



Be at the heart
of your child's learning

A Guide for Parents and Carers

CfE Briefing

Broad General Education in the Secondary School

Broad general education is one of the key terms used in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). When CfE was debated and agreed by parents, teachers and others in 2002, there was agreement that education in Scotland had to change if it was to equip young people for the challenges of the 21st century. It was widely agreed that education should be preparing young people to become more adaptable learners and more prepared for a changing world. It was agreed it should also be raising standards of attainment and achievement for all young people.

One of the key entitlements of CfE is that all children should receive a rounded education, known as a broad general education, from early years through to the end of S3, before

moving on to a senior phase in S4 to S6 which will include studying for qualifications. This broad general education should provide young people with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences that they can draw on as their lives, careers and job opportunities continue to change.

The broad general education phase of CfE is closely connected to the senior phase with the learning undertaken up until the end of S3 providing a strong foundation for choosing and specialising in a range of subjects. In the senior phase, young people will have the opportunity to take qualifications and courses that suit their ability and interests. More information on the qualifications can be found on the SQA website.



August 2012

Curriculum for Excellence is raising standards of learning and teaching across Scotland, preparing young people with the skills they need in a fast and changing world

Glossary of Key Terms for Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence

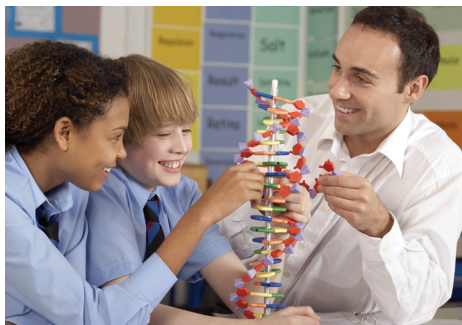
Often shortened to CfE, Curriculum for Excellence is the curriculum in Scotland which applies to all children and young people age 3-18. It aims to raise achievement for all, enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in learning, life and work.

Experiences and Outcomes

Each area of the curriculum in the broad general education is broken down into experiences and outcomes often called Es&Os. The curriculum areas are: expressive arts, health and wellbeing, languages, mathematics, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies and technologies. The Es&Os describe the expectations for learning and progression within each curriculum area.

Broad General Education

The period from age 3 to the end of S3 (age 3-15), covering all of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas.



Curriculum Levels

Curriculum levels are national levels to describe different stages of learning and progress. For most children the expectation is:

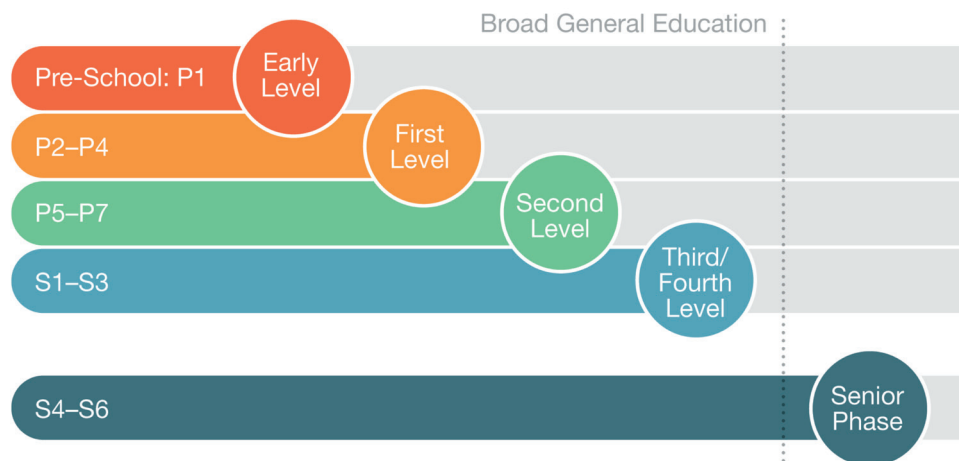


Figure 1: Broad General Education

A full list of key terms for CfE can be found on the Parentzone website.

What will my child learn during their broad general education?

A key part of broad general education is the development of the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities set out in the Es&Os. Learning may span a number of curriculum areas. For example an Es&Os literacy project planned around science and technology, might include outdoor learning experiences, research and the use of ICT. There is likely to be more themed and project learning, as well as wider opportunities to show how skills and knowledge can be used in challenging, different and interesting ways. More information on different approaches to learning that children will experience can be found in the CfE factfile of key terms and features. Visit www.educationscotland.gov.uk for this information.

