the Senior Phase. This critical dependency forms part of the scope for the development of qualifications. The Scottish Qualifications Authority will lead this work on developing qualifications, working closely with partners and stakeholders and from the outset engagement with stakeholders, especially practitioners, will be a key activity.

Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Government have been working with practitioners to “test” aspects of *Building the Curriculum 3* including models of planning and delivery of the curriculum. This work has produced material under the title of *Building your Curriculum* to guide the process of planning aspects of the curriculum. Further work is on-going and is producing early insights to support practitioners in using the *Curriculum for Excellence* framework in planning teaching and learning. Participants, who are practitioners from all school sectors and from across Scotland, have taken the opportunity to explore a range of themes that will be important for effective planning of the curriculum in the Senior Phase.

Those involved were asked to produce a high level curriculum map showing a strategic vision of how their establishment would:

- > reflect the guidance within *Building the Curriculum 3*; and
- > provide a platform for more detailed work on allocation of time and resources and on detailed planning for phased implementation.

The June 2009 Ministerial announcement on the way forward for the next generation of National Qualifications will mean that work in relation to planning the Senior Phase can be developed further. It is anticipated that future work on *Building Your Curriculum* will have an increasing focus on the Senior Phase and will ensure the participation of a wide range of partners who contribute to a young person's



learning including schools, colleges, third sector organisations and community learning. The college sector in particular have considerable experience in curriculum planning across subject areas and in integrating cross cutting themes such as literacy and numeracy.

Outputs from the *Building Your Curriculum* work include materials to provide guidance on the process of planning as well as early insights into innovative practice. These are being used by authorities as well as individual establishments. Initial materials and insights are available on the *Curriculum for Excellence* website: [www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/buildingyourcurriculum](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/buildingyourcurriculum)

### Reflective Questions

- > How will you plan to ensure that the principles and practice set out in those parts of the Experiences and Outcomes that are the responsibility of all – health and wellbeing across learning, literacy across learning and numeracy across learning – continue into the Senior Phase?
- > How can you best work with other sectors and partner agencies to develop a coherent and inclusive curriculum in the Senior Phase?

## Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work

If they are to become successful, confident, responsible and effective adults who can meet the rapidly changing challenges of life and work in the 21st century, all young people will need to be flexible and adaptable, with the capacity to continue developing a range of new skills for learning, life and work throughout their lives.

*Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* outlines the Scottish Government's ambitions for making Scotland's skills base world class and recognises the pivotal role that schools and their partners have to play in equipping young people with these skills.

*Building the Curriculum 3* includes an entitlement for every child and young person to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These skills should be developed across all curriculum areas, in interdisciplinary studies and in all the contexts and settings where young people are learning, from early years through to the Senior Phase of learning and beyond. They are embedded in the *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes and in the qualifications framework. As such they are the responsibility of all those involved, in whatever setting, in planning, supporting, designing and delivering learning.

A Building the Curriculum paper on skills for learning, life and work is being developed to provide further advice and support for all partners involved, in whatever setting, in promoting effective learning for children and young people that enables them to develop the skills to flourish in a modern society and economy.

This guidance will be published as *Building the Curriculum 4 – Skills for Learning, Life and Work* later in 2009.

### Reflective Questions

- > How will you plan to ensure that young people in the Senior Phase are developing the skills required “to flourish in a modern society and economy”?



## Qualifications

In the Senior Phase qualifications will have a key role to play in enabling young people to develop the four capacities and the range of skills for learning, life and work they require. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced the future arrangements for National Qualifications in a Parliamentary Statement on 11 June 2009. The new qualifications will offer increased flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and more scope for personalisation. The new arrangements include:

- > Introduction of a new qualification to be offered at SCQF levels 4 and 5 from 2013/14 – National 4 and National 5. This will replace both Standard Grade (General and Credit) and Intermediate 1 and 2. Standard Grade Foundation level will be replaced by revised Access 3 qualifications.
- > Introduction of new qualifications in literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 from 2012/13 – National Literacy and National Numeracy. The qualifications will be available from S3 onwards and will build on the development of literacy and numeracy skills from earlier stages. It is expected that most young people will be presented for these qualifications before they leave school. The qualifications will be flexible to meet the needs of all learners including adult learners.
- > The existing Access, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications will be reviewed to ensure they reflect the values, purposes and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The revised qualifications will be implemented from 2013/14 onwards.

