

OECD recommendations 1.1-1.4 - Update on progress

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The OECD published Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future with 12 recommendations (Annex A) in June 2021. The Scottish Government subsequently published its response and an interim implementation plan was published in October 2021 (up-dated April 2022). Reform activity is now well underway with several inter-related pieces of work, such as the National Discussion on Scottish Education and the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment (the 'Hayward Review'), still to report their findings. The **significant** interdependencies for the work discussed in this paper are recognised.
- 1.2 In August 2022, Education Scotland (ES) took on the lead role for the 4 curriculum specific recommendations that sit under the broad heading: ***Balance Curriculum for Excellence so students can fully benefit from a coherent learning experience from 3 to 18 years.***¹
- 1.3 Leadership of these curriculum specific OECD recommendations currently sits within the ES National Directorate and is developed and planned across relevant ES teams and in partnership with ADES and the Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications (CAQ) Network in particular. We are also developing shared working links with universities and others to strengthen the research base.
- 1.4 As a direct response to the work required for reform, ES has expanded its Curriculum Innovation Team and created a newly formed Learning, Teaching and Assessment team. Both teams are now housed within the National Directorate.
- 1.5 In taking this work forward we are committed to working in partnership, and to working with learners, teachers and practitioners at local and regional levels. In practice this means enabling groups to come together in person and online to work together. We use **service design** approaches to identify, define and shape the work,

¹ 1..1 - Re-assess CfE's aspirational vision against emerging trends in education to take account of evolutions in education and society: Scotland should consider updates to some of its vision's core elements and their implications for practice, in particular, the role of knowledge in CfE; and define indicators aligned to the vision to help understand students' progress across all four capacities set out in CfE.

1.2 - Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE to deliver Scotland's commitment to providing all learners with a rich learning experience throughout school education: Scotland could consider how the design of CfE can better help learners consolidate a common base of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the end of BGE, and nurture and hone this base for them to progress seamlessly through Senior Phase and the choices its offers.

1.3 Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE: Scotland could consider adapting the pedagogical and assessment practices and the structure of learning pathways in the Senior Phase to enhance learners' experience of upper-secondary education and help them develop CfE's four capacities continuously.

1.4 Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research by developing the environment of curriculum design support around schools, including in supporting exchange and collaboration between practitioners for curriculum design and experimentation within and across schools, and collaboration between schools and universities.

adapting and iterating the approaches to support capacity building in curriculum design at local level.

- 1.6 The 'Scottish Approach to Service Design'² describes design as a way of exploring the problem space openly, collaboratively and with users, before a solution or service is decided. This is a method of exploring problems that remove organisational or sectoral boundaries.

2. Summary of key activities

- 2.1 To date key activities have followed a model where current curriculum challenges are firstly explored with the system, clearly defined by the system, exemplified across the system with the intention of empowering and enabling the system. A set of tools and approaches are developed as part of the process that can be adapted in any part of the system to meet local and community needs. Early evidence suggests that this is having impact.

- 2.2 Due to a number of historical interdependencies (including the Muir Review) and live interdependencies (including the National Discussion on Scottish Education, the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment and the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape) much of the curriculum development work since June 2021 has been in an **exploratory phase**. The aim is to be well-placed for the conclusions of the aforementioned interdependencies and provide strong foundations for further work to be carried out at pace.

- 2.3 Key exploratory activities linked to the OECD Curriculum Recommendations to date have included the following:

- **1.1** - Re-assess CfE's aspirational vision against emerging trends in education to take account of evolutions in education and society.
 - **Four Capacities Thought Paper**³: published October 2022.
 - **Map Barriers, wicked Issues and interdependencies of Scottish Education: developing a systems picture of the interdependencies of a very complex landscape** (from November 2022, working draft due May 2023).
 - **Development of Principles and Practice Papers for the two remaining contexts: Ethos and Life of the School and Personal Achievements.** (from May 2023).
- **1.2** - Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE to deliver Scotland's commitment to providing all learners with a rich learning experience throughout school education.
 - **Knowledge within each of the 8 Curriculum Areas:** Links to the 4 Capacities; links to meta-skills; review of the role of knowledge in each area. (from October 2022).
 - **Promoting and supporting the implementation of Realising the Ambition.** (from February 2020).
 - **Interdisciplinary Learning:** Re-convene the IDL practitioner co-design team to evaluate the August 2020 Thought Paper: *Interdisciplinary Learning*

