

Senior phase pathways

Taking forward CfE in the senior phase

Case studies from three secondary schools

Introduction

Building the Curriculum 3 (BTC 3) stated that the aim of *Curriculum for Excellence* is to help prepare all young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy. Secondary schools have been taking forward work to build curriculum frameworks which will support the young people in their school to gain the knowledge and skills for learning, life and work. The senior phase from S4 to S6 should be designed to provide specialisation, depth and rigour. During this time, learning pathways should prepare young people for achieving qualifications whilst continuing to provide a range of activities which develop the skills and attributes of the four capacities. Preparation and planning for a positive and sustained destination is a key aspect of this phase of education. The relationship between the curriculum and National Qualifications becomes significant during this period of a young person's learning journey. Developing the Young Workforce has been strengthening partnerships and encouraging schools to widen the range of work-related learning opportunities, including vocational qualifications in the senior phase. We are seeing increasing numbers of young people leaving schools with vocational qualifications at a range of different SCQF levels.

Curriculum planning and structures in secondary schools have continued to evolve progressively as new qualifications have replaced old ones. Schools have been reviewing and developing their curriculum structures to take account of their experience of delivering National Qualifications and the need to create greater flexibility in the senior phase to help meet the needs of all young people. Particular attention has been given to reviewing young people's experience in S3 to provide a suitably challenging culmination of the broad general education, whilst also providing effective transition to the senior phase and courses leading to qualifications. Curriculum for Excellence gives schools the opportunity to move away from viewing the curriculum through the lens of column structures and to think instead about supporting various learning pathways for groups of learners with differing needs. This more flexible approach starts with the learners and builds the curriculum to provide the courses and programmes which they need to be successful in both their qualifications and their move to a positive destination. BTC 3 suggested schools could consider how best to structure the system to ensure that the 'two term dash' is not the only route to qualifications for young people. It is possible to allow young people the opportunity to study qualifications over an extended timeframe. The three case studies included here provide examples of how these schools have implemented this suggestion in different ways to suit their own context.

Various publications have been provided in relation to planning the senior phase and these can be found on the Education Scotland website [Senior Phase](#) page.

In this resource, three secondary schools describe some innovative aspects of their senior phase curriculum, including two-year courses leading to qualifications. They set out the importance of particular design features, the challenges they faced and the lessons they are learning from the ongoing evaluations of their curriculum design. Evidence about success of the design focuses on improved outcomes for young people.