

## SCQF FE/HE Report 2014/15 - Action on Recommendations

Rec	Recommendation	Respondee	Response
1	The SFC, in discussion with Universities Scotland, should amend the Outcome Agreement guidance to encourage Colleges and HEIs to use public funding, wherever possible to offer learning programmes which are credit rated onto the SCQF.	<b>SFC</b>	In development of the next iteration of outcome agreement guidance (spring/summer 2016) <b>SFC</b> will reinforce our expectation that institutions offer provision which is credit-rated onto the SCQF.
2	The SFC should develop tools and measures (e.g. leaver destination surveys) to evidence progression across and upwards through the SCQF.	<b>SFC</b>	<b>SFC</b> is currently working with the college sector to ensure that all courses are appropriately specified to qualification aim and SCQF level; either formally or to a 'broadly comparable' level. This will allow, over time, volume activity and progression across and upwards through the SCQF on a range of measures, including leaver destinations.
3	The College Development Network and Universities Scotland/QAA Scotland, (through the RPL Network), should identify 'task' or 'project' related ways to further embed the use of the SCQF across the HEI and College sectors and provide staff with opportunities to develop practical skills in the use of the SCQF and also to make use of SCQF resources. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive credit rating of more non-core provision (e.g. non-recognised qualifications) onto the SCQF across</li> </ul>	<b>CDN</b> <b>QAA</b> <b>Universities</b> <b>Scotland</b>	<b>CDN</b> will continue to promote the SCQF as a valuable model for credit transfer onto HE and as a vehicle for entry and progression through College. There are opportunities emerging for credit rating for a number of industry recognised qualifications that are being used currently in School / College Partnerships. The new regional outcome model for College funding could also provide a lever for SCQF credit and levelling of regionally devised qualifications. We promote understanding of SCQF through all of our networks  <b>QAA Scotland</b> was pleased to see that the report recognised the work led by QAA on revising the UK Quality Code including, in Part A, the review of the UK frameworks describing higher education qualifications of HEIs and the greater prominence given to RPL in Chapter B6. QAA Scotland considers all HEIs credit-rated provision within the scope of Enhancement-led Institutional Review and

the sectors. An initial focus could involve working in partnership with sector bodies (e. g. skills bodies, trades associations) to credit rate common CPD provision which is offered across institutions. (Both sectors.)

- Coordinate a collaborative approach to ensure that commonly offered qualifications from other Qualification/Awarding Bodies are credit rated onto the SCQF. (College sector.)
- Provide opportunities to develop general knowledge and awareness of the SCQF and skills and expertise specifically in credit rating via contextualised workshops for subject networks. (Both sectors.)
- Promote institutionally-led curriculum review activities that promote the development and inclusion of courses and learning programmes in curriculum portfolios that are credit rated onto the SCQF.

regards the SCQF as one of the external reference points common to all institutions. We were also pleased to see the work on the National RPL Framework acknowledged.

CfE - **US** has continued to utilise close ties with Scottish Government, Education Scotland and UCAS, e.g. in contributing to a working group to develop school profiles which will enable contextualisation of admissions from Scottish pupils leaving school from the Senior Phase of CfE. These profiles seek to map the qualifications available to pupils through the levels of the SCQF and ensure that the value of the flexibility of the senior phase is recognised. Particularly during the period of transition into full implementation of CfE, SCQF has provided a robust structure underpinning and reassuring the sector (in Scotland and UK-wide) that changes to the school curriculum do not change the standards of awards. The University of Edinburgh have provided two examples of specific progress following the publication of our report on the implications of CfE for HEIs:

“Over the past 18 months, the University of Edinburgh has introduced a number of admissions policies and practices relevant to the review, e.g. Recognition of Prior Learning: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/admissions-advice/admissions-policy/policies>. Greater clarity about the recognition and suitability of HN qualifications for entry to the University, including advanced entry: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/entry-requirements/academic/higher-nationals>. Our undergraduate admissions entry requirements and selection criteria, as published in the University prospectus and online, fully recognise CfE in terms of new qualifications and also the CfE principles of curriculum design.” These examples are indicative of the progress made across the

sector.

