

SCQF PARTNERSHIP  
OPERATIONAL PLAN 2011-12

# DELIVERING OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



scottish credit and  
qualifications framework

## Our vision

*Our vision is of a Scotland where the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework actively supports individuals in reaching their full potential in relation to lifelong learning and utilisation of skills. In addition we want to provide tools and solutions to support both learners and employers through what we know will be extremely difficult times. We will seek to add value to the strategy outlined in Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth by working closely with a range of agencies involved in supporting the economic recovery agenda.*

## The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) supports individual learners and exists to sustain a vibrant lifelong learning culture in Scotland. It is our aim to include, where appropriate, qualifications and assessed learning in Scotland into the SCQF so that learners can identify their current position in relation to the Framework and can plan their future learning pathways. The Framework supports all of Scotland's citizens, learning providers and employers by:

- helping people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime, so as to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential;
- enabling employers, learners and the public in general to understand:
  - the full range of Scottish qualifications;
  - how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of assessed learning;
  - how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the development, and utilisation, of the skills of the workforce;
  - how Scottish qualifications relate to qualifications in other countries;
  - how using level descriptors can assist with qualifications development
  - how using level descriptors can assist with benchmarking skills and experience.
- providing a Framework which fully supports both credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
  - this provides a route for individuals, employers and institutions to achieve value for money, optimise efficiency savings and ensure that learning does not have to be repeated. It is recognised that this may require initial investment but would, we believe, provide significant savings in the long run for individuals, organisations and society in general.

## The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership

The SCQF is in the custody of, and managed by, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF Partnership). The Partnership is a company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish registered charity.

The SCQF Partnership has a Board of Directors which comprises nominees of the following organisations:

- Scotland's Colleges;
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education;
- Scottish Ministers;
- Scottish Qualifications Authority;
- Universities Scotland.
- Plus a co-opted Director representing the interests of employers; and
- An independent Chair, Sir Andrew Cubie, CBE.

All of those bodies represented on the Board have a significant interest and involvement in, and influence on, learning in Scotland. The SCQF Partnership also works closely with a wide range of stakeholders, to help the company to achieve its goals. It is only through such partnerships and collaborative working that the Partnership will realise its vision. The objectives set out in this plan therefore will be developed, implemented and evaluated through a variety of arrangements using the SCQF Board partners but also the members of our key committees such as the Quality Committee, the Forum, which comprises 34 different stakeholders, and the European and International Group. In developing this plan we have worked to optimise synergies with the operational plans being developed by Board partners for 2011-12. The SCQF Partnership is supported by an Executive Team which is led by the Chief Executive Officer, Aileen Ponton.

We have a Strategic Plan for 2011-14 which sets out demanding key goals over that period. We have continued to take full account of the views of our partners and stakeholders as to the current context to ensure that we, along with others, are playing as full a part as possible in supporting the Government agenda to deliver economic recovery. The need to support economic growth and ensure that skills are utilised fully in workforce development are very clear to all concerned. We recognise fully that the next few years could see many changes in the education and training landscape both structural and contextual. The Strategic Plan has been developed to capitalise fully on our excellent partnership arrangements and to build on the recommendations which came from the Frontline Report commissioned by us in 2010, whilst still recognising that we will need to be flexible in order to respond to changing priorities for partners and stakeholders. The report reflected stakeholder view on performance to date such as

*“The SCQF Executive Team is a small tight group that functions well together. They are efficient, helpful and have achieved a level of engagement that far exceeds what would be expected from an organisation of their size.”*

Like many others, however, we know that to deliver a real enabling agenda for Scotland over the next three years we will have to work smarter and for us this means utilising that real commitment and buy-in from our partners to maximise our reach and our impact. We have consulted with our key stakeholders on how we can best support them and enhance education, learning, skills and training for individuals and employers. We also aim to support other existing partnerships or those which may emerge within the lifelong learning arena.

The key objectives for 2011-12 are therefore contextualised by the Strategic Plan and were developed through consultation with a wide range of our partners and stakeholders. They therefore take account both of the continued commitment to lifelong learning amongst all of our stakeholders and of the changing political and economic landscape in Scotland as it affects learning and qualifications. We need to ensure that we, with others, are playing as full a part as possible in supporting the Government agenda to deliver economic recovery. This Operational Plan also takes account of our significant budgetary constraints and will be delivered with due regard to value for money and efficiency savings where possible.

