Route map through assessment

Course: English   Level: National 4

This document is intended to assist teachers in planning and delivering the overall vision for Curriculum for Excellence.

The vision for the new national qualifications is to create assessment opportunities that follow and support learning and teaching. This follows the principles laid out in *Building the Curriculum 5* and makes assessment a natural part of learning and teaching.

This route map aims to signpost all of the relevant material that is available to support your subject. Your professional judgement is vital and the documents listed below are intended to support you in deciding the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and assess candidates.

Education Scotland has produced a professional focus paper for English, N4 and this is a good starting point as it provides support to help develop learning and teaching approaches that take forward the purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence through English National 4.
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/nq/e/nqresource_tcm4741301.asp

English National 4 course content

Most of the SQA information on the new national qualifications in English can be found at
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45672.html. All of the information relating specifically to National 4 can be found at
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45673.html. Staff should also regularly check the updates and announcements section of this page.

As they progress through this course learners will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and talking in order to understand and use language. The course is made up of four units: Analysis and Evaluation, which develops the receptive skills of reading and listening; Creation and Production, which develops the productive skills of writing and talking; an Added Value Unit and a Literacy unit.

Learners will read and listen to a range of straightforward texts in order to understand, analyse and evaluate them as appropriate to purpose and audience in the contexts of literature, language and media. Learners will also create and produce straightforward spoken and written texts as appropriate to purpose and audience, in a range of contexts.

Internal assessment

The course is made up of four mandatory uni The two core English units are:

English: Analysis and Evaluation: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_English_AnalysisandEvaluation.pdf
English: Creation and Production:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_English_CreationandProduction.pdf

The Literacy Unit is a mandatory Unit of the National 4 course. It is also available as a freestanding Unit. It can be accessed via the following link: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_English_Literacy.pdf

The Added Value Unit: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47403.html is a mandatory Unit of the National 4 English Course and is also available as a free-standing Unit.

Along with the Added Value Unit assessment, learners must pass all three units in order to gain the full course award. A number of Unit Assessment Support Packs (UASPs) have been created by SQA which outline a variety of tools that can be used to gather evidence across each of the outcomes and assessment standards in each unit. Some UASPs suggest a unit-by-unit approach while others suggest a combined approach. The latter, in particular, are designed to lessen the assessment burden on learners and staff by providing learners with the opportunity to generate evidence for multiple assessment standards, including those detailed in the Literacy unit outcomes, across more than one unit within a single assessment activity.

UASPs may be adapted by centres in order to better fit the needs of their learners. This can be done without prior SQA verification, provided that similar question types are used and the same assessment standards are applied. Units are assessed on a pass/fail basis. Unlike the NAB assessments that featured in the old NQs, **a pass is not based on minimum score and assessment questions are not assigned a set number of marks**. Instead, the assessor will exercise professional judgement when deciding if each assessment standard has been met. This difference of approach is particularly significant in the assessment of reading and listening. Staff should also note that the assessment of reading must be based on a learner's reading of an unseen text. Critical essays completed as part of a class literature study cannot be accepted as evidence of achieving assessment standards in reading. When assessing listening, assessment judgements must be based on the learner's ability to examine the features of spoken language. Film and television clips can serve as engaging source texts for the listening assessment and should provide plenty of scope for learners to understand and analyse the spoken language that features. However, the learner's analysis of media techniques in these texts will not serve as evidence of their listening abilities. Judging evidence tables are built in to UASPs in order to support departments and individual staff in making assessment decisions.

Evidence of learners' achievement might also arise naturally from day-to-day learning activities. For example, a learner might meet some of the assessment standards for talking and/or listening during a group discussion activity. Learning and teaching resources designed for English National 4 can be found at http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/english/coursematerials.asp (Glow username and password required).

Literacy
Literacy is one of the mandatory units of English National 4. It can also be achieved as a stand-alone unit. All the assessment standards within the Literacy unit can be overtaken in combination with those detailed in the two core units (Analysis and Evaluation, Creation and Production) or the Added Value Unit, lessening the assessment burden. Further information about the assessment standards for the Literacy unit can be found at http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_English_Literacy.pdf.

Staff must note that learners may not access a human reader and scribe when being assessed for reading and writing as part of the National 4 Literacy unit. They may, however, be supported by the use of appropriate ICT and other assistive technologies. This will also have implications for Literacy unit assessment combined with the assessment of any of the other English National 4 units. In addition, although there is no specified minimum word count for the assessment of writing within the Creation and Production unit, the Literacy unit states that an assessment of writing must consist of a minimum of 300 words.

Further information on Literacy as a stand-alone unit can be found at
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N4_Languages_Literacy.pdf.

Added Value Unit Assessment

At National 4 level assessment of added value will be conducted through an Added Value Unit, which is internally assessed and externally verified. When learners reach National 5 and Higher level, this assessment of added value is captured through the external course assessment. The National 4 Added Value Unit gives learners the opportunity to evidence their ability to apply the skills of reading, writing, listening and talking that they have developed through the other three units. The task is for learners to plan and research a topic of their own choice, which must be within the contexts of language, literature or media. Suggestions as to how to support learners in choosing a topic can be found in the SQA course support notes, pages 10–11:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N4_Languages_English.pdf

Evidence that the learner has met the assessment standards can be found in his/her preparatory notes, which may take the form of a workbook or journal, as well as in the final written or spoken presentation of his/her findings.

Other useful websites

Education Scotland's online professional learning community for English. Staff across Scotland share resources and ideas here for English from the Broad General Education through to Higher: https://bit.ly/englishplhome (Glow username and password required)

Education Scotland's online professional learning community for literacy. Staff across Scotland share resources and ideas here for literacy: https://bit.ly/lithome. (Glow username and password required)

The BBC's Knowledge and Learning Beta site for English National 4:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zx4cwmn.