**US** will be exploring ways in which to ensure coherent provision across the sector, and to introduce greater efficiencies in the learner journey, including reducing unnecessary duplications at SCQF Level 7. This work, which is currently at an early stage, will require close engagement with the SCQF throughout to ensure that any changes are in learners' best interests.

RPL framework - the QAA/US RPL Network produced a National Framework for Recognition of Prior Learning in 2014  
<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/publications/recognition-of-prior-learning---national-framework-for-scottish-higher-education.pdf?sfvrsn=6>).

As indicated in the introduction, "The Framework firmly locates RPL within broader developments linked to a more flexible, accessible curriculum, enabling greater participation in higher education by learners from a wide range of backgrounds". The purpose of the Framework is to, inter alia, "support the implementation of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) core principles of RPL in the university sector". Its explicit recognition of SCQF as both a facilitator and key principle of RPL is evidence of the further progress and embedding of the SCQF in Scottish HEIs.

Articulation – **US** and our members continue to review data on articulation to inform policy development. There continue to be some challenges, which SFC is responding to, in effectively utilising data collected through the National Articulation Database. Changes to **SFC** support for Articulation Hubs may mean that the role of the SCQF as an underpinning tool to support articulation becomes even more valuable. Universities are increasingly facilitating articulation in innovative methods. For example, the Strathclyde Engineering

			<p>Academy: The Academy is a collaboration between the University of Strathclyde and partner colleges and industry which provides a pathway to BEng Honours or MEng-level programmes in an engineering discipline within one of the Faculty of Engineering's participating departments. The first year of the Engineering Academy programme is undertaken as an enhanced HNC programme within one of our partner colleges and the curriculum for the HNC programme has been designed in consultation with the participating departments at the University. Three separate HNC programmes have been developed to allow students to progress to the participating departments at the University. This intense interaction and articulation between college and university is a model being considered by other institutions. It is reliant upon close curriculum mapping and integration of programmes as facilitated by the SCQF.</p> <p>Advanced apprenticeships – the sector will be looking to expand provision in this area going forward, which will require close engagement with the SCQF.</p>
4	<p>Following the outcome of the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) review, the SCQF Partnership should work with SFC and QAA (Scotland) to use future updates or guidance on external review methods and institution-led quality review to further direct and encourage the use of the SCQF generally in the HE sector and specifically to encourage HEIs to reference and comply with the SCQF Credit Rating Guidelines when credit rating non-core provision.</p>	<p><b>SFC</b> <b>QAA</b> <b>(Scotland)</b> <b>SCQFP</b></p>	<p>As part of the review of the QEF and specifically as part of any developments of the ELIR method, <b>SFC</b> will build in appropriate direction and encouragement to institutions to greater use of the SCQF particularly capitalising on the recent growth in interest in use of the SCQF within the sector.</p> <p>The Review of the QEF is ongoing and will continue throughout the 2015-16 academic year. <b>QAA Scotland</b> will continue to develop the enhancement-led approach that is characteristic of the HE sector in Scotland, within this we will continue to build external review on the common agreed reference points, including the SCQF and UK Quality Code, and will continue to regard all an institution's learning provision within scope wherever and however it is delivered.</p>

5	<p>SFC and Education Scotland should use future updates to the College Review process and 'Reviewers Handbook', to strengthen its review of the use of the SCQF in the College Sector to encourage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design of learner progression pathways that use qualifications that are credit rated onto the SCQF.</li> <li>• Compliance with the SCQF credit rating guidelines when credit rating provision onto the SCQF and marketing programmes.</li> </ul> <p>This work could be informed initially by a thematic study on the use of the SCQF in the College Sector.</p>	<p><b>SFC Education Scotland</b></p>	<p>As part of the pilot work of new approaches to quality assurance and enhancement in the FE sector, working in partnership with <b>Education Scotland</b>, we are currently seeking the best approach to both encouraging the development of credit-rating activity within colleges as well as approaches to scrutiny of credit-rating activity as part of the quality arrangements. See also the response to recommendation 2 above.</p> <p><b>Education Scotland</b> is in the final year of a four year cycle of external review of colleges and is currently revising arrangements to reflect changes to the external environment. These arrangements are taking full account of SCQF within engagement and evaluation processes. This includes a stronger focus on SCQF within pathways from school to college-based learning. All support materials will be updated accordingly.</p> <p><b>Education Scotland</b> is in the process of exploring the use of SCQF within individual colleges and will produce a short report on the findings in February 2016.</p>
6	<p>The SCQF Executive Team should work with SFC, SQA, Universities Scotland and the College Development Network to consider how best to support the on-going development of articulation in the HEI and College sectors post-2016 when funding for the Articulation Hubs will cease. As part of this work, there should be further discussion about the need to build a case to the 'Commission on Widening Access' to</p>	<p><b>SCQFP</b></p>	<p>Within its workplan for 2015-16 SCQFP will undertake to continue to work in partnership with SQA, US and CDN to develop models that support consistency and flexibility around approaches to articulation.</p> <p>SCQFP will review the processes and methods it uses to ensure systems remain in place for institutions in FE and HE to fully engage with the SCQF to embed its use in the articulation process as a means to support widening access and participation.</p> <p>The Partnership will discuss a range of related issues which include the positioning of the SCQF within the Commission on Widening Access recommendations and the future in relation to RPL at the</p>

