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Your guide to credits,
levels and qualifications

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Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign

scqf

scottish credit and
qualifications framework

Understanding credits, levels and qualifications

You will get to know about the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as it appears on your SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate which is issued in August. This leaflet tells you about the SCQF and how you will benefit from it.

What is it?

The SCQF is a way of comparing Scottish qualifications. It covers the qualifications you will achieve at school, college, university and in the workplace. It does this by giving each qualification a level and credit points.

The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is. For example, one person may study a course at National 4 and another at Higher. Both qualifications have 24 SCQF credit points but have different levels of difficulty. The credit points show how much you need to learn to achieve that qualification.

What is it for?

The SCQF makes it easier to describe, compare and understand qualifications. Before the SCQF, there was no easy way to compare different qualifications. Now it is easy to see that, for example, an Advanced Higher is at the same level as a Higher National Certificate. Most Scottish universities and colleges now use SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses. You can also compare vocational and academic qualifications and see that, although they are very different types of learning, in many cases they sit at the same SCQF level.

The SCQF can:

- help you make the right learning choices and understand qualifications you are not familiar with;
- help employers understand different qualifications;
- help universities or colleges identify the level that you have studied in a particular subject;
- recognise other areas of your learning that can help your personal development and goals for the future; and
- increase confidence and self-esteem by showing you the level of learning you have achieved.



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12	Some SQA qualifications are changing between 2013-2016. See www.sqa.org.uk/readyreckoner				Professional Apprenticeship
11					Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10					Professional Apprenticeship
9				Professional Development Award	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma	↓	Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5 Intermediate 2				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4 Intermediate 1	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ 1
3	National 3 Access 3				
2	National 2 Access 2				
1	National 1 Access 1				

Table tip

Don't worry if you're not familiar with some of the qualifications mentioned above. You will learn more about them as you move through school. We explain each one on the interactive Framework diagram on our website at scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm. The SCQF website also contains a helpful video clip which explains the SCQF in relation to your SQA exam certificate. Visit scqf.org.uk/videos/scqf-in-your-sqa-exam-results/.

This Framework diagram shows the main SQA qualifications studied at secondary schools in Scotland. You may be surprised to know that other types of learning that you might do in your school or youth club are included in the SCQF. Turn over for information about some awards you might have heard of.



Other awards you may know

SCQF Levels	Award Owner	Award Name	Credit Points
7	The Boys' Brigade	King George VI Leadership Programme	13
6	ASDAN	Certificate of Personal Effectiveness Level 3	15
5	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme	5
5	The Outward Bound Trust	Adventure & Challenge Award (5 day)	5
5	NCFE	Developing Effective Thinking Skills	2
5	YouthLink Scotland	Participative Democracy	2
4	The British Sports Trust Sports Leaders UK	Sports Leadership	7
4-7	Youth Scotland	Youth Achievement Awards Bronze- Platinum	7-16
4-6	Co-operative Education Trust Scotland Ltd.	Certificate in Co-operative Studies	18 (each)
3	Youth Scotland	Dynamic Youth Awards One-Five Star Awards	1-31

Frequently asked questions

Are SCQF credit points the same as UCAS tariff points?

SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS tariff points relate to the grades you have achieved. SCQF credits are a measure of how much you need to learn to achieve a qualification, no matter what grade you get.

Why does an 'A' at Higher get the same number of SCQF credit points as a 'C' at Higher?

The number of SCQF credit points you've gained doesn't change depending on your grade at any particular level. SCQF credits reflect how much learning you've done, not how well you've learned a subject.

Will my qualifications be recognised if I move abroad?

SCQF levels are now referenced against the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), so learning institutions and employers in Europe can easily compare your qualifications against their own country's qualifications framework.

If I build up SCQF credit points, will I get into college or university?

Not directly, although SCQF credit points help admissions officers in colleges and universities know exactly how much learning you have done and at what level. The admissions officers still have other factors to consider, such as the subjects you studied and grades you achieved.

Will the SCQF help me to get a job?

Not directly, but it will help employers understand the level of difficulty of each qualification, as well as the number of credit points you have achieved as part of your personal development. As your career develops, any work-based qualifications you achieve may add to the number of credits you already have.



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