² [SAtSD.pdf \(mygov.scot\)](#)

³ <https://education.gov.scot/media/fyhfk3p/education-scotland-notosh-exploring-the-four-capacities-october-2022.pdf>

:ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world against OECD recommendations. Identify next steps. (from October 2022).

- **Development of working definitions of pedagogies:** Building from research phase, defining key pedagogies for Scottish Education. (from February 2023).
 - **Curriculum area pedagogy project:** Exploring, defining and exemplifying subject area pedagogies. (from April 2023).
- **1.3 - Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE.**
 - **Learner Pathways:** Re-convene the Learner Pathways co-design team to evaluate the August 2020 Thought Paper: *Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design* against OECD recommendations. Identify next steps. (from November 2022).
 - **Profiling Achievements:** New co-design team formed. Exploring existing practice nationally and internationally on the use of e-portfolios and transcripts. (from November 2022, draft report March 2023).
 - **1.4 - Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research.**
 - **Curriculum Design Workshops:** support to LAs, RICs and Schools as required. (ongoing)
 - **Innovative Timetabling Models:** New Group Formed. Documenting and sharing ideas of what is possible in terms of curriculum flexibility both now and in the future (e.g. reduction of 90 min class contact time). First report published. (from October 2022).
 - **National PLL Programme in Curriculum Design:** scoping and planning underway (from September 2022). Pilot cohort starting in August 2023. First cohort starting in December 2023. Cohorts last 12 months.
 - **Consider curriculum area accredited professional learning programmes:** working going on in Maths, PE, Geography and Sustainability (from December 2022).
 - **Curriculum Design Hubs:** strengthening curriculum design capacity at Regional level. Hub blueprint developed, developing links with Higher Educations, ADES links established, LA Day of Design Planned (2nd March 2023).
- 2.4 A copy of the current plan with all current actions (previously shared with CAB in September 2022) and an update commentary on progress are included for reference and discussion at **Annex B**.

3. Co design groups

- 3.1 The Muir Review (March 2022) placed a real emphasis on listening to the voices of young people and also those closest to young people (teachers & practitioners and school & setting leaders) and a further emphasis in the role of teachers and school / setting leaders in shaping as well as implementing national policy.
- 3.2 A key approach of the exploratory work noted in section 2 above has been the creation of a number of national co-design groups to help define and shape the work to ensure that it genuinely meets the needs of children and young people. Two of these groups were in existence pre-COVID but have been re-convened and re-focused, and a number of new groups have been added. Group membership spans across the 32 Local Authorities and membership is primarily teachers and

practitioners and school and setting leaders. Groups also contain LA staff, national agency staff (ES, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Skills Development Scotland and members of the wider system (FE, HE, etc.)

3.3 There are currently over 300 service users, as identified in paragraph 3.3, actively involved in co-designing activity. Current groups include:

Name of Group	Established	Membership	Supports OECD Recommendation
Interdisciplinary learning	November 2019. Re-established October 2022.	75	1.2
Learner Journey	November 2019. Re-established November 2022.	56	1.3
Profiling Achievement	November 2022	88	1.3
Curriculum Review	November 2022	56	3.4
Innovative Timetabling	October 2022	25	1.4

4. Conclusion and Questions

4.1 Within the system there is a strong appetite to focus attention on the curriculum, its purpose and how that is being experienced by children and young people post-covid and into their futures. A number of authorities have recently held in person events bringing leaders across 3 to 18 together with curriculum design as a main focus. This strong appetite is coupled with a mix of both anticipation and apprehension about the potential changes needed both now and in the future. Perceived tensions exist between the focus in recent years on attainment and links with ‘performativity’ versus innovations to what the curriculum can and should offer. The culture needed to support an ‘authorising environment’ for curriculum innovation continues to require to be strengthened.