	broaden the articulation definition.		December Board meeting From this meeting will come a series of actions which will support delivery of this recommendation
7	<p>The SCQF Executive Team should continue to work with SDS, SQA, Universities and relevant skills bodies to promote the use of the SCQF in workbased qualifications/programmes and increase awareness levels of the SCQF with employers. To support this consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including SDS employability national programmes on the Framework diagram and new apprenticeship models once the pilots have been completed.</li> <li>• Continuing to explore with skills bodies the value of creating contextualised framework diagrams to highlight the comparability of academic qualifications with sectoral qualifications.</li> <li>• Continuing to work with Colleges and Universities to develop and promote pathways for workbased qualifications into academic qualifications.</li> <li>• Continuing to work with partners to promote the value of credit rating for sector wide CPD provision (see also Recommendation 3).</li> <li>• Continuing to link funding to</li> </ul>	<b>SCQFP/ SDS</b>	<p>SCQFP continues to work with the organisations mentioned to ensure that the Framework is fully utilised and promoted across all sectors including employers. Regular meetings with key partners will continue to take place to agree joint activities particularly around meeting the recommendations of DYW including supporting senior phase learning pathways and the new Foundation and Advanced apprenticeships.</p> <p>SCQFP has also developed a blank Framework diagram which can be contextualised for sectors and will continue to work with partners to highlight the comparability of academic and sectoral qualifications. The success of developing and promoting learning pathways is reliant on institutional admission and RPL policies. Therefore the SCQF Partnership will continue to champion the cause for RPL through its Board members and stakeholders.</p> <p><b>SDS employability national programmes – funding for outputs is based on achievement of SCQF level and credit points</b></p> <p>The Employability Fund (EF) aims to assist unemployed individuals to progress towards and into employment; the interventions offered through EF mapped stages 2 to 4 of the strategic skills pipeline. The funding model includes output payments, which are based on achievement of SCQF certificated learning at stages 2 and 3:</p> <p><b>Stage 2:</b> Employability/ core skills/ personal development provision SCQF Level 3 and a minimum of 18 SCQF credit points.</p> <p><b>Stage 3:</b> Employability and/or vocational provision SCQF L4 and minimum of</p>