Young people and adult learners will benefit from qualifications that support the revised curriculum and will experience a better planned and better connected educational experience. Approaches to assessment 3-18 will be more closely linked to learning, will promote breadth and depth of understanding, motivate and challenge learners and ensure that their transition into qualifications is smooth. The new and revised qualifications will be designed to meet the needs of all learners in progressing from their prior levels of achievement in their broad general education, through the qualifications framework to other learning and employment.

Further information is available at:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/qualifications](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/qualifications)

The process of developing qualifications, led by SQA, has to be open and transparent – engagement activities will be designed to involve appropriate stakeholders in each stage of the process. Engagement will be underpinned by a website which will keep all stakeholders informed on the latest developments. Classroom practitioners will be able to find out about progress of developments and provide feedback via a comment facility.

The Scottish Baccalaureate in Science and the Scottish Baccalaureate in Languages, which is available in schools from August 2009, will provide a further opportunity for schools to develop partnerships with other schools, colleges, universities and employers in planning, delivering and assessing qualifications in the Senior Phase. The Scottish Baccalaureates will give young people the opportunity to work across curriculum areas and to apply further their subject knowledge in realistic and challenging contexts. They will also focus very much on the development of a range of skills for learning, life and work which will continue to prepare the learner for further study and employment.

Other qualifications, including those provided in the college sector (e.g. NQ Group Awards) will also help to achieve the aims of the Senior Phase. Particularly Skills for Work Courses which are designed to help learners develop knowledge and skills that will be useful in work and for life in general, including attitudes which will help enhance employability, an understanding of the workplace and generic employability skills and positive attitudes to learning.



The number and range of qualifications undertaken will be a matter for schools, education authorities, colleges, parents and young people to decide. Schools and colleges will be encouraged to develop flexible approaches which will enable young people to build upon their learning in S1-S3. Young people may be following 1 and/or 2 year programmes of learning leading to qualifications.

### Reflective Questions

- > How will you plan to “develop flexible approaches” towards delivery of qualifications to enable young people in the Senior Phase to build upon their prior learning and experiences in S1-S3?
- > How will you seek to provide an appropriate balance between providing a framework to study for qualifications whilst providing other planned opportunities for personal achievement?

## Providing Support for all Scotland’s Children and Young People

Work is underway to establish how all young people’s entitlement to “personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide” will be delivered. This entitlement means that all children and young people should have appropriate support wherever they learn.

A number of frameworks already exist through which support is provided by a range of partners. However wide-ranging action is needed across education and children’s services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and underachievement and of leaving school with few if any qualifications. All young people, including those in need of more choices and more chances, are entitled to a Senior Phase of education with a range of partners likely to be involved in planning and delivering support for young people throughout their Senior Phase.

Effective support for young people involves a range of adults who should both recognise their own role and work in partnership with others to put the necessary support in place. An essential feature of effective support must include creating opportunities for young people to be involved in planning and reflecting on their own learning. *Building the Curriculum 3* states that all children and young people should have frequent and regular opportunities to discuss their learning with an adult who knows them well and can act as a mentor, helping them to set appropriate goals for the next stages in learning. The health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes and related principles and practice provide specific references to preparing for changes and choices and are applicable within the Senior Phase.

Young people can find change and transitions challenging and it is important that they are effectively supported through these. In instances where a learner is moving to an unfamiliar environment, it is essential that the receiving establishment has the information needed to build upon prior learning and meet the needs of that young person – information which fully captures the young person’s achievements and learning in the wider context. The Additional Support for Learning Act requires education authorities to take specific action to help young people with additional support needs to make the transition from school to post school life successfully.

During the Senior Phase young people will continue to require support for a range of reasons, not least in order to help them with choices about future learning. These choices need to be informed by a developing understanding of the expectations of employers and further and higher education as well as the learner’s strengths and interests.

High quality, impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is vital to support young people (and others) make informed decisions about their pathways and future career choices. Skills Development Scotland (SDS), working with schools and other partners, is responsible for delivering IAG to young people. The Scottish Government is working with SDS to develop tools to support young people in making their post-16 learning choice. This includes an e-Prospectus of post-16 learning opportunities containing comprehensive information on local learning opportunities, pathways and support accessed through a national site.

