



The Benefits of Credit Rating: SCQF Case Study Microsoft® – Windows Server Certifications

Background

Microsoft is a technology leader that creates innovative software to help individuals and organisations realise their full potential. The company has spent many years in Scotland working closely with the education sector to make Microsoft certification and training affordable and adaptable to delivery within standard qualifications such as degrees and Higher Nationals.

What programmes were credit rated?

Microsoft partnered with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to integrate much of the Windows 2003 Server range of certifications into the Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in computing and related subjects that are delivered throughout Scotland's Colleges.

A recent survey amongst Colleges highlighted the need to move forward and to obtain credit rating so that Microsoft certifications could be used as credit towards SQA qualifications and other purposes.

Thus, the organisation has now also had its recent Windows Server 2008 certifications credit rated and levelled onto the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) through working with the University of the West of Scotland. Certifications include Microsoft IT Professional: Windows Server 2008: Server Administrator and Microsoft Technical Specialist: Configuring Microsoft Windows Vista Client. These certifications have been placed on the Framework at SCQF levels 7-9.

Benefits of credit rating

The SCQF was developed to help both employers and employees understand and compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland. Mainstream qualifications, such as those offered in schools, are included in the Framework and Microsoft is one of the private sector companies that has stepped up to the mark to place its industry-standard certifications on the SCQF. Industry-specific qualifications ensure that employers have a team with the right skills through relevant IT certifications with objective validation. Having these certifications credit rated means that their level can be easily compared to the level of other mainstream qualifications, including SVQs, HNC/Ds and degrees.

The SCQF also helps employees to navigate the maze of IT courses offered by industry as well as universities and colleges. Learners may also find that they are able to transfer credit gained through smaller, relevant chunks of learning, such as Microsoft's wide range of certifications, towards larger learning programmes such as a degree in Computing and IT. Industry qualifications can also help job seekers stand out in today's highly competitive job market.

Derrick McCourt, Director of Microsoft Scotland, comments, "Working with the SCQF has enabled Microsoft to bring a formal recognition of its own certification system in terms of credit and level. This is valuable in that it brings together qualifications from the worlds of industry and academia, thus establishing a mutual parity to support the Scottish Government's skills strategy. In practical terms, those responsible for hiring IT professionals for industry vacancies now have, for the first time, a method of comparing different qualifications on applicants' CVs. This will bring benefit to Microsoft, its tens of thousands of solution partners and hundreds of thousands of customers."

For more detail on the SCQF and the benefits of having your learning programmes credit rated, visit www.scqf.org.uk/resources to view the Employer Leaflet. Further information on Microsoft certifications is available at www.microsoft.com/learning/mcp.