

Realising your potential

A guide to the SCQF for lifelong learners



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

What is the SCQF?

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's national qualifications framework. By using the SCQF you can find out about qualifications in Scotland and plan your future learning to realise your full potential.

- It's Scotland's framework for lifelong learning.
- It covers a wide range of qualifications from school, college, university, community settings and the workplace.
- It clearly shows that qualifications are worth the same, regardless of where you have achieved them.

The SCQF can:

- help you plan your learning and make the right choices;
- help employers understand your qualifications;
- help universities or colleges identify the level you have studied at in a particular subject, and make it easier to transfer credits between different learning programmes;
- increase your confidence by showing you the level of learning you have achieved; and
- recognise other areas of formal and informal learning or skills that may help you to develop and achieve your goals.

SCQF Levels	
12	
11	
10	
9	
8	
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3
2	National 2, Awards
1	National 1, Awards



SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs
		Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
		Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
		Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
	Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
			Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ
			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The framework diagram above shows the main Scottish qualifications studied at school, college and university, and in the workplace. However, there are many more learning programmes on the SCQF which we cannot show here. To check if a programme is on the SCQF, search the SCQF database at scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/.

Did you know?

- There are over 11,500 qualifications on the SCQF, and around 900 of those recognise learning in the workplace or locations other than schools, colleges and universities.
- The SCQF has 12 levels. Qualifications at level 1 are the easiest to achieve, and qualifications at level 12 are the most demanding.
- SCQF credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving each qualification. One SCQF credit point represents 10 hours of learning.

Other awards you may know

SCQF level	Award owner	Award name	Credit points
11	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	ACCA Strategic Professional	180
8	The Chippendale International School of Furniture	The Chippendale School of Furniture Award	24
8	Aegon	Aegon Certificate of Professional Practice in Platform Operations	20
7	Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (SASA)	Early Childhood Swim Teaching	6
7	Chartered Banker Institute	Mortgage Advice and Practice Certificate	20
7	Scottish Autism	Autism Trainer Award	9
6	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Rope Rescue Operator	7
6	First Aid Awards Limited	Award in Leading First Aid for Mental Health	2
5	Glasgow Kelvin College	Parenting Matters	2
3	LEAD Scotland	Community Action & Leadership	18

Frequently asked questions

I studied and gained my qualifications in the UK but outside Scotland. What are my qualifications comparable to in Scotland?

Use the Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries leaflet to compare qualifications across Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. It is helpful if you studied elsewhere in the UK, or if you have moved from Scotland to another part of the UK or Republic of Ireland and need to compare your Scottish qualifications. You can download the leaflet from the SCQF website at scqf.org.uk/all-resources/.

Does the SCQF only cover schools, colleges and universities?

No, it also covers vocational training, such as Apprenticeships and SVQs, that can give you a better chance of getting a job or a promotion. The SCQF also covers learning that you might do in other places (for example, in your local community or with an employer).

I don't have many formal qualifications, but I have lots of skills and work experience. Is there a way for colleges, universities and employers to recognise this?

Yes, there is a process called the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This is learning based on experience. It applies to all your learning which has not already been assessed or you have not received credit points for. This includes skills you have gained through life and work experiences (paid and voluntary), as well as community-based learning, and learning, training and professional development in the workplace.

RPL is a term to describe the process used to recognise learning from the past. It means that you may be able to use things you have learned through experience to help you get a promotion at work, get a job or get a place on a course. Have a look at the online RPL tool at scqf.org.uk/guide-to-rpl/rpl-tool/ for more guidance.

Are SCQF credit points the same as UCAS tariff points?

SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS is the organisation that processes applications for higher-education courses. The tariff points relate to the grades you achieved in school and college. SCQF credit points are a measure of how much you need to learn to achieve a qualification or learning programme, no matter what grades you got.

Do credits help me to study for another qualification or job?

Yes, they can help. However, it's up to the awarding body, such as SQA, and individual universities and colleges, to decide how relevant one piece of learning is to the programme of learning that you want to do. This is called credit transfer.

Are Apprenticeships now on the SCQF?

Yes, various types of Apprenticeship are available in many industries across SCQF levels 5 to 12. There's lots more information on Apprenticeships on the Skills Development Scotland website at www.apprenticeships.scot/.

You will find more frequently asked questions on our website at scqf.org.uk/faqs/.

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