How will my child be assessed during their broad general education?

Teachers will continue to use a range of ways of assessing young people; this may include observation, coursework and tests to see how a child is progressing and what their next steps in learning should be. Schools will share this with parents in reports, at parents' evenings and other meetings and events.

All children should have opportunities to experience all the experiences and outcomes

How do I know if my child is making good progress through their broad general education towards qualifications?

Young people will progress through the broad general education at different rates. All children should have opportunities to experience all the Es&Os across all curriculum areas up to and including the third curriculum level where appropriate for their individual learning needs. Most learners will progress into the fourth curriculum level in many aspects of their learning before the end of S3.

The new National Qualifications have been designed to build on the Es&Os. This allows young people to aim for the most appropriate levels of qualifications. For some learners in S4, this may include learning towards National 1, National 2 and National 3 qualifications; for others National 4 or National 5, or even Higher qualifications, will be more appropriate. Teachers will be best placed to tell you how your child is progressing, what level they are at and what their next learning steps should be. Further information can be found on Parentzone.



Will following a broad general education up to S3 mean that my child will take fewer qualifications?

The number and range of qualifications learners take will be for schools, teachers, parents and young people themselves to decide. CfE allows for local flexibility on how many qualifications young people take, the period over which they study for individual courses, and decisions on when they are ready for the various levels of qualifications.

Learning up to S3 will contribute to learning for qualifications, particularly where learners achieve the fourth level during their broad general education, allowing young people to take between 5 and 8 qualifications in S4 as is currently the case.

Can my child take qualifications in S3?

In most cases, it will not be in a learner's interest to take a qualification before S4. All young people should have the entitlement to a rich and motivating broad general education up to the end of S3. There may be specific circumstances which apply to an individual learner where it is felt that it is in their interests to take a qualification in S3. Any such decision should be made in discussion with parents, the school and the child, as at present.

When will my child make their subject choices in secondary?

Subject choices which will lead to taking qualifications in S4 should normally be taken towards the end of S3. This is so that all young people get the opportunity to experience the full range of Es&Os, before choosing courses for qualifications. Schools however may want to offer some specialisation and choice throughout S1-S3 depending on young people's interests, progress and achievements to help young people remain challenged and motivated in their learning.



The aim is to ensure that learners get a broad general education which helps prepare them for the senior phase

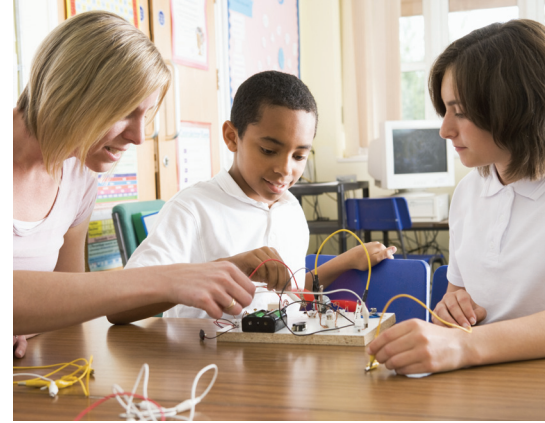
Can things be different from school to school?

CfE allows schools and local authorities to decide how to design and manage their curriculum. Curriculum timetables during the broad general education may very well look different from one school to the next. This is because they know best how they can use the skills, expertise and resource within their school and community, in the best interests of their pupils. They know their community and their young people, and their staff and are best placed to know how they can get the best possible outcomes for each learner. Schools should keep parents involved and informed in the decisions around curriculum planning.

What else might be different in S1-S3?

Schools are looking for interesting and challenging ways to give young people the full range of experiences in a broad general education. Some schools are running master classes or electives to give young people a chance to learn a subject in more depth. Other schools are designing learning opportunities which will cover a number of experiences and outcomes through one theme or period of study. The aim of these different types of learning is to ensure that learners get a broad general education which helps prepare them for the senior phase.

Ask your own authority and or school for their own information on Curriculum for Excellence.



Parentzone is a website dedicated to providing parents and carers with the most up to date information about your child's education. The website provides lots of practical advice and ideas of how you can be involved in your child's learning as well as providing essential information on features of Curriculum for Excellence.

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone

This CfE briefing is part of a new series designed to provide parents with information and advice on CfE and getting involved in their child's learning.



T +44 (0)141 282 5000 **E** enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk **W** www.educationscotland.gov.uk
The Optima, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

© Crown copyright, 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding images and logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the document title specified.

To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.