

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
SCQF Level Descriptors



SCQF Level Descriptors

The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework

The SCQF provides a national vocabulary for describing learning opportunities so making the relationships between qualifications clearer. It will clarify entry and exit points, help map routes for progression within and across education and training sectors and increase the opportunities for credit transfer. In these ways it will assist learners to plan their progress and minimise duplication of learning.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework				
SCQF level	SQA National Units, Courses and Group Awards	Higher Education	SVQs*	SCQF level
12		Doctorates		12
11		Masters	SVQ 5	11
10		Honours Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate**		10
9		Ordinary Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate**		9
8		Higher National Diploma Diploma in Higher Education	SVQ 4	8
7	Advanced Higher	Higher National Certificate Certificate in Higher Education		7
6	Higher		SVQ 3	6
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade		SVQ 2	5
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade		SVQ 1	4
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade			3
2	Access 2			2
1	Access 1			1

The level descriptors

The SCQF has 12 levels reflecting the current Scottish system of education and training. There are no descriptors for level 1 which covers all provision which falls below the full achievement of level 2 while level 12 relates to outcomes associated with doctoral level studies. The descriptors show how each level becomes increasingly demanding by changes to factors such as complexity and depth of knowledge, links to associated academic, vocational or professional practice, and the degree of autonomy exercised by the learner.

SCQF levels provide a basis for broad comparisons between learning and qualifications achieved in different contexts, such as the workplace and formal classroom study, and by a variety of modes, but they can only be applied to learning which has been or can be subject to valid, reliable and quality assured assessment.

These generic level descriptors have been designed to provide a general understanding of each level. The descriptors give broad, general, but meaningful, indicators of the characteristics of learning at each level. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning at each level.

The descriptors can be used in a number of ways:

- to allocate levels to learning programmes and qualifications
- in validation events for qualifications and programmes as a basis for communication with learners and other users of qualifications
- as a guide for mapping progression routes within and across the education and training sectors
- by programme designers when making entry requirements and recommendations for programmes

At each level five headings have been identified to make the descriptors manageable. These are:

- ***knowledge and understanding*** — mainly subject-based
- ***practice: applied knowledge and understanding***
- ***generic cognitive skills***, eg evaluation, critical analysis
- ***communication, numeracy and IT skills***
- ***autonomy, accountability and working with others***

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There is no separate descriptor for level 1, which covers all provision that comes below the full achievement of level 2.

Where two or more qualifications or programmes of learning are placed at the same level they will be comparable in certain respects, particularly their overall level of outcome, but they will each have their own purpose, content or structure. The SCQF does not, however, demonstrate equivalence or inter-changeability of qualifications.

Using the level descriptors

The descriptors flesh out the levels of the Framework. They are designed to help programme designers and the writers of Unit specifications to look at the range of skills that might be covered at a particular level, select appropriate headings and peg outcomes accordingly.

It is envisaged that people assigning a level to a qualification will employ an approach that involves both matching against a level and identifying the levels above and below which don't match. This will be done by direct matching with the descriptors, and by making comparisons with the SQA and HEI qualifications that make up the Framework.

It is not envisaged that a learner in every unit/course/programme will cover all of the headings. The decision regarding what is included lies with the designers/writers of programmes of learning. However, it is envisaged that Knowledge and Understanding and/or Practice - applied knowledge and understanding will be a key to allocating a level to most programmes.

Level descriptors can be used at any stage in the design, development and validation of programmes, courses or units. The intention is for them to be used as a guide to locate the level of outcomes, but not to prescribe the content, range, and so on. They are not intended to be the sole reference source either.

NB These descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics.

