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Teachers in primary and secondary schools, pre-school centres and special schools and units

11 March 2010

Dear Colleague

## PROGRESS OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

I am writing to you as Chair of the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, which includes representatives from national organisations (such as SQA and LTS), local authorities and teacher and headteacher associations. As you may be aware, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has asked Management Board for advice on whether the schedule for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) may need to be adjusted. He has made it clear that he is not suggesting that a delay is necessary, but that he wants reassurance that the current schedule can be delivered and advice on any action that needs to be taken.

It is clear that teachers and schools across the country are already delivering learning and teaching that is aligned to the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and have made significant changes to how they organise the curriculum. There is no suggestion that work should slow down or be put on hold.

On 22 April, therefore, Management Board will focus on the timetable for the introduction of qualifications as this is the only area where delays have been suggested. It will consider what action needs to be taken to ensure that new qualifications can be delivered on schedule, with National 4 and National 5 qualifications being awarded from 2014. If Management Board believes that the schedule needs to be adjusted, they will give advice to that effect. Management Board will, of course, also continue to check what action is needed to support delivery of Curriculum for Excellence across stages and sectors.

I am writing to you in order to:

- update you on national progress with CfE and the issues we are addressing; and
- to ask you to complete a [short survey](#) by 26<sup>th</sup> March about CfE to provide us with information, evidence and advice in preparation for our next meeting on 22 April.

## Progress with CfE Exemplification

All key policy decisions relating to CfE have now been taken and communicated to schools and teachers. Examples of curriculum, learning and teaching and assessment are being prepared based on practice in schools across the country and will be made available as soon as possible. Materials have been distributed to schools to use to inform parents and learners about CfE. SQA have begun the process of developing the new qualifications and will provide information to presenting centres about individual subjects and courses as soon as possible. A formal programme plan exists to ensure effective management of the programme across all streams of work and across the country. A schedule of planned delivery dates for future advice, support and information is attached to this letter ([Annex A](#)). More detailed information about what is available and what is planned is available on the [Curriculum for Excellence website](#).

Can I highlight three examples of the support that is being made available and that are particularly relevant to consideration of whether the timetable is achievable? Illustrations of **assessments** across all levels and curriculum areas are being developed by schools across the country and should be available to you in April. Examples of **curriculum structures** that have been developed by a number of secondary schools are being made available this month. SQA has established a number of Curriculum Area Review Groups that will provide subject specific **information about new qualifications**. Initial information from these groups will be available before the end of the summer term.

## We are dealing with a number of issues.

Curriculum for Excellence asks you to base teaching and learning on a less prescriptive approach to subject content. I know that teachers welcome this recognition of their professionalism but appreciate that you are anxious to ensure your pupils meet expected standards and, in the senior phase, do well in national examinations. We are developing exemplar assessment material, establishing a system of moderation to ensure consistent standards, showcasing emerging good practice and encouraging the sharing of exemplar material. SQA has started the programme of developing the new qualifications and will provide information to presenting centres as soon as possible. (See attached schedule of key milestones in the programme plan. Annex A).

Teachers and schools are being encouraged to adopt innovative approaches to curriculum delivery, working across subject areas and curriculum structures. I know that teachers are anxious that HMIE, local authorities and headteachers will respond positively to innovation, providing support as well as constructive challenge.

Teachers and schools need to invest time in developing new approaches to teaching and learning and assessment and, in due course, to developing courses leading to new qualifications. Management Board has issued a strategy paper on Continuing Professional Development. Ministers have allocated an additional 4 in-service days. Ministers and Management Board have asked local authorities to ensure that teachers have the time and resources they need to implement CfE.

SQA is understandably anxious to ensure that there is a 'whole system' approach to the development and implementation of the new qualifications. That will require the release of teachers to support the development of qualifications, that all presenting centres manage the administration of the new qualifications effectively and, critically, that presenting centres have robust high quality moderation systems to support the internally assessed aspects of the new qualifications: National 4 and National 5. More generally, the programme to implement CfE depends on coordinated contributions from a wide range of local and national

organisations. These contributions do not only relate to qualifications: we also need to be assured that assessment standards are being maintained and moderated across all establishments. A detailed plan is being developed and tightly programme managed to ensure delivery of the entire programme including qualifications and the moderation of standards. We will make sure schools and teachers know what contributions they need to make and are kept up to date on overall progress. (See the attached schedule. Annex A.)

### **Action being taken prior to 22 April**

We are pulling together existing evidence on preparedness such as recent inspection reports and information provided by the organisations represented on the Management Board. The programme plan is being subjected to robust assessment to ensure it would deliver what is required on schedule. Management board is also keen to give every teacher in Scotland the opportunity to offer views and suggestions. I am therefore including a [link to a survey](#) that has been agreed by Management Board (including by the EIS). It is important that as many teachers as possible [complete the online survey](#) to ensure the results are representative. Can you please, therefore, take a few minutes to complete the survey by 26 March. We are using as many avenues as possible to ensure we reach every teacher. This may result in your receipt of more than one copy of this survey. I apologise if this occurs but I want to ensure that as many teachers as possible get the opportunity to express their views through this survey.

Thank you in anticipation of your help. I will write to you again after 22 April to explain what has been decided and to give you more details of the support that will be available to you.