4.2 Members of the Curriculum and Assessment Board (CAB) are invited to comment on the paper attached. In particular we invite CAB to:

- comment on any activity and thinking to date.
- reflect on the actions that were previously shared with CAB in September 2022 (in red) currently captured in the high-level plan (Annex B) and consider any gaps.
- share useful insight from a personal, professional or research perspectives in the use of co-design / ‘ground up’ policy making.

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Annex A: 12 Broad Recommendations from the OECD Report

Recommendation 1. Balance Curriculum for Excellence so students can fully benefit from a coherent learning experience from ages 3 to 18 years

1.1 Re-assess CfE's aspirational vision against emerging trends in education to take account of evolutions in education and society: Scotland should consider updates to some of its vision's core elements and their implications for practice, in particular, the role of knowledge in CfE; and define indicators aligned to the vision to help understand students' progress across all four capacities set out in CfE.

1.2 Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE to deliver Scotland's commitment to providing all learners with a rich learning experience throughout school education: Scotland could consider how the design of CfE can better help learners consolidate a common base of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the end of BGE, and nurture and hone this base for them to progress seamlessly through Senior Phase and the choices it offers.

1.3 Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE: Scotland could consider adapting the pedagogical and assessment practices and the structure of learning pathways in the Senior Phase to enhance learners' experience of upper-secondary education and help them develop CfE's four capacities continuously.

1.4 Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research by developing the environment of curriculum design support around schools, including in supporting exchange and collaboration between practitioners for curriculum design and experimentation within and across schools; and collaboration between schools and universities.

Recommendation 2. Combine effective collaboration with clear roles and responsibilities

2.1 Ensure stable, purposeful and impactful stakeholder involvement with CfE: System leaders at national and local levels could continue encouraging the involvement of stakeholders (and in particular, students) with CfE by better structuring each engagement initiative they offer, clarifying its purpose, designing it accordingly, and letting stakeholder input inform decision making.

2.2 Revise the division of responsibilities for CfE: System leaders and stakeholders could revise the current allocation of responsibility for CfE, including responsibilities for its strategic direction, its reviews and updates, and the response to schools' needs of support with curriculum issues. The revised allocation should be stable over time to fulfil Scotland's commitment to shared ownership of CfE.

2.3 Structure a coherent communication strategy to support developments of CfE: System leaders, with the Learning Directorate and Education Scotland at the forefront, could develop a communication strategy in support of CfE's next developments and collaborate with practitioners, scholars and other CfE stakeholders as they do so.

Recommendation 3. Consolidate institutional policy processes for effective change

3.1 Provide dedicated time to lead, plan and support CfE at the school level: In support of the next phase of development of CfE, Scotland could consider the provision of

additional dedicated and ring-fenced time for all teachers, for curriculum planning, for monitoring of student achievement and in support of moderation of assessment outcomes.

3.2 Simplify policies and institutions for clarity and coherence: To align the institutional structures with clear ownership of CfE, Scotland could explore assigning leadership and development responsibilities for curriculum (and perhaps assessment) to a specialist stand-alone agency; and consider refreshing the remit of an inspectorate of education regarding CfE.

3.3 Align curriculum, qualifications and system evaluation to deliver on the commitment of Building the Curriculum 5: Scotland could first identify modes of student assessment that could be used in school and external settings at Senior Phase levels, in alignment with the four capacities and CfE philosophy; and second, re-develop a sample-based evaluation system to collect robust and reliable data necessary to support curriculum reviews and decision making.

3.4 Develop a systematic approach to curriculum review: Scotland could consider establishing a systematic curriculum review cycle with a planned timeframe and specific review agenda, led by the specialist stand-alone agency.

Recommendation 4. Lead the next steps for Curriculum for Excellence with a long-term view

4.0 Adopt a structured and long-term approach to implementation: Building on the system's existing strengths, Scotland should consider how to take on board the recommendations in this report as a coherent package rather than individual policy actions for the next steps.

