

# Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

**SCQF Update 6**  
September 2006

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**SCQF UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 2006**

**SCQF**

**The Scottish Credit and  
Qualifications Framework**

# SCQF UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2006

**News and information from the SCQF:** *what's been happening since spring 2006?*

## Introduction

Welcome to the September edition of the *SCQF Update 2006*. This is an exciting period for the SCQF and for Partner Organisations. The SCQF Development Partners are committed to promoting the SCQF and its importance for lifelong learning in Scotland. A welcome development is that the Association of Scotland's Colleges joined the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA Scotland), the Scottish Executive and Universities Scotland as a Development Partner.

Many important activities have taken place during this period both centrally and across the sectors. Formalisation of the arrangements for the management of the SCQF continues to progress and partners are exploring the relationship of the SCQF to other frameworks in the UK, Europe and beyond. Partner Organisations continue to look at how best to extend the Framework to include as many learning programmes as possible, including those delivered in the workplace and in the community.

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## SCQF Company limited by Guarantee

The SCQF is a voluntary partnership between the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA Scotland), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Executive, Universities Scotland and the Association of Scotland's Colleges. Over the past few months, the SCQF Development Partners have explored several options for formalising the current informal arrangements and they decided that the formation of a company limited by guarantee was the best way forward for maintaining the integrity and quality assurance of the SCQF, for its promotion and for developing relationships with other frameworks across the UK, Europe and those further afield. The Company will carry out these functions in terms that are supportive and consistent with the lifelong learning needs in Scotland. It will establish a Quality Committee to advise on all aspects of the maintenance and assurance of the Framework and for the recognition of credit rating bodies. It is expected that the Company will be incorporated by the end of 2006.

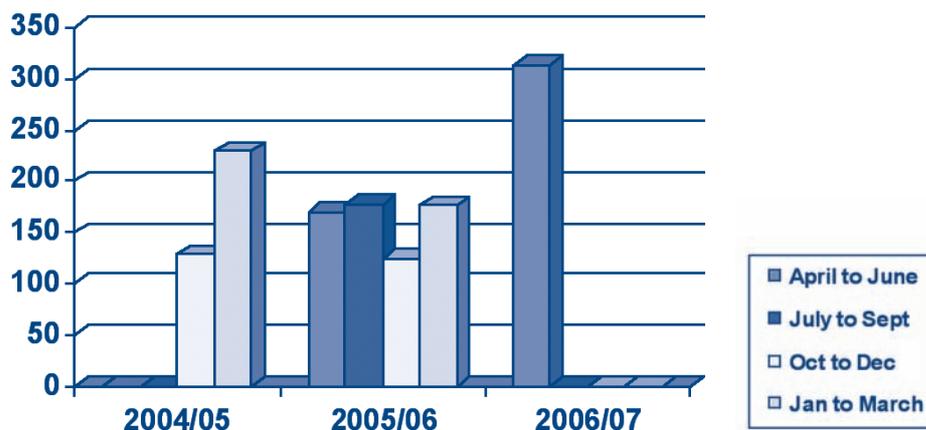
A priority for the Company will be the use of the SCQF to support access and participation in lifelong learning. As a preliminary to this, a Joint Advisory Committee Seminar, chaired by Dr Andrew Cubie, was held on 31 March 2006 at the Abode Hotel in Glasgow. The focus of this well attended seminar was to explore ways in which, through working together, the range of organisations and learning providers can make full use of the opportunities created by the SCQF to support this priority. The outcomes of the seminar will be used to inform the design of an integrated cross-sector programme of work to implement, use and extend the potential of the SCQF. The JAC Seminar Report is available on the SCQF website at <http://www.scqf.org.uk/downloads/JointAdvisorySeminarReport310306.pdf>

Another area of major importance for the SCQF is its relationship with other UK and European frameworks. Work is progressing in areas such as 'articulation' and 'self-certification' with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA Scotland) and Universities Scotland.

## SCQF Website

The website is vital to the communication of the SCQF and recently many new facilities have been added to encourage its use. The website is also reviewed and updated on a regular basis and it is great to see that it is proving more popular with a significant increase in the number of hits over the last year. As displayed on the graph, the first quarter of this year saw the number of hits almost doubled from the same period in 2005/06.