Yours sincerely



**Colin MacLean**  
**Chair, Curriculum for Excellence Management Board**

## Curriculum for Excellence – Key Milestones

*(Additional in-service day for all staff in summer or autumn term 2010 depending upon local CFE implementation plan)*

March 2010	<p><b>Implementation Progress Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CfE MB Survey</li> <li>• Letters to LAs/Heads of Establishment</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building the Curriculum 5 – two follow up seminars – Ayr and Inverness</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum Management and Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building your Curriculum – 30 examples of curriculum structures in a variety of contexts covering Primary, S1 – S3 and the senior phase will be published.</li> <li>• Building the Curriculum 4 – National events</li> <li>• 16+ Learning Choices – National events</li> </ul>
April 2010	<p><b>Implementation Progress Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrative examples of CfE submitted by schools published on-line</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum Management and Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 examples of curriculum structures in a variety of contexts covering Primary, S1 – S3 and the senior phase will be published</li> <li>• 16+ learning choices – Policy and practices framework</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial examples, locally quality assured and moderated, to support approaches to assessment, in literacy and numeracy across all curriculum areas and health and wellbeing - around 80 to be published on the CfE website. Examples will show pupils' work assessed by practitioners against the standards and expectations in Building the Curriculum 5</li> <li>• Announcement by Scottish Government on resources to help support quality assurance and moderation model in Building the Curriculum 5</li> <li>• Decision by Cabinet Secretary on when the NAB is to be closed</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design principles for National 4 and National 5 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
May 2010	<p><b>Support for Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further exemplification to support learning and teaching will be available to complete coverage across all curriculum areas with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and sciences</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building the Curriculum 5 - four follow up seminars - Stirling, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen</li> <li>• Further initial examples, locally quality assured and moderated, to support approaches to assessment, in literacy and numeracy across all curriculum areas and health and wellbeing published on the CfE website. Examples will show pupils' work assessed by practitioners against the standards and expectations in Building the Curriculum 5.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft rationale and qualifications summary for new Literacy &amp; Numeracy qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>• Curriculum Area Review (CAR) reports published on SQA website</li> </ul>
June/ July 2010	<p><b>Curriculum Management and Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity agreements for all young people in 10 pilot areas</li> <li>• Strategy for careers, information, advice and guidance</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Area overviews/list of suites of courses signed off and published on SQA website</li> </ul>
August 2010	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of guidance on recognising achievement and the S3 profile</li> <li>Initial advice on reporting to parents</li> </ul>
September 2010	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New online National Assessment Resource (NAR) goes live populated with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial examples of assessment which were published on CfE website in April and May and which have been quality assured over the summer for inclusion in the NAR</li> <li>Items from the existing SSA in Literacy and Numeracy quality assured for inclusion in the NAR</li> </ul> </li> <li>NAR practitioner guidance available</li> <li>Start of National (3-15) Quality assurance and moderation model</li> </ul>
October 2010	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further advice on reporting to parents, taking account of NAR exemplars</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft arrangement and specifications for Literacy and Numeracy published on SQA website</li> </ul>
January 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft rationale and course summary for new National 4 and 5 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
April 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft course specifications for new National 4 and 5 qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li><b>Formal publication of new Literacy and Numeracy qualification arrangements and specifications (Literacy SCQF level 3, 4 and 5 and Numeracy SCQF level 3, 4 and 5)</b></li> </ul>
May 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft rationale and course summary for revised Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
August 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft unit specifications for National 4 and 5 published on SQA website</li> <li>Draft rationale and summary for revised Access 1 and 2 qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>Draft rationale and course summary for revised Access 3 qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>Draft course specifications for revised Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
November 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft unit support packs for National 4 and 5 qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>Draft unit specifications for revised Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>Draft unit specifications for revised Access 1 and 2 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
December 2011	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft unit specifications for revised Access 3 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
January 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft course and unit assessment specifications/evidence requirements for new National 4 and 5 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft unit support packs for revised Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>• Draft unit support packs for revised Access 1, 2 and 3 qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
February 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft course and unit assessment specifications/evidence requirements for revised Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
April 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course and unit assessment specifications/evidence requirements for revised Access 1, 2 and 3 qualifications published on SQA website</li> <li>• <b>Formal publication of National 4 and 5 course arrangements and unit specifications</b></li> <li>• <b>Formal publication of revised Access 1, 2 and 3 qualifications arrangements and specifications</b></li> <li>• <b>Formal publication of revised Higher course arrangements and specifications</b></li> </ul>
May 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Access 1, 2 &amp; 3, National 4 &amp; 5, revised Higher implementation events begin</li> <li>• Course specification for revised Advanced Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
October 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft unit specifications for revised Advanced Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
December 2012	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft unit support packs for revised Advanced Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
March 2013	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft course and unit assessment specifications/evidence requirements for revised Advanced Higher qualifications published on SQA website</li> </ul>
April 2013	<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial phase of assessment support material to support the implementation for revised Access 1, 2 &amp; 3, National 4 &amp; 5 and revised Higher published on SQA website</li> <li>• <b>Formal publication of revised Advanced Higher course arrangements and specifications</b></li> </ul>