The e-Prospectus is intended as an accessible, searchable directory of information on learning and progression opportunities in a local area. As part of broader IAG provision, it will also enable access to information about financial and wider support such as transport and childcare. A common application process is also proposed which offers young people a single tool through which they can apply for post-16 learning opportunities.

This is an important element of the infrastructure which supports 16+ Learning Choices and, in addition to supporting young people in making choices, it will make it easier for local authorities and SDS to track learner's progress. Consideration will also be given to the development and integration of other tools, such as Individual Learning Planning, taking account of those already in use or being developed.

The e-Prospectus is at a very early stage of development and the priorities for this work are: specification of what SDS is to deliver; establishment of governance arrangements which reflect the broad range of stakeholder interests; and the development of an effective communications and engagement strategy. To achieve this, it will be important that the school, college and voluntary/volunteering sectors, as well as other learning providers, have ownership of the development and discussions are planned across sectors to progress this work.

### Reflective Questions

- > How might you develop existing structures to provide the personal support needed by all young people in the Senior Phase?
- > How can you build upon and develop new partnership working to ensure effective personal support for all young people in the Senior Phase, especially at points of transition?

## Support in moving into positive and sustained destinations

*Building the Curriculum 3* recognises that one of the key ways the success of the education system will be judged is on the extent to which it contributes to the national indicator on positive and sustained destinations. *Skills for Scotland* makes clear the Scottish Government's desire for all young people to stay in learning after 16.<sup>2</sup> It also highlights a clear commitment to young people about the routes on offer to education, employment and training (and the support they can expect) and recognises the need to focus on particularly vulnerable groups of young people.

16+ Learning Choices (16+LC) is our model for ensuring that all young people have a suitable offer of post-16 learning.

16+ LC is a universal model – to support all young people, whether they choose to stay at school, go to college, enter work-based learning, or engage in learning in a non-formal setting. However, it has a particular focus on those young people who leave school early, as those young people have to make an earlier transition, and are likely to be more vulnerable.

<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Government's wish, articulated in *Skills for Scotland*, is that all young people should stay in learning post-16  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0>

16+ LC has three interconnected elements:

- > the right learning – a flexible mix of provision designed to meet the needs of the young person;
- > good advice and personal support – to enable young people to access and sustain suitable provision; and
- > financial support – focussed on helping young people from low income families choose the learning that's best for them.

This will be underpinned by careful tracking so that we know where young people are and, if necessary, help them to re-engage. 16+ LC will ensure that learning, support and tracking work together seamlessly so that every young person is offered a suitable place in learning well before they reach their school leaving age. Twenty-one local authorities and their partners have started to implement 16+ LC; the aim is to roll this out to all young people across Scotland by December 2010.

### Reflective Questions

- > What additional support might vulnerable young people need to support them in their learning within the Senior Phase and to support them into positive and sustained destinations?

## Recognising Achievement and Assessment

Work is ongoing to put in place a Framework for Assessment with principles which apply throughout a young person's education. This framework is being developed with the full involvement of stakeholders and plans are in place to publish a statement on assessment and, as part of the *Building the Curriculum* series, an Assessment Framework later this year.

A framework is also under development for recognising achievement. This is a challenging and important agenda and there are a number of reasons for looking at ways in which greater recognition can be given to children and young people's achievements, namely:

- > more effective recognition of achievements can increase self-esteem, improve motivation and keep children and young people engaged in learning;
- > to encourage children and young people to reflect on their learning – where they are and where they want to go;
- > to help learners develop skills for learning, life and work and assist them to articulate the skills that they have gained in different contexts including interviews with potential employers, colleges or higher education;
- > to help deliver the aims, values and purposes of *Curriculum for Excellence* – where planning opportunities for personal achievement is an integral part of the curriculum.

*Curriculum for Excellence* emphasises the importance of considering “achievement” as learning activities and skills development that are an important part of the learning experience of all children and young people at all stages. Achievement can be seen as the progress young people make in developing the range of attributes and capabilities which contribute to the four capacities. Summaries of achievement, which the young person would be able to contribute to, could be used as a way of reporting on progress being made and could be used to inform future learning plans.

The process of recognising achievement encourages children and young people to recognise, reflect on and articulate the learning and skills gained from activities rather than being overly focussed on the activities themselves. This will help children and young people to apply the learning and skills that they

have developed in different contexts. The importance of recognising achievement to young people's learning applies across the 3-18 age group but the way in which it takes place will change as the young person develops.