## Objective 1 Maintain the quality and integrity of the SCQF

### 1.1 Build capacity within credit rating bodies and support a clearer understanding of the business benefits of the SCQF to them in order to encourage and ensure widespread use of the SCQF

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Provide targeted activities for credit rating bodies to share knowledge, encourage more third party credit rating and share good practice	MARCH 2012
b Deliver events for credit rating bodies which consider SCQF developments over the past 10 years and generate opportunities for further work	MARCH 2012
c Provide sectoral training and development for staff in colleges and universities both face to face and online on approaches to credit rating	ONGOING
d Build college capability to transform non credit bearing programmes into credit bearing programmes	ONGOING

### 1.2 Ensure that any increase in the number of credit rating bodies continues to add value to the Framework and is managed in a robust and transparent manner consistent with our quality principles

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Continue to promote the facility to become a credit rating body to appropriate organisations supported by clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities	ONGOING
b Update the quality assurance model for becoming a credit rating body to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and takes account of best practice	SEPTEMBER 2011
c Devise a strategy for informing committee members, partners and stakeholders on our work and the quality principles and processes which underpin it	MARCH 2012
d Develop guidance and support for key areas of potential risk such as externality of quality assurance, nomenclature related to the Framework and reputational risk	DECEMBER 2011
e Continue to monitor new credit rating bodies to ensure the ongoing delivery of quality processes	ONGOING



### 1.3 Position the SCQFP firmly as a central source for up-to-date, clear and targeted information about the Framework and its uses to ensure both consistency and quality, including the provision of a central database

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Continue to support credit rating bodies to populate and maintain the SCQF Database	ONGOING
b Continue to develop a range of guidance to support the SCQF Handbook taking account of user feedback and requirements	DECEMBER 2011
c Promote the use of the SCQF Level Descriptors	ONGOING
d Commence the review of the SCQF Level Descriptors in order to ensure that they take account of developments, remain relevant to the Scottish education and training system and take full account of the range of users	ONGOING
e Promote the SCQF Partnership as a knowledge centre for SCQF related developments	ONGOING
f Develop information and guidance which is tailored to the variety of users and audiences	ONGOING

### 1.4 Provide a leadership role to partners and stakeholders which encourages collaboration and consistency of decision making in order to support learners and promote ongoing trust in the framework

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Disseminate information on the potential for greater collaboration between credit rating bodies	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Actively encourage the embedding of transparent articulation and progression arrangements including links to RPL	MARCH 2012
c Provide opportunities for credit rating bodies to share issues and developments to promote mutual trust and share good practice	MARCH 2012
d Support sectors to collaborate on credit rating where that is seen as either adding value or ensuring consistency in approach	SEPTEMBER 2011

### 1.5 Ensure that we continue to provide strong leadership and support on the case for RPL, the benefits of credit transfer and the importance of progression and articulation

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Develop case studies of real articulation and progression in non traditional areas through enabling work between SSCs and institutions in key employment sectors	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Promote the SCQF Partnership RPL network and encourage members to become ambassadors for RPL linking as appropriate with the HE RPL Network	DECEMBER 2011
c Further develop the strategic case for RPL to gain buy-in from the range of stakeholders who would benefit from this	SEPTEMBER 2011
d Provide support to the articulation hubs to share good practice and case studies of real activity	MARCH 2012
e Provide RPL workshops to support credit rating bodies with the principles and processes along with some practical tools for implementation	MARCH 2012
f Encourage collaboration and sharing of practice and understanding across learning and training sectors within the UK, Europe and internationally	ONGOING
g Develop further specific support to institutions on the embedding of RPL (working directly with QAA and the HE RPL network in relation to HE institutions)	DECEMBER 2011

## Objective 2 Promote and develop the Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning

2.1 Position the Framework, along with a range of tools including those linked to RPL, as a set of mechanisms to support learners, guidance givers, credit rating bodies, employers and providers of training	
ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Work with Skills Development Scotland to roll out to a wider audience the profiling tools for schools and those facing redundancy	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Test the employer toolkit and develop case studies to promote to other employers in both the public and private sectors	SEPTEMBER 2011
c Develop a range of case studies for each user group which highlight the benefits of engaging with the SCQF	DECEMBER 2011
d Actively promote the work undertaken in 2010/11 by employers in the Government's Economic Strategy Key Sectors and by employers and Sector Skills Councils through the case studies and video clips in order to encourage more employers and SSCs to engage with the SCQF	SEPTEMBER 2011
e Establish a project which utilises the generic SCQF RPL toolkit in different occupational or institutional sectors	SEPTEMBER 2011
f Work with colleges to understand and articulate business benefits to employers of having their own provision credit rated	SEPTEMBER 2011
g Establish work to develop a strong evidence base on the impact of the SCQF, as a means of identifying and spreading best practice	MARCH 2012
h Run workshops which support organisations in understanding the processes involved in submitting learning programmes for credit rating	ONGOING
2.2 Actively encourage Stakeholders of all types to utilise the Framework and its level descriptors through a wide range of communications materials	
ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Conduct an annual review of the SCQF website to ensure its relevance, impact and support for all users, with the support and input of the website review group	DECEMBER 2011
b Continue to work with stakeholders, Forum members and partners to annually review their websites and publications to ensure consistency of the SCQF message in public information	ONGOING
c Conduct an ongoing annual review of college and university prospectuses and websites, building on the work already done, to ensure that these organisations are supported to raise awareness of the purpose and benefits of the SCQF for learners	SEPTEMBER 2011
d Encourage Forum partners and stakeholders to be proactive in both the development and targeted use of SCQF case studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in publications;</li> <li>■ at key events;</li> <li>■ and on websites</li> </ul>	ONGOING
e Promote the SCQF database via the SCQF website as well as partner/stakeholder channels to raise awareness of this facility for learners, employers, guidance and information givers and education providers	MARCH 2012
f Use additional marketing and promotion opportunities to highlight the diversity of provision now in the Framework to institutions and employers	SEPTEMBER 2011
g Strengthen and further develop relationships with press contacts to increase coverage of SCQF news and success stories in targeted publications	DECEMBER 2011
h Develop appropriate links to support SCQF being featured in the communications plans of partners, Forum members and stakeholders to continue raising awareness and increasing reach of the SCQF	SEPTEMBER 2011



