



REALISING YOUR POTENTIAL

A GUIDE TO THE SCOTTISH CREDIT
AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
FOR LIFELONG LEARNERS



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

PLAN YOUR LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFECTIVELY USING THE SCQF

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership promotes lifelong learning in Scotland. By using the Framework you can find out about all mainstream qualifications in Scotland and plan your future learning to realise your full potential.

WHAT IS THE SCQF?

The SCQF can help you compare the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It recognises achievements from school, college and university, and many work-based qualifications, by giving each qualification a level and credit points.

The diagram on the next page shows that there are 12 levels. Qualifications at level 1 are the easiest, and qualifications at level 12 are the most demanding. SCQF credit points show how much learning is needed to achieve qualifications. One SCQF credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning.

The SCQF makes qualifications easier to describe and understand. Before the SCQF, there was no easy way to compare different types of qualifications. Now it is easy to understand that, for example, an Advanced Higher is at the same level as a Higher National Certificate (HNC), the first year of a degree or a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 3. They are all at SCQF level 7 because, although they are all different types of qualification, the level of learning is roughly the same.

HOW IS THE SCQF BEING USED?

All Scottish universities and colleges use SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses. A wide range of other learning is also being recognised using SCQF levels

and credit points. Some employers, such as local authorities, are also using SCQF levels instead of, or as well as, types of qualifications when they advertise jobs.

Some organisations, such as employers within Social Services, are also using the SCQF to help with the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of potential or current employees. This can help you to identify and get recognition for the skills and knowledge you have gained through life and work experiences which may count towards a particular qualification or job role that you want to achieve.

THE SCQF CAN:

- help you identify what skills you need and choose the best way to move forward in your learning;
- help you understand qualifications you are not familiar with;
- help employers understand different types of qualifications;
- help universities or colleges identify the level you have studied at in a particular subject, and make it easier to transfer credits between different learning programmes; and
- recognise other areas of formal and informal learning or skills that may help you to develop and achieve your goals in the future.

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12				DOCTORAL DEGREE 540	
11				INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREE 600 MASTERS DEGREE 180 POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA 120 POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE 60	SVQ5
10				HONOURS DEGREE 480 GRADUATE DIPLOMA 120 GRADUATE CERTIFICATE 60	
9			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	BACHELORS/ORDINARY DEGREE 360 GRADUATE DIPLOMA 120 GRADUATE CERTIFICATE 60	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA 240		DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION 240	
7		HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE 96		CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 120	SVQ3
6					
5					SVQ2
4			NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD	SVQ1
3					
2					
1					

DIAGRAM NOTES

We have produced this Framework diagram to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications that the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and higher education institutions have already given an SCQF level and credit points to. However, there are many more learning programmes on the Framework, which we cannot show here. If you want more information on other learning that has an SCQF level and credit points, you can visit our website at www.scqf.org.uk to look at the interactive version of the diagram or search the database.

The credit values for some learning programmes, such as Professional Development Awards, National Certificates and SVQs, can vary depending on the number of units involved. If you need more information on credit values for specific qualifications, contact your learning provider.

OTHER LEARNING PROGRAMMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

There are some other learning programmes and professional qualifications that you might take at college, university, in the workplace or your local community centre that may also have an SCQF level and credit points. This area of the framework will continue to develop, so it is worth checking our website at www.scqf.org.uk. There are some examples in the following table.

SCQF Levels	Course Owner	Title	Credit Points
4	CACDP (The Council for the Advancement of Communication of Deaf People)	Level 1 Certificate in British Sign Language	5
5	City and Guilds	Certificate in Retail Principles	34
5	British Computer Society	ECDL	27
6	ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)	Certificate of Personal Effectiveness Level 3	15
6	ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management)	Certificate in First Line Management	20
7	CIoBS (Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland)	Certificate in Financial Services	30
7	COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland)	Counselling Skills	40
8	Chartered Management Institute	Introductory Diploma in Management	16
11	Scottish Police College	Strategic Community Safety	30

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I studied and gained qualifications outside the UK. Can you tell me what my qualifications are comparable to in Scotland?

No, not at the moment. You should contact an organisation called UK NARIC, which is the national agency responsible for providing information, advice and expert opinion on vocational, academic and professional skills and qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide. You will need to pay for this service. You can contact UK NARIC on +44 0871 330 7033 or by emailing them at info@naric.org.uk. You may also be able to get help from Skills Development Scotland (they used to be called Careers Scotland). You can phone them on 0845 8 502 502 or use the online contact form at www.careersscotland.org.uk/ContactUs.asp

What do you mean by prior informal learning and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

Prior informal learning is learning based on experience. It includes all learning which you have done which has not already been assessed or credit-rated. This includes things you have learned through life and work experiences (paid and voluntary), as well as community-based learning, workplace learning and training and professional development. RPL means that you may be able to count things you have learned through experience towards a promotion at work, getting a job or getting a place on a course.

Are SCQF credit points the same as UCAS tariff points?

No, SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS is the organisation that processes applications for higher education courses. The tariff points relate to the qualification grade that has been achieved. SCQF credit points are a measure of how much learning needs to be done to achieve a qualification or learning programme, whatever the final grade.

Do credits help me to study for another qualification or job?

Yes, they can help. However, it's up to the awarding body, such as SQA, and individual universities and colleges, to decide how relevant one piece of learning is to the programme of learning that you want to do. This is called credit transfer.

How do I work out what credits I have?

Your community learning and development centre, college, university or training provider can tell you how many credit points each qualification represents. You can find more information about SCQF levels and credit points by visiting our website at <http://www.scqf.org.uk/Resources/>.

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