

Understanding Qualifications

Introducing the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

An Initial Guide for those involved in Early Education and Childcare:
in daycare settings, in out of school care and in playwork



The Scottish Credit and
Qualifications Framework

With different qualifications on offer, how do you decide which one to choose?

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is a way of looking at, comparing, and understanding, Scottish qualifications.

Most mainstream Scottish qualifications are now being placed within the Framework and, in due course, other qualifications and learning will be included.

The SCQF is designed to help learners, employers and providers compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland.

By giving every qualification a **level** and a **credit** value, the SCQF makes it easy to compare qualifications and see where they stand.

Look at the Framework diagram and you'll find out more.

What is the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework?

Levels

The Framework has 12 levels: most Early Education and Childcare qualifications are at level 5 and above.

Early Education and Childcare qualifications are designed to meet particular needs. Qualifications at the same level have the same level of complexity but the content, purpose and the amount of learning in them is not necessarily the same.

Credit Points

The number of SCQF credit points for a qualification gives you an idea of how much learning is required. A qualification that requires a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills will require more learning and have more credit points attached to it than a qualification where a smaller amount of learning is required.

One SCQF credit point represents the learning achieved in about 10 hours of learning time. The new HNC in Early Education and Childcare, available from 2004, is worth 96 credit points and the learning will take around 960 hours of learning time.

Other Benefits of the SCQF

Credit Transfer

In the Framework, SCQF credit points can be used to transfer from one qualification to another, where appropriate. For example, transfer can be from a training programme to an SVQ or from an HNC to the second year of a degree programme. This will help reduce the repetition of learning some people experience.

It is important to state that there is no automatic transfer route from one qualification to another but the Framework helps learners see where it might be possible.

The SCQF levels and credit points will be shown on SQA certificates from the end of 2004 and may be useful for CVs.

Learners can achieve qualifications at their own pace and it is possible to work towards some qualifications on a part-time basis, gathering credit points as you go.

The SCQF and Early Education and Childcare

The SCQF will help those who choose to work in Early Education and Childcare to identify appropriate education and training and build on their learning in the future if they choose.

By using levels and credit to describe learning opportunities, the SCQF will help to make the relationships between qualifications clearer.

As services become more integrated, the flexibility that the SCQF creates will support credit transfer between related areas such as health care, social care and early education and childcare.

In these ways the SCQF will support those who work in Early Education and Childcare to plan and develop a career pathway that minimises duplication in their learning.

Recent Scottish Executive publications on education and training in Early Education and Childcare have all stressed the value of the SCQF. The Scottish Social Services Council's commitment to using the SCQF to help define the requirements of registration will mean that the sector will have clear definitions of qualifications for particular work roles and better information about possible progression routes.

The UK and European Context

Talks are underway to link qualifications frameworks in the rest of the UK and Europe.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF levels	SQA National Units, courses and group awards	Higher Education (HE) qualifications	Scottish Vocational Qualifications	SCQF levels
12		Doctorate		12
11		Masters	SVQ 5	11
10		Honours degree		10
9		Ordinary degree		9
8		HND Diploma of HE	SVQ 4	8
7	Advanced Higher	HNC Certificate of HE		7
6	Higher		SVQ 3	6
5	Intermediate 2/ Credit S Grade		SVQ 2	5
4	Intermediate 1/ General S Grade		SVQ 1	4
3	Access 3/ Foundation S Grade			3
2	Access 2			2
1	Access 1			1

The positioning of SVQs in the table gives a broad indication of their place in the Framework. A major project is underway to clarify the position of SVQs within the overall UK context. The diagram above does not show every type of qualification, but the main Scottish qualifications are represented.

How Can I Find Out More?

If you need further information, or advice on qualifications and training in Early Education and Childcare, the following organisations will be happy to help.

Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

SSSC will start to register workers in Early Education and Childcare from 2006 in one of three categories: support worker, practitioner or manager/lead practitioner. This means that if you want to work in a daycare setting or out of school care you will need to register with SSSC.

Contact them by phone at Lo-call **0845 6030 891**, by email at enquiries@sssc.uk.com or visit their website at www.sssc.uk.com for further information about registration.

You can contact the SSSC Learning and Development Officer for Early Education and Childcare on **01382 207154**.

It might also be helpful to contact your local Childcare Partnership. There are contact details for every Childcare Partnership at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/about/ED/EEC/00015135/page281701866.aspx>

The new national database of progression opportunities that can be accessed through the SCQF website www.scaf.org.uk from June 2004 will provide details of available HNQ to degree progression routes in Scotland.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

SQA can provide information on:

- National Qualifications (including Standard Grade, National Units and Courses at Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher and Scottish Group Awards (SGAs))
- Higher National Qualifications (HNCs, HNDs)
- Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)
- Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs)
- Professional Development Awards (PDAs).

Contact them by phone at their Care Scotland helpline **0141 242 2344** or by email at carescotland@sqa.org.uk or on the website: www.sqa.org.uk

Your Local College or University

Contact your local institution(s) for detailed information on education and training provision. Use the PlanIT database to access detailed information on institutions, including direct links to their websites. The Association of Scottish Colleges' website is www.ascol.org.uk. If you want to find out more information about awards at universities and higher education institutions then visit:

www.universities-scotland.ac.uk for contact details.

Want General Information or Advice?

Careers Scotland

Visit their website on www.careers-scotland.org.uk or phone their helpline on **0845 8502 502**.

PlanIT and SkillUP

Need information on learning opportunities and how they relate to careers and careers development?

PlanIT and SkillUP are web-enabled databases providing information on learning opportunities throughout Scotland. Courses are grouped into broad Career Areas. General careers, learning and business information is also provided.

Visit PlanIT at www.ceg.org.uk and SkillUP at www.skillup.org.uk

learndirect scotland

The national freephone learning helpline and database service provides information on over 40,000 learning opportunities throughout Scotland. Contact them by using the learndirect scotland helpline on **0808 100 9000** or their website: www.learndirectscotland.com

Want More Information on the SCQF?

A guide to SCQF Introduction to the SCQF is available on the SCQF website www.scqf.org.uk. The guide details the definitions of levels and gives the credit points attached to a wide number of well-known qualifications.

If you want information on gaining credit for training, contact SQA or a university.

You can contact the SCQF Development Officer by emailing lorraine.judge@sqa.org.uk or l.judge@qaa.ac.uk. Other information will be available as SCQF develops so keep visiting the SCQF website.