SCQF Level Descriptors

SCQF Level 2 (eg Access 2)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/ or work with :</p> <p>- knowledge of simple facts and ideas in a subject/ discipline</p>	<p>Relate knowledge to a few simple everyday contexts with prompting.</p> <p>Use a few very simple skills.</p> <p>Carry out, with guidance, a few familiar tasks.</p> <p>Use, under supervision, basic tools and materials.</p>	<p>Use rehearsed stages for solving problems.</p> <p>Operate in personal and/or everyday contexts.</p> <p>Take some account, with prompting, of identified consequences of action.</p>	<p>Use very simple skills with Assistance - for example:</p> <p>Produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar/ routine contexts</p> <p>Carry out a limited range of very simple tasks to process data and access information</p> <p>Use a limited range of very simple and familiar numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts</p>	<p>Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent and directive supervision.</p> <p>Identify, given simple criteria, some successes and/or failures of the work.</p>

SCQF Level Descriptors

**SCQF Level 3
(eg Access 3, Standard Grade Foundation level)**

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline - simple facts and ideas associated with a subject/ discipline 	<p>Relate knowledge with some prompting to personal and/ or everyday contexts.</p> <p>Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks.</p> <p>Complete pre-planned tasks.</p> <p>Use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively.</p>	<p>Identify, with some prompting, a process to deal with a situation or issue.</p> <p>Operate in familiar contexts using given criteria.</p> <p>Take account of some identified consequences of action.</p>	<p>Use simple skills - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar, routine contexts - carry out simple tasks to process data and access information - use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts 	<p>Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent supervision.</p> <p>Participate in the setting of goals, timelines etc.</p> <p>Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes.</p> <p>Identify, given simple criteria, own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</p>

SCQF Level 4
(eg Intermediate 1 , Standard Grade General level , SVQ 1)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline which is mainly factual - some simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/ discipline - knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology 	<p>Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts.</p> <p>Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements.</p> <p>Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.</p>	<p>Use, with guidance, given stages of a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue.</p> <p>Operate in straightforward contexts.</p> <p>Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.</p>	<p>Use straightforward skills, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts - use the most straightforward features of familiar applications to process and obtain Information - use straightforward numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts 	<p>Work alone or with others on straightforward tasks.</p> <p>Contribute to the setting of goals, timelines etc.</p> <p>Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes.</p> <p>Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</p>

SCQF Level 5

(eg Intermediate 2 , Standard Grade Credit level , SVQ 2)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline which is mainly factual but has some theoretical component - a range of simple facts and ideas about and associated with subject/ discipline - knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology 	<p>Relate ideas and knowledge to personal and / or practical contexts.</p> <p>Complete some routine and non-routine tasks using knowledge associated with a subject / discipline.</p> <p>Plan and organise both familiar and new tasks.</p> <p>Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively (eg without waste).</p> <p>Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices.</p>	<p>Use a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue which is straightforward in relation to a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Operate in a familiar context , but where there is a need to take account of or use additional information of different kinds, some of which will be theoretical or hypothetical.</p> <p>Use some abstract Constructs - eg make generalisations and/ or draw conclusions.</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills - for example :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts - use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information - use a range of numerical and graphical data in straightforward contexts which have some complex features 	<p>Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum supervision.</p> <p>Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team with manager / supervisor.</p> <p>Take leadership responsibility for some tasks.</p> <p>Show an awareness of others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and make a contribution to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.</p>

SCQF Level Descriptors

SCQF Level 6 (eg Higher , SVQ 3)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and / or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - generalised knowledge of a subject/ discipline - factual and theoretical knowledge - a range of facts, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices, techniques about/ associated with a subject/ discipline <p>Relate the subject/ discipline to a range of practical and/ or everyday applications</p>	<p>Apply knowledge and understanding in known , practical contexts.</p> <p>Use some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/ or materials associated with a subject/ discipline in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements.</p> <p>Plan how skills will be used to address set situations and/ or problems and adapt these as necessary.</p>	<p>Obtain, organise and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving.</p> <p>Make generalisations and predictions.</p> <p>Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of skills - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts - select and use standard applications to process, obtain and combine information - use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements 	<p>Take responsibility for the carrying out of a range of activities, where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision.</p> <p>Take some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work.</p> <p>Manage limited resources within defined and supervised areas of work.</p> <p>Take account of roles and responsibilities related to the tasks being carried out and take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes</p>

