Credit where credit’s due
A guide to the SCQF for parents and carers
Understanding the SCQF

If your child is studying SQA qualifications, you will become more aware of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), as it is included on your son or daughter’s SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate which is issued every August. This leaflet tells you about the SCQF and what it means for your child.

What is the SCQF?
The SCQF is Scotland’s lifelong learning framework. It can help you compare the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It covers achievements such as those from school, college and university, and work-based qualifications.

The SCQF has 12 levels. Qualifications at level 1 are the simplest to achieve, and qualifications at level 12 are the most demanding. The SCQF credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving each qualification. One SCQF credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning.

For example, one person may study a course at National 4 (SCQF level 4) and another at Higher (SCQF level 6). Both award the same number of SCQF credit points, but they are at different levels of difficulty.

What is the SCQF for?
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 see that, for example, an Advanced Higher is at the same level as a Higher National Certificate (HNC), the first year of a degree or an SVQ level 3. They are all at level 7 on the SCQF because, although they have a different focus, content and types of assessment, the demands on the learner are roughly the same. This means that your son or daughter can be confident that their qualification has the same worth whether it was achieved through college, the workplace, school, university or another route.

How is the SCQF being used?
All Scottish universities and colleges are now using SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses, if these are included in the Framework. A wide range of other learning is also recognised on the SCQF and we have provided some examples over the page. Employers are increasingly using SCQF levels instead of, or as well as, types of qualifications when they advertise jobs.
The SCQF can:
- help your son or daughter choose how they progress with their learning;
- help you and your son or daughter understand qualifications you or they are not familiar with;
- help employers understand different types of qualifications which your son or daughter may have achieved;
- help universities or colleges identify the level your son or daughter has studied at in a particular subject, and make it easier to transfer credits between different learning programmes; and
- recognise other areas of learning that may contribute to your son or daughter’s personal development and goals for the future.

Table tip
Don’t worry if you are not familiar with some of the qualifications mentioned above. You will learn more about them as your son or daughter moves through school. For more information on each award and its credit points, visit the interactive Framework at scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm.

Table notes
We have produced this Framework diagram to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications that SQA, colleges and universities have already given an SCQF level and credit points to. However, there is a varied range of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, we cannot show here. For more information on other learning that has an SCQF level and credit points, please visit the SCQF database at scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/.
Other learning programmes and wider achievement

Some other learning programmes that your son or daughter might take at school, college or a local youth club which recognise non-academic wider achievement may have an SCQF level and credit points. This area of the Framework will continue to develop, so it is worth checking the SCQF database at scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCQF level</th>
<th>Award owner</th>
<th>Award name</th>
<th>Credit points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Young Enterprise Scotland</td>
<td>Can, Plan, Do: Supporting the Enterprise Journey</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Boys’ Brigade</td>
<td>King George VI Leadership Programme</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds</td>
<td>Diploma in Site Carpentry at SCQF level 6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award</td>
<td>Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Outward Bound Trust</td>
<td>Adventure &amp; Challenge Award (5 day)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Skills Development Scotland</td>
<td>Certificate of Work Readiness</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The British Sports Trust Sports Leaders UK</td>
<td>Sports Leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Co-operative Education Trust Scotland Ltd</td>
<td>Certificate in Co-operative Studies</td>
<td>18 (each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>SQA</td>
<td>Employability Award</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Youth Scotland</td>
<td>Dynamic Youth Awards One-Five Star Awards</td>
<td>1-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequently asked questions

What do the level and credit columns mean on my son or daughter’s SQA exam certificate?
These refer to the SCQF levels of the exams your son or daughter has taken, and reflect the knowledge and skill they needed to achieve that particular award. So, for example, a Higher will have a ‘6’ in the level column and a ‘24’ in the credit column, as the credit value reflects the amount of learning involved in a qualification. For more information, have a look at our helpful video at scqf.org.uk/videos/scqf-in-your-sqa-exam-results/. The SQA also have lots of information on their exam certificates at www.sqa.org.uk/sqc.

How do SCQF credit points relate to UCAS tariff points? Are they the same?
SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS is the organisation that processes applications for higher-education courses, and tariff points relate to the grade at which a qualification has been achieved. SCQF credit points are a measure of how much learning needs to be done to achieve a particular qualification, whatever the final grade.

Are Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) now on the SCQF?
Yes, they are available in many industries across SCQF levels 5-12. There’s lots more information on MAs on the Skills Development Scotland website at www.apprenticeships.scot.

How does the SCQF link with Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy, Developing the Young Workforce?
Developing the Young Workforce is the Scottish Government’s response to Education Working for All. The strategy outlines a seven-year programme to offer all young people in Scotland a broader range of choices in the Senior Phase (from S4 to S6) of their school years and higher-quality work experience. It also aims to build closer connections between schools, colleges and employers. The SCQF supports the strategy by showing the equality between vocational and academic qualifications.

You will find more frequently asked questions for parents and carers on our website at scqf.org.uk/more/faqs/learners-parents-and-carers/.