**Figure 1: Source: Webtrends**



The majority of visitors viewed the site for the first time and encouragingly, there is also a significant number of return visitors.

As part of its ongoing development, the Association of Scotland's Colleges SCQF college website ([www.scqfcolleges.org.uk](http://www.scqfcolleges.org.uk)) will migrate to the SCQF website in the coming months.

Other developments include the creation of sector specific web pages to help keep you up to date with activities and developments in a range of different areas.

Case studies, including examples of best practice, have also been included to provide an insight as to how the Framework is being used nationally and to the benefit of Scottish learners. As always, further information, as well as a range of downloadable documents and various sector publications, can be accessed through the SCQF website. For further information, visit us on [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

## UPDATE ON THE SCQF AND SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS

### SCQF and the Scottish Learning Festival

The SCQF is hosting a seminar at the forthcoming Scottish Education and Teaching with Technology (SETT) – Scottish Learning Festival, organised by Learning and Teaching Scotland, on 21 September. The seminar, entitled 'Credit Where Credit's Due: Recognising Achievement in the SCQF' is focused on raising further awareness of the SCQF amongst teaching staff and school representatives. It will feature examples of schools in the Renfrewshire area that deliver a broad curriculum including, for example, the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland's (CIOBS) qualifications, which have been SCQF credit rated by SQA. The recent piloted delivery of the CIOBS' **Certificate in Financial Services** within Gryffe High School, Renfrewshire has proved to be successful, with 6 pupils completing the programme and gaining SCQF credit for their learning. Some of the pupils have since used their credit to help with their entry to higher education.

Georgina Pollock, Principal Teacher of Business Education at Gryffe High School said,

*"Gryffe High School was approached by the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland to pilot one of their professional qualifications – the Certificate in Financial Services. My pupils have now passed all 3 subjects – Introduction to Financial Services, Basic Accounting and Taxation and Introduction to Marketing. They were presented with their certificates at the school on 31 May 2006 by the Chief Executive, Professor Charles Munn OBE. My 6 pupils are all delighted to have passed and will appear on the cover of the Scottish Banker Magazine Aug/Sept edition. All agree that the independent learning required to complete this course was a useful bridge between school and university and who knows about the future – I may meet one of them when I am looking for financial advice on my pension!!"*

The project is now being rolled out to other schools in Scotland and it is anticipated that nearly 100 pupils will participate in session 2006/7. For further information, contact

**Margaret Cameron**  
([m.cameron@scqf.org.uk](mailto:m.cameron@scqf.org.uk)).

### **Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC)**

SCQF level and credit has been reported on the

SQC in summary format since December 2004. Prior to detailed reporting of the SCQF information on the SQC (January 2007), SQA will hold awareness raising sessions for staff in schools and colleges. SQA provides publications for candidates, 'About your SQC' leaflet and 'Your Exams' booklet, that also contain an explanation regarding the SCQF information on their certificate.

## **UPDATE ON THE SCQF AND SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES**

### **Raising Awareness**

The majority of college prospectuses now include the SCQF diagram as part of their introduction. Some indicate individual programme's SCQF level, and use this to map progression pathways. Encouragement is given to this good practice, as the wider use of the SCQF on college websites helps to give a more visual impression of the range of options available for progression.

### **Information Booklets**

The Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) and the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) have produced two booklets, which were disseminated to all Scotland's colleges in May. The booklets, 'Using the SCQF in College Processes' and 'Thinking about College', were designed for college staff and learners respectively, as a means of raising further awareness and supporting the use of the SCQF in this sector. For further information and copies of these booklets, contact **Christine Mathers** ([Christine.mathers@sfeu.ac.uk](mailto:Christine.mathers@sfeu.ac.uk)).