**SCQF Level 7 (SHE level 1)
(eg Cert HE , Advanced Higher, HNC and SVQ 3)**

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broad knowledge of the subject/ discipline in general - knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles - an awareness of the evolving/ changing nature of knowledge and understanding - an understanding of the difference between explanations based in evidence and/ or research and other forms of explanation, and of the importance of this difference 	<p>Use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/ or materials associated with a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.</p>	<p>Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas which are routine to the subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of approaches to addressing defined and/ or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/ discipline - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form - use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and new contexts - use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data - use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination - use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/ targets 	<p>Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take supervision in less familiar areas of work.</p> <p>Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure.</p> <p>Manage limited resources within defined areas of work.</p> <p>Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks.</p> <p>Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.</p>

SCQF Level 8 (SHE level 2)
(eg Dip HE, HND , SVQ 4)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/ discipline - detailed knowledge in some areas - understanding of a limited range of core theories, principles and concepts - limited knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms - an outline knowledge and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly / academic processes 	<p>Use a range of routine skills , techniques , practices and/ or materials associated with a subject/ discipline , a few of which are advanced or complex.</p> <p>Carry out routine lines of enquiry, development or investigation into professional level problems and issues.</p> <p>Adapt routine practices within accepted standards.</p>	<p>Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/ or synthesis of ideas, concepts , information and issues which are within the common understandings of the subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of approaches to formulate evidence based solutions / responses to defined and/ or routine problems/ issues.</p> <p>Critically evaluate evidence– based solutions / responses to defined and/ or routine problems/ issues.</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/ discipline for example :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes - use a range of standard applications to process and obtain data - use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/ targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take significant managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work.</p> <p>Manage resources within defined areas of work.</p> <p>Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>Take continuing account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.</p> <p>Work in support of current professional practice under guidance.</p> <p>Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/ or ethical codes or practices under guidance</p>

SCQF Level 9 (SHE level 3)
(eg Ordinary degrees, Graduate Certificates)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/ discipline - a critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology - knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments 	<p>Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a discipline.</p> <p>Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced.</p> <p>Practise routine methods of enquiry and/or research.</p> <p>Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability.</p>	<p>Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/ or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues.</p> <p>Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues.</p> <p>Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/ discipline for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make formal and informal presentations on standard/ mainstream topics in the subject/ discipline to a range of audiences - use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work - interpret, use and evaluate numerical data to achieve goals/ targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</p> <p>Practise in ways which take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Work under guidance with qualified practitioners.</p> <p>Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/ or ethical codes or practices, seeking guidance where appropriate.</p>

**SCQF Level 10 (SHE level 4)
(eg Honours degrees, Graduate Diplomas)**

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject/discipline - a critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles - detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline - knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/ discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies 	<p>Use a range of the principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a few skills, practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes.</p> <p>Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.</p>	<p>Critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse complex/ professional level problems and issues.</p> <p>Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues.</p> <p>Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills and practices and thinking in a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues.</p> <p>Make judgements where data/ information is limited or comes from a range of sources.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/ discipline- for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences - communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues and specialists - use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify requirements/ improvements to software to increase effectiveness - interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/ targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/ equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</p> <p>Practise ways which show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Work effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners.</p> <p>Work with others to bring about change, development and/ or new thinking.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p> <p>Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.</p>

SCQF Level Descriptors

SCQF Level 11 (SHE level 5 , PG 1) (eg PG Dip, PG Cert , MA , MSc , SVQ 5)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/ or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/ discipline - including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions - a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts - a critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principles and concepts - extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront - critical awareness of current issues in a subject/ discipline and one or more specialisms 	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are associated with subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments.</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</p> <p>Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development.</p> <p>Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/ or practices.</p> <p>Practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.</p>	<p>Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed by developments at the forefront of a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues.</p> <p>Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.</p> <p>Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge , skills, practices and thinking in a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/ information.</p>	<p>Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/ discipline - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/ expertise - communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists - use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/ improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness - undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data 	<p>Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Take responsibility for a significant range of resources.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development.</p> <p>Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>

SCQF Level Descriptors

SCQF Level 12 (SHE level 6, PG 2) (eg Ph.D. — Doctorate)

