

# COMMUNICATING THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (SCQF):

A GUIDE FOR SCOTTISH COLLEGES





## Introduction to the SCQF

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, known as the SCQF for short, is Scotland's national lifelong learning framework, and is used by learners, education providers, employers, Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) and policymakers throughout the country.

The SCQF provides the language used to describe all learning in Scotland. Effective communication is at the heart of the Framework, and we at the SCQF Partnership greatly value your support in helping to bring the SCQF closer to the learner through your communications activities.

## Purpose of this Guide

As a college in Scotland, this guide is aimed at providing you with some suggestions on how to describe the SCQF through your communications channels, such as your prospectus and website. It also suggests how you might use the SCQF to effectively promote provision and progression routes at your institution.

Consistency in describing the SCQF is essential for the successful implementation and understanding of the Framework, so this guide offers you support with this, ensuring that learners receive the most accurate information available on Scotland's national lifelong learning framework.

## Why Mention the SCQF in your Communications to Learners?

- **CHOICE:** Accurately referring to the SCQF when promoting your learning programmes allows existing and prospective learners to make informed choices about the provision that you offer.
- **QUALITY:** All learning programmes which have been credit rated and placed on the SCQF are quality assured. By referring to the SCQF you are communicating the quality of your learning programmes at home and abroad.
- **CAPACITY:** By providing information on the variety of entry requirements and progression opportunities for your programmes, you increase your capacity to attract and retain learners.
- **LIFELONG LEARNING:** Raising awareness of the SCQF through your communications materials supports the realisation of the Scottish Government's objective to promote lifelong learning for all.

## How Should I Explain the SCQF to Learners?

Most college prospectuses and websites feature a section on Understanding Qualifications. Within this section you could use the following explanation of the SCQF:

### *Introduction to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)*

#### **What is the SCQF?**

The SCQF is a way of comparing the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It covers programmes in school, college, university and in the workplace. It does this by giving each qualification on the Framework a level and a number of credit points. The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is. The credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving that qualification. Each credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning.

Throughout this prospectus, you will see the SCQF level and credit points awarded to each programme of study, if it is on the Framework. This may help you decide which learning programme is most suitable for you at this stage in your lifelong learning journey.

#### **The SCQF can:**

- help you decide how you progress in your learning;
- help you understand qualifications you are not familiar with;
- help employers understand different types of qualifications and help with the development of your skills;
- help colleges and universities identify the level that has been studied in a particular subject and make it easier to transfer credit points between different learning programmes; and
- provide recognition of other areas of your learning that may contribute to your personal development and your goals for the future.

All Scottish colleges and universities are now using SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses, but only if these have been credit rated into the Framework. Some employers are also using SCQF levels instead of, or as well as, types of qualification when they advertise jobs.

The SCQF can also assist you to compare your qualifications with the rest of the UK and Europe. This is especially helpful if you are planning to study or work outside Scotland. A leaflet called *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries* is available to download from the Resources page of the SCQF website.

For more information on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, visit [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk). For information on the SCQF level and credit points for learning programmes which have been credit rated, search the SCQF database at [www.scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/).

## Is there a Diagram that I can use to Describe the SCQF?

Yes, the diagram below illustrates the mainstream qualifications which sit on the SCQF and could be included in your marketing materials to provide a visual aid of the Framework for learners. Please contact the SCQF Partnership Executive Team to request a high resolution print-ready version of the Framework diagram for use in your marketing materials.

We are also happy to send out hard copies of the Framework diagram.

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ 1
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3				
2	National 2, Awards				
1	National 1, Awards				

## What is Credit Rating?

Only CRBs can credit rate a qualification or learning programme. CRBs include all Further Education Colleges, all Higher Education Institutions, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and a number of other organisations approved by the SCQF Partnership.

Credit Rating is a formal, quality assured, objective process carried out by trained personnel in which a qualification or learning programme is subject to rigorous scrutiny and analysis and is then allocated an SCQF level using the SCQF Level Descriptors. During this process SCQF credit points are allocated to the qualification or learning programme.

## Using SCQF Levels and Credits to Describe Programmes

When a qualification or learning programme has been credit rated by a Credit Rating Body (CRB) you can refer to that qualification or learning programme in terms of its SCQF Level and SCQF credit points. For example:

**Named Award:** *Business – HND*

**Level:** *SCQF Level 8*

**Awarding body:** *SQA*

**Credit value:** *15 credit points*

**Entry:** *Entry to SCQF Level 7 (Year 1) with two relevant Scottish Highers. Applicants with other formal academic qualifications and/or relevant employment experience will be considered on an individual basis*

*Entry to SCQF Level 8 (Year 2) with successful completion of year 1*

College certificates listing credit rated programmes should include the SCQF logo. For a high resolution copy of the SCQF logo and guidelines regarding its use please contact the SCQF Partnership Executive Team at [info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk).

## Referring to Non-Credit Rated Programmes

SCQF Level Descriptors can allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications/learning programmes achieved in different contexts. Sometimes a broad comparison is all that is required by an individual or organisation for internal planning or to identify informal progression pathways without carrying out a formal quality assured credit rating process. This is sometimes referred to as ‘benchmarking’ or ‘mapping’ and does not allow any formal statement of SCQF level or credit or permit the use of the SCQF logo. Any organisation which only carries out this informal process must ensure that any SCQF level or credit estimated as a result is not formally promoted to learners or the general public through publicity or course material and does not appear on any certificates or learning transcripts.

You can check whether a qualification or learning programme has been credit rated or not by consulting the SCQF database on the SCQF website [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk).

## More Information

For more information on how you can promote the SCQF to learners, contact the SCQF Partnership at [info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk)

[www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)  
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