### **Briefing Sessions**

Update briefing sessions are being offered by SFEU to specialist curriculum teams and to colleges who are about to undergo HMIe Review. To arrange for in-house delivery of an update briefing session contact **Christine Mathers** ([christine.mathers@sfeu.ac.uk](mailto:christine.mathers@sfeu.ac.uk)) or **Eric Massie** ([eric.massie@sfeu.ac.uk](mailto:eric.massie@sfeu.ac.uk)).

### **College Credit Rating Implementation Group**

Over the past six months, eight colleges have taken part in the pilot to credit rate a variety of different types of college devised qualifications. A conference, planned for the 2 October in Perth, will include presentations by colleges on their credit rating experience along with an evaluation report prepared by HMIe. For further information, contact **Margaret Cameron**, ([m.cameron@scqf.org.uk](mailto:m.cameron@scqf.org.uk)).

### **SQA training and development support for Credit Rating**

SQA has developed a variety of materials to support training in Credit Rating for a range of audiences and contexts. These materials include the SQA Higher National Unit; 'Credit Rating: Principles and Practice', with associated exemplar and training pack for the delivery of a training workshop. The pack includes presentations and sample credit rating activities. Some of the materials were used during the College Credit Rating pilot. The exemplar and support materials will be made available to centres approved to deliver the Unit. The Unit is now available from [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk), within the 'find an HN Unit' section. For further information, contact **Lynn Tully** ([lynn.tully@sqa.org.uk](mailto:lynn.tully@sqa.org.uk)).

### **Articulation from Higher Nationals to Degree Programmes**

SQA recently conducted a series of events to launch the new HN Guide for Higher Education Institutions (Higher National Certificates and Diplomas: information for higher education institutions). The launch focussed on the design principles of the new HNs and promoted the progress and articulation opportunities the HNs offer candidates wishing to go onto degree programmes. Representatives from both Scotland's Colleges and the HE sector illustrated these articulation opportunities through real case study examples. The guide can be obtained from: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk), under the section for HEI staff.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The RPL webpage on the SCQF website includes an RPL Resource pack comprising case studies and exemplars of materials used to support the RPL process. The resource pack can be downloaded from [www.scqf.org.uk/rpl.asp](http://www.scqf.org.uk/rpl.asp).

## THE SCQF IN HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

### Partnerships within the SCQF

A major conference based around the theme of working together within the SCQF to create new opportunities and meet new needs, was held in Dundee on 22 May. The conference was aimed at exploring ways to strengthen links between HE and Colleges, including bridging and articulation between the sectors. This also touched upon links with other key areas, e.g. the opportunities created by credit rating within the SCQF, linkages in and out of Scottish Vocational Qualifications, the work of the Scottish Wider Access Regional Fora, and the SCQF in Social Services, Health and Community Learning. An information leaflet on the outcomes of the conference was produced for all Scottish higher education institutions and Scotland's colleges.

### The Mapping Tracking and Bridging Website – is your information correct?

Scottish universities and colleges are encouraged to ensure that information on the mapping database, showing links between HN Qualifications and Degrees across Scotland, is kept up to date. The mapping database is accessible through the SCQF website:

<http://www.scqf.org.uk/college2uni/>

### Higher Education (HE) Programme of Work 2006/8

An HE programme of work has been developed under the auspices of the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA), and focuses on the sector's priorities from summer 2006, in making use of the SCQF. A working group has been convened by QAA Scotland and Universities Scotland to verify, against criteria stipulated in the 'Bologna Process' in higher education, that the framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland is compatible with the framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Scottish working group, consisting of experts from the sector, students and international representatives, has progressed the verification process through SACCA under the auspices of the QAA Scotland Committee. A final report on the verification process has been approved by the QAA Scotland Committee, and will be submitted to the Bologna working group on qualifications frameworks by the end of September 2006. It is hoped that the results can inform the process of the verification procedures in the remainder of the countries signed up to the Bologna process, each nation having a target date of 2010 to verify that their national frameworks are compatible with the framework for the EHEA. For further information on this sector, contact **Dr Alan Runcie** ([a.runcie@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:a.runcie@qaa.ac.uk)).

## THE SCQF IN THE WORK PLACE

### Scottish Vocational Qualifications & Modern Apprenticeships and the SCQF

The first