Knowledge and understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic cognitive skills	Communication, ICT and Numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level includes the ability to :				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts - a critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms - knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/ discipline 	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/ discipline.</p> <p>Use and enhance a range of complex skills, Techniques, practices and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms.</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</p> <p>Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues</p> <p>Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices.</p> <p>Practice in the context of new problems and circumstances.</p>	<p>Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues.</p> <p>Identify , conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues.</p> <p>Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues.</p> <p>Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data/ information</p>	<p>Use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/ discipline - for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose - communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms - use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work - critically evaluate numerical and graphical data 	<p>Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/ or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues.</p> <p>Work in ways which are reflective, self-critical and based on research/ evidence.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues.</p> <p>Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/ or ethical codes or practices.</p>

Credit Rating Guidelines

Credit rating is a process of professional judgement leading to a statement on the level and volume of outcomes of learning. Professional judgement is exercised by those best qualified through experience and knowledge of the discipline, field of study, profession, trade or area of skill.

The focus of the credit rating process is on outcomes and on the arrangements for assessing learner achievement of these.

- 1 Credit points are a measure of appropriate and defined learning outcomes at a specified level.*
- 2 One credit point equates to the learning outcomes achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time.*
- 3 Learning time refers to the average time judged to be required by an average learner at a particular level to achieve defined learning outcomes. It includes all the learning activities relevant to the achievement of the outcomes, including the undertaking and completion of assessment tasks.*
- 4 The minimum number of credit points is **one**.*
- 5 Credit points are always allocated at a specified level normally determined by the original design content of a unit of learning.*
- 6 The number of credit points assigned to a unit of learning or module is independent of the perceived centrality or importance of the unit within any wider programme.*
- 7 The number of credit points awarded is independent of the standard at which the outcomes are achieved.*
- 8 Credit points are general in that they define a volume and a level of outcome within the SCQF. They become specific when related to transfer to a particular programme or to an individual's claim for credit towards a particular programme.*
- 9 Credit points can be transferred.*
- 10 Allocation of a level to learning is essentially a matter of professional judgement using appropriate reference points such as the SCQF generic level descriptors, relevant programme descriptors, higher education subject benchmark information, SQA specifications and other appropriate sources of information and guidance.*
- 11 SCQF levels are not related directly to years of study. They are defined by the extent of demands made of the learner in each of the five broad categories of competence.*
- 12 The credit rating body will be responsible for ensuring that the credit rating process and outcomes are consistent with relevant reference points.*

Recognition of prior informal learning— RPL

The term **prior informal learning** covers all prior learning which has not previously been assessed or credit-rated whether achieved through life and work experiences (paid and voluntary) ; learning gained in non-formal contexts through community-based learning; workplace learning and training; continuing professional development and independent learning.

RPL can be undertaken by a learner for **personal and career development**, or to support the transition between informal and formal learning. This focuses on **formative** recognition which may result in a mapping or a notional levelling of an individual's learning within the context of the SCQF as part of an educational guidance or personal development planning process. This may involve :

- mapping the outcomes of learning within the SCQF, or a notional levelling of learning, in order to identify possible progression routes to build on that learning. This mapping or 'notional levelling' may be undertaken by comparing the outcomes of learning to SCQF level descriptors; core skills or national occupational standards (NOS)
- identifying and further developing core skills gained through prior informal learning as part of bridging activities to ease the transition between informal and formal learning

RPL can be undertaken to **gain credit** (for entry to and/or credit within formal programmes of study). This focuses on **summative** recognition which will involve a formal assessment of prior informal learning as part of the credit-rating process. This involves determining:

- the **comparability of the learning** to either the:
 - Particular requirements for entry to a programme in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding (*RPL for entry*);
 - Existing or negotiated individual programme unit or modules (*RPL for credit against particular units/module*);
 - The outcomes, or competences, for part of a level of a programme or qualification in a particular subject or vocational area (*RPL for general or specific credit*);
 - The outcomes for an entire level of a programme or qualification (*RPL for general or specific credit*).
- the **level of credit**
- the **volume of credit**

If you are interested in finding out more about what RPL involves, the SCQF RPL Guidelines and the shorter Core Principles and Key Features of RPL will provide you with further information and guidance. Alternatively you can contact a college or university to discuss.

The SCQF RPL information is available on the SCQF website www.scqf.org.uk

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