### 2.3 Work with key partners to fully develop and embed the Framework in specific sectors which will support skills utilisation and workforce development during a time of economic and employment change

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Develop targeted and specific activity to bring SSCs and institutions together in key employment sectors to utilise the SCQF in a range of ways to support employers in the development of employability opportunities, pathways and progression routes and skills utilisation opportunities using SCQF tools	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Continue to gain support from SDS, SFC and the SFC Skills Committee by increasing understanding of the different ways in which the Framework can be used. This will be achieved through a variety of different methods including training sessions, workshops and presentations	MARCH 2012
c Work with QAA, Universities Scotland and HEA to maximise synergies with their work on employer engagement	ONGOING
d Fully utilise the SCQF Forum to ensure engagement particularly from those organisations which represent schools, employers and the voluntary sector	ONGOING

### 2.4 Ensure that the Framework fully supports both the principles and the processes of Curriculum for Excellence particularly in the Senior phase in schools

ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Develop a relationship with the new agency SEQIA to formulate a communications strategy that builds and promotes the links between the SCQF and the 4 capacities within CfE	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Obtain high level strategic backing and understanding of the diverse capabilities of the Framework via the CfE Management Board	JUNE 2011
c Promote the diversity of provision in the Framework which supports the wider achievement of young people through the development of case studies	DECEMBER 2011
d Develop a plan for the credit rating of further programmes which support recognition of wider achievement and of young people in need of more choices and more chances	JUNE 2011
e Promote the schools toolkit to its target audience through a variety of partners and media	DECEMBER 2011
f Implement the SCQF Curriculum for Excellence Task & Finish Group activity plan ensuring that schools and learners are fully aware of and utilising the benefits the Framework can offer	SEPTEMBER 2011
g Support the work of the HE sector to identify issues and opportunities arising from Curriculum for Excellence	JUNE 2011

## Objective 3. Develop and maintain relationships with other frameworks in the UK, Europe and internationally

3.1 Position the SCQF as a leader in Framework development sharing both successes and challenges with others in Europe and internationally	
ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Continue to work with UK partners to promote the outcomes of the EQF Referencing and its potential for business and education	MARCH 2012
b Contribute to the development of the EQF Web	MARCH 2012
c Provide expertise internationally in order to increase knowledge and reputation of the SCQF and the SCQF Partnership	MARCH 2012
d Work with partners and jointly with other countries where there are themes or issues which would benefit Scotland or where we have expertise to share	MARCH 2012
e Provide support to study visits to Scotland where there is mutual value in joint working or discussion	ONGOING
3.2 Work closely with colleagues in the UK and the ROI to support mutual recognition of Frameworks and a collaborative approach to the European Agenda	
ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Actively participate in and support the UK Co-ordination Group for VET	MARCH 2012
b Participate in the European Commission dialogue around 'stateless' qualifications group and communicate the outcomes to stakeholders	SEPTEMBER 2011
c Disseminate the outcome of work to consider the internationalisation agenda in qualifications	SEPTEMBER 2011
d Support the European Commission structures including the Advisory Group for the EQF and related peer learning activities and sub groups which help support and promote mutual trust in the EQF in member states	MARCH 2012
e Disseminate EQF promotional materials widely and ensure that up-to-date accurate information is available on the SCQF website	ONGOING
f Work with the other UK National Co-ordination Points (NCPs) to deliver projects linked to better understanding and use of the EQF	MARCH 2012
3.3 Contribute fully to the European agenda by engaging with the emerging policy instruments and initiatives to ensure the appropriate fit with Scottish Education and training	
ACTIVITIES	COMPLETION DATE
a Provide targeted information for institutions on the EQF and how this could support student mobility including the role of ECVET	SEPTEMBER 2011
b Engage with appropriate infrastructures for ECVET and EQAVET and ESCO and ensure that the SCQF is accurately represented in discussions	MARCH 2012
c Make recommendations to the SCQF Partnership Board on the mechanisms for promoting information on EQF levels in relation to Scottish qualifications and learning programmes	JUNE 2011

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