	output driven targets that are linked to achievement of SCQF level progression.		18 SCQF credits, or Employability certification of at least 34 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4 or above where employer opinion is integral to attainment of the credit rated group award  <b>New apprenticeship models</b> Ongoing work around new apprenticeship models will be mapped to the SCQF, to create coherent work-based learning pathways and show progression opportunities. The method statement for Foundation Apprenticeships is in development and will contain a series of design principles; this includes assigning a set SCQF level and minimum SCQF credit points for a Foundation Apprenticeship.
8	The SCQF Partnership should work with the Scottish Government to develop a national strategy and funding framework to fully embed RPL into the College and HEI sectors.	<b>SCQFP</b>	The SCQF Partnership discussed a very full paper on the issue of repositioning RPL within the current policy landscape. As a result the Chair will now write to SFC and Scottish Government to reopen that debate.
9	QAA should continue to test institution's engagement with UK Quality Code (most specifically B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning) as part of external review and to support and champion the use of RPL in HE.	<b>QAA (Scotland)</b>	The Review of the QEF is ongoing and will continue throughout the 2015-16 academic year. <b>QAA Scotland</b> will continue to develop the enhancement-led approach that is characteristic of the HE sector in Scotland, within this we will continue to build external review on the common agreed reference points, including the SCQF and UK Quality Code, and will continue to regard all an institution's learning provision within scope wherever and however it is delivered.
10	The Executive Team should work with SQA, the HE RPL Network, Universities Scotland and the College Development Network to develop targeted RPL initiatives and projects that:	<b>SCQFP</b>	SCQFP will continue to develop and deliver RPL workshops to facilitate learners and institutions going through the RPL process. Through discussion and collaboration we will look to work with the sectors to develop sector specific workshop materials and content that allows institutions and organisations to build capacity and streamline implementation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build staff capacity and skills to implement RPL in practice in both sectors.</li> <li>• Continue to raise awareness of RPL and share effective practice across both sectors.</li> <li>• Help to address inconsistencies in RPL policies and practices within and between institutions.</li> </ul>		<p>We will undertake to complete development work on the RPL section of the SCQF website to enhance the information for learners and practitioners to help raise awareness and encourage organisations and institutions to promote their RPL offer to learners.</p>
11	<p>The SCQF Executive Team should work with Universities Scotland and the College Development Network to improve signposting and consistency of referencing to the SCQF within HEI and College websites and prospectuses. This could involve engaging with marketing networks to provide workshops and gain commitment to implement the guidance outlined in SCQF Guides – ‘Communicating the SCQF: A Guide for Scottish Colleges’ and ‘Communicating the SCQF: A Guide for Scottish Universities’.</p>	<b>SCQFP</b>	<p>SCQFP will continue this work of reviewing prospectuses on an annual basis and ensuring that institutions are fully aware of the guidance that exists for promoting SCQF correctly and effectively. This will involve working continued liaison with Universities Scotland and CDN particularly engaging with CDN’s marketing network</p>
12	<p>The SQA should undertake their planned review of their policy to support the use of the SCQF in the organisation to actively promote the SCQF to learners and education/training providers. SQA</p>	<b>SQA</b>	<p><b>SQA</b>'s Thematic Review of Qualifications Frameworks is current in progress and will consider positively the above recommendation in relation to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. This will be reported to SQA's Qualification Committee in Spring 2016.</p>



	should continue to progress changes to documentation to remove reference to 'SQA Credit'.		
13	The SCQF Executive Team should continue to work with the National Union of Students in Scotland (NUS) and Student Participation in Quality Scotland (sparqs) to progress actions that develop learner use of the SCQF in planning learner journeys. The QAA Enhancement theme 'Student Transitions between 2015 and 2017' could provide a focus for student-led action through the student network, for example, to further embed the use of the SCQF to inform and support transitions between education sectors and levels of study.	<b>SCQFP</b>	<p><b>QAA Scotland</b> supports the Enhancement Theme Student Network to select and conduct areas it wishes to pursue and the Network will decide on the focus for its activity each year.</p> <p>More broadly the interactive Student Transitions map and many of the resources being developed under the Theme by institutions, by students and by QAA Scotland (eg on students' transitions skills and strategies) will be a valuable resource for students as they move between education levels.</p> <p>SCQFP, through the SCQF Forum will seek to develop a joint workplan with NUS and Sparqs that builds on work already in place to ensure the SCQF becomes a key tool for learners. We will re-examine key messages in literature to ensure the student network is appropriately targeted and we will seek to engage at relevant awareness raising events to ensure the wider applications of the SCQF is understood and utilised.</p>
14	The College Development Network should work with the Professional Learning and Development Forum to ensure that the refresh of the 'Initial Teacher Training/Education Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges', planned for 2017, makes explicit reference to the SCQF as a tool to support curriculum planning and design.	<b>CDN</b>	<p>We use SCQF and the existing entry and CPD standards for lecturers as basis of all training we offer.</p> <p>We will ensure that SCQF and an understanding of SCQF as a tool to support curriculum planning and design is included in both the entry and CPD standards</p> <p>There is currently consultation underway on who will lead the refresh of standards.</p>