Annex B

OECD Curriculum Improvement Recommendations – High level Activity Plan		
1.1 Re-assess CfE’s aspirational vision against emerging trends in education to take account of evolutions in education and society: Scotland should consider updates to some of its vision’s core elements and their implications for practice, in particular, the role of knowledge in CfE; and define indicators aligned to the vision to help understand students’ progress across all four capacities set out in CfE.		
Key Interdependencies: National Discussion (reports April 2023) and Independent Review of Assessment and Qualifications (May 2023)		
1.1.1	Ensure re-examining the aspirational vision of CfE and implications for practice is captured in the national discussion.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for development of tools for National Discussion 	August - September 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish <i>Exploring the Four Capacities</i> 	20 October 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of outputs, implications, production of advice. In person workshop 	March 2023 – July 2023 March 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for next stage of Four Capacities work 	March 2023 – May 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory work on one capacity alongside OECD matrix of success work (SG) 	Jan 2023 – March 2023
1.1.2	Continue to convene and facilitate dialogue to re-visit and assess the 2019 refreshed narrative for Scotland’s Curriculum to ensure that stakeholders understand the vision.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate national understanding of refreshed narrative – produce evidence paper. 	August 2022 – December 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop web-based tools to support curriculum design 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider development of principles/practice papers to support remaining two contexts (personal achievements and ethos and life ..) 	11 January 2023
1.1.3	Develop resource to support re-assessment of vision to include: emerging trends, current strengths and challenges and relevant research information. (Incorporate CAB paper 2.2)	August 2022 – March 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meeting 1 	9 November 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning meeting 2 	19 January 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing initial tools 	Feb – June 2023
1.1.4	Map the policy and practical delivery inter-dependencies and the wicked issues within the current system that are considered to be the barrier to implementation of CfE.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate initial findings Workshop initial draft with colleagues on SG/ES day 	August 2022 – December 2022 6 February 2023
1.1.5	Create scoping paper that builds on initial work from the NIF team to start to identify possible components of a matrix of success that link to the four capacities.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint production of paper outlining options – overtaken by SG request to OECD for review. Round table of OECD (international) findings 	August 2022 – August 2023 28 February 2023
1.2 Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE to deliver Scotland’s commitment to providing all learners with a rich learning experience throughout school education: Scotland could consider how the design of CfE can better help learners consolidate a common base of knowledge, skills and attitudes by the end of BGE, and nurture and hone this base for them to progress seamlessly through Senior Phase and the choices its offers.			
Key Interdependencies: National Discussion (reports March 2023) and Independent Review of Assessment and Qualifications (May 2023)			
	1.2.1	Develop scoping paper to review and clarify position of knowledge within the curriculum. This will include the consideration of relationships between knowledge and the four capacities, a framework for knowledge within individual curriculum areas and what may constitute a common base of knowledge required by learners for the 21 st century.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify initial group to co-design options for curriculum review process. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for Pilot curriculum area reviews for Maths, HWB and Social Studies Maths practitioners workshop HWB practitioners workshop Social Studies by correspondence 	August 2022 – Dec 2022 20 February 2023 21 February 2023 February March 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce scoping /findings paper 	March 2023 August 2022 – April 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review other curriculum areas (5) 	August 2023 – June 2024
	1.2.2	Develop scoping paper to explore skills frameworks currently developed across the system, how skills align with each of four capacities and their practical application within curriculum areas.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review metaskills framework re alignment with four capacities 	January 2023 – April 2023
	1.2.3	Explore and develop key pedagogical principles. This will include a close look at digital, play and project based pedagogies.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and exemplify key pedagogical approaches - outline paper for possible discussion at SG/ES day 	August 2022 – December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce set of podcasts: pedagogy- voices from practice 	September 2022 - March 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key principles of effective pedagogy 	January 2023 - June 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify effective pedagogies in each curriculum area 	January 2023 - October 2023 (but see 1.2.1 times)
	1.2.4	Produce scoping paper to explore how other systems explore big ideas.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore international approaches to big ideas and undertake initial testing with ongoing equalities work. 	August 2022 - December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore applicability of big ideas approach in maths and HWB 	September 2022 - October 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big Ideas paper ready for sharing 	October 2023
1.2.5		Re-convene the IDL practitioners co-design team to evaluate the August 2020 Thought paper: <i>Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world against OECD recommendations. Identify next steps.</i>	August 2022 - December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 1 online 	25 October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 2 in person 	16 March 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 3 	
1.2.6		Promote and support the implementation of Realising the Ambition	From February 2020
<p>1.3 Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE: Scotland could consider adapting the pedagogical and assessment practices and the structure of learning pathways in the Senior Phase to enhance learners' experience of upper- secondary education and help them develop CfE's four capacities continuously.</p> <p>Key Interdependencies: National Discussion (reports March 2023); Independent Review of Assessment and Qualifications (May 2023) and Independent review of the Skills Delivery Landscape</p>			
	1.3.1	Re-convene the Learner pathways practitioners co-design team to evaluate the August 2020 Thought paper: <i>Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design against OECD recommendations. Identify next steps.</i>	August 2022 –December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 1 online 	7 December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 2 online 	8 February 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 3 in-person 	24 March 2023
	1.3.4	Ensure that Education Scotland Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme remains 'fit for purpose' throughout each stage of the reform programme through regular review and consultation with ES NIF Officers.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTA/NIF workshop 1 	31 October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce review paper identifying strengths and challenges. 	September 2022 - December 2022
	1.3.5	Continue to develop and strengthen system capacity for teacher judgement through QAMSO programme.	January 2023 – August 2023
	1.3.6	Ensure and monitor links to wider policy (inc: Economic Strategy, Digital Strategy, SG Devices and Infrastructure Project, Review of Land Based Qualifications...)	August 2022 onwards