To inform policy development on recognising achievement, 12 collaborative enquiry projects were set up in partnership with LTS and 12 local authorities in 2008/09. The projects explored the key issues involved in recognising achievement at a local level. An evaluation has been commissioned and a report will be published in Autumn 2009. Engagement continues to take place with a range of stakeholders to progress thinking on recognising achievement and to inform the development of guidance which will be developed in collaboration with partners.

The recording of a young person's achievement will be undertaken in a range of ways, including the S3 profile. The S3 profile will give young people the opportunity to consider and record their achievements to date. It will also provide the opportunity to reflect on their progress and plan for the future. It is expected that the S3 profile will include information on the range of the young person's achievements including the development of skills and progress in curriculum areas in the whole range of contexts and settings in and out of school.

### Reflective Questions

- > How can you ensure that frameworks for recognising personal achievement motivate and support all young people in the Senior Phase?

## Partnerships

The commitment to deliver the entitlements described in *Curriculum for Excellence* for all young people means the development of different mechanisms involving a range of providers. In the Senior Phase it is likely to become more common for young people to learn through a range of providers, including other schools, colleges, universities, youth work and other less formal learning settings and in a range of mediums through both direct contact and the use of ICT. This makes it particularly important to ensure that all young people can experience a coherent curriculum in the full range of settings.

*Building the Curriculum 3* identifies a wide range of examples of organisations and partners who can actively assist in the experience of learning, the development of the four capacities and the fulfilment of the entitlements. It is important to ensure that all partners are involved in designing, planning and delivering learning for young people from the outset. In building these successful partnerships the key focus will be on the needs, strengths and interests of the young person.

Adopting a partnership approach builds on key aspects of existing policies (including *Lifelong Partners*, our school/college partnership strategy; *Skills for Scotland*; and *More Choices, More Chances*). These all emphasise the importance of all those tasked with this work including Further and Higher Education providers; schools; training providers; community-based and non-formal learning providers; and employers working together. Several evaluations of this developing area have been published and, whilst generally positive, all contain recommendations for further improvements and more consistency across the country.

Extensive partnership arrangements have been formed by schools and Scotland's colleges to support the delivery of qualifications. At present, approximately 20,000 learners take part in either Skills for Work programmes, or similar college-devised programmes, as part of their curriculum. Most attend college on one day a week, or attend classes within their own school, delivered by college lecturers. Partnership activity also includes delivery by colleges of Highers in subjects such as Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and Politics, as well as NQ and HN Units in a wide range of subjects. The partnerships are



being further developed through joint delivery of the Scottish Baccalaureate interdisciplinary project and are likely to include the delivery of National Qualification Group Awards which provide progression from Skills for Work qualifications.

Whilst it is for local authorities and their partners to determine the best structure for partnership working and decision making in their area, we recognise that it may be helpful to supplement what is already available by providing some case studies of effective partnerships through the *Building Your Curriculum* work.

### Reflective Questions

- > What is your current experience of working with other sectors and partner agencies and how can you best build upon this to design, plan and deliver learning for all young people in the Senior Phase?

## Senior Phase communications

Effective communication of key messages to all stakeholders including parents and young people in respect of the Senior Phase has been identified by internal and external stakeholders as being of crucial importance. This relates both to the overarching *Curriculum for Excellence* key messages and those specific to the Senior Phase and within that specific elements such as qualifications.

Plans are in place to meet this need for information dissemination in a variety of ways including the further advice to the system such as *Building the Curriculum* papers on skills and assessment; more insights into early thinking and practice available through the *Curriculum for Excellence* website. This communication activity will of course sit beneath the wider *Curriculum for Excellence* communication/engagement plans.

## What happens next?

All those involved in the development of the *Curriculum for Excellence* Senior Phase will continue to work in partnership to stimulate thinking and produce advice and insight where this is necessary. However, the entitlements will be made real for young people by learning providers working together to think through for themselves how they will deliver these for all young people. This paper provides some stimulus for that thinking to either begin or to continue.

**CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE MANAGEMENT BOARD  
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www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk

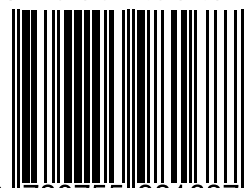


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