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SCOTLAND'S FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

a guide for learners, providers
and employers



SCOTLAND'S FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework promotes lifelong learning in Scotland. Through this Framework you can currently find out about all mainstream qualifications in Scotland and plan your future learning. An increasing number of other organisations including employers and learning providers are also having their learning credit rated onto the SCQF.

BACKGROUND

The Framework supports everyone in Scotland, including learning providers and employers, by:

- helping people of all ages and circumstances to get access to appropriate education and training so they can meet their full potential; and
- helping employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

By using two measures – the level of a qualification and the number of credit points awarded for that qualification – the Framework helps you understand and compare qualifications. The level of a qualification increases with the complexity of the course. The number of credit points for a qualification is based on the amount of time that an 'average' learner studying at the appropriate level might take to achieve the outcomes of that course. One credit point represents 10 hours of learning time.

THE FRAMEWORK

- describes the courses and programmes that lead to qualifications;
- helps with the development of progression routes; and
- provides opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications.

The Framework also provides an extremely important way of recognising 'outcome-based learning' (learning that is related to things that you can do) and 'quality-assured learning' (learning that has been assessed and

checked by someone else) in a wide range of settings (for example, learning in the workplace or in the community).

SCQF LEVELS

The Framework has 12 levels which provide a basis for broad comparisons between learning and qualifications achieved in different contexts. The levels help show how demanding the qualification or programme is – Level 1 being the least demanding and Level 12 the most demanding. Increases in level relate to factors such as:

- the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding – mainly subject based;
- level of practice – the applied academic, vocational or professional practice;
- communication, numeracy (maths skills) and IT skills; and
- the level of independence, responsibility and the roles taken in relation to other learners or workers in carrying out tasks.

SCQF CREDIT POINTS

SCQF credit points are allocated based on the amount of time that it would take an average learner to complete the qualification or learning programme. One credit point represents the amount of learning that could be achieved in a notional 10 hours of learning time (see the note below). This includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the learning outcomes, including the assessment itself.

Note: The use of 'notional' here means that the 'average' learner would take 10 hours to complete the learning equal to one credit. Some learners may take longer and others may take less time.

SCQF CREDIT RATING

Qualifications in the Framework are allocated a level and credit points through a process called credit rating. To be eligible to be placed on the Framework, qualifications and learning programmes must be based on learning outcomes and assessed in a valid, reliable and quality-assured way. Currently the credit rating bodies are the higher-education institutions, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Scotland's colleges.

Consultation on other credit rating bodies took place in 2008 and information on the outcome is available at www.scqf.org.uk

THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

In some circumstances, it may also be possible to recognise learning that has been gained through experience or the workplace. This is called the Recognition of Prior Learning.

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK TABLE

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12			DOCTORAL DEGREE	
11			INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREE MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10			HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA	DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
7	ADVANCED HIGHER CREDIT POINTS 32	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SVQ3
6	HIGHER 24			
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT STANDARD GRADE 24 24			SVQ2
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL STANDARD GRADE 24 24	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD	SVQ1
3	ACCESS 3 FOUNDATION STANDARD GRADE 18 24			
2	ACCESS 2 18			
1	ACCESS 1			

We have produced this Framework diagram to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and higher-education institutions. However, there is a varied range of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limits of this format, cannot be shown here. For more information on other credit rated education, please visit our website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the database.

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP

In November 2006, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership was set up to manage the Framework. Our members are:

- Association of Scotland's Colleges;
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education;
- Scottish Ministers;
- Scottish Qualifications Authority; and
- Universities Scotland.

We are not run to make a profit and are a registered charity.

OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- maintain the quality and effectiveness of the Framework;
- promote and develop the Framework as a way of supporting lifelong learning; and
- develop and maintain links between the Framework and similar frameworks throughout the UK, Europe and the rest of the world.

Maintaining the quality and effectiveness of the Framework is vital for it to be successful. We have set up a Quality Committee to support the quality of the Framework and to provide clear, accurate technical information to learners, the public and others with an interest in learning, including learning providers and employers.

The Framework provides the language used to describe all learning. Effective communication is at the heart of the Framework and we are supporting a communication programme for the people of Scotland. We also produce publications about learning in Scotland and keep people up to date with developments through our website (www.scqf.org.uk) and SCQF Updates, which we produce every six months.

To help us support the Framework, we have set up the SCQF Forum. The Forum is made up of senior representatives from the fields of education, business and communities in Scotland. The Forum gives us advice to make sure the Framework continues to meet the needs of all learners, employers and other users of Scottish qualifications, both within Scotland and in Europe and the rest of the world.

OUR MAIN CHALLENGES

The SCQF continues to develop to meet the challenges set out in 'Skills for Scotland: a lifelong learning skills strategy'. We have worked with partners to set up a database of all credit rated learning in Scotland as we recognise the importance of making this information available to everyone who needs it.

We are working to reference the Framework with qualifications frameworks in the rest of the UK and are also leading the way in qualifications framework development and referencing in Europe.

For more information on these, and other developments, see the SCQF Strategic Plan for 2007 to 2011. You can find this on our website at www.scqf.org.uk.

The Framework is at the heart of helping individual learners, learning providers, users of qualifications and policymakers to promote a culture of lifelong learning in Scotland. If you need more information, please get in touch with us.

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