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial outline 	November 2022
1.3.7		Explore existing practice nationally and internationally on the use of e-portfolios and transcripts that will result in a scoping paper that establishes key elements of effective practice and how these can recognise achievements across the four capacities.	August 2022 – June 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene Profiling Achievements co-design group 1 in person 	22 November 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online meeting of group 	12 January 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene Profiling Achievements co-design group 2 in person 	26 January 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of co-design findings [link to 1.1.1 - 4C stage 2 and to initial findings from Hayward] 	April 2023
3.1 Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research by developing the environment of curriculum design support around schools, including in supporting exchange and collaboration between practitioners for curriculum design and experimentation within and across schools; and collaboration between schools and universities.			
1.4.1		Increase Curriculum design capacity by establishing Curriculum Design Hubs in each of the RICs.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working blueprint ready for use with RICs 	August 2022 – October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for development of 'hubs' in each RIC 	October 2022 – April 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnership work with ADES CAQ network 	2 December 2022 ->
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of Design to focus on RIC capacity 	2 March 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of progress to date. 	April 2023
1.4.2		Develop professional learning course with qualification/award in curriculum design	August 2023 – June 2024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal working group set up [PLL/CIT/] to develop proposal and plan 	October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group 2 	28 October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnership work with ADES CAQ network – join working group 	2 December 2022 ->
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal agreed 	May 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot programme begins 	September 2023
1.4.3		Establish timetabling group to identify and decide approaches to building capacity.	August 2022 – June 2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of group 1 	25 October 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of initial thinking 	December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of group 2 	14 December 2022
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of group 3 	
3.4 Develop a systematic approach to curriculum review: Scotland could consider establishing a systematic curriculum review cycle with a planned timeframe and specific review agenda, led by the specialist stand-alone agency.			

3.4.1	Develop initial scoping paper to examine options for what a cycle of curriculum review might look like in Scotland.	August 2022 – December 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with co-design group to develop options paper 	December 2022 – March 2023
3.4.2	Explore how curriculum is reviewed in other OECD countries.	August 2022 – October 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a literature review – OECD team involved 	