

Did You Know? -10 Top Tips for SCQFfold

The SCQF is Scotland's Lifelong Learning Framework. It assists people of all ages and circumstances, not just pupils in schools, to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential. It also helps employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how they relate to each other and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

The SCQF has 12 levels. The levels show how difficult a qualification is to achieve, so Level 1 is the least demanding and Level 12 (which is Doctoral Degree level), is the most demanding. The levels are based on a set of level descriptors which are the reference points and definitions that provide a way of recognising learning that is outcome based and quality assured. They have been tried and tested and are recognised as the national vocabulary for describing learning.

The SCQF Framework diagram is an easy way to compare qualifications gained in school, college, university and in the workplace. Because each qualification is allocated a level you can see how a qualification you might have gained in school compares to a qualification gained in another learning environment. This can help you to plan your future learning and carer development.

The SCQF recognises much more than formal qualifications gained in school and college. There are many other learning programmes that you might take at college, university, in the workplace, a youth club or your local community centre that may also have an SCQF level and credit points. These could include ASDAN Awards, City & Guilds qualifications, Youth Achievement Awards and YouthLink Awards among many others.

The SCQF helps 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, so as you accumulate credit points you won't get a place in college or university with these alone but they do contribute to the process.

Curriculum for Excellence aims to provide a rounded education experience for people at school. The new national qualifications that have replaced Standard grades and Intermediates 1 & 2 are known as 'National Courses' and they link directly to their SCQF level, so National 4 sits at SCQF level 4, and so on. And just as Curriculum for Excellence recognises that not all learning takes place in the classroom, this is also a feature of the SCQF where credit is given for informal as well as formal learning.

UCAS tariff points and SCQF Credit Points are different. UCAS tariff points relate to the grade 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. So an 'A' grade at Higher gets the same number of SCQF credit points as a 'C' at Higher. This is because SCQF credits reflect how much learning you have done, not how well you have learned a subject.

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. This means your qualifications will be recognised if you move abroad, providing the country you are moving to recognises the European Qualifications Framework.

The SCQF helps employers understand the level of difficulty of the qualifications you have. SCQF credit points also show them how long it has taken you to achieve those qualifications. As your career develops, any work based qualifications you achieve may add to the number of credit points you already have.

SCQF credit points can be converted to European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System points (ECTS). If you are planning to go to university and complete part of your studies in Europe, your SCQF points can be converted to ECTS points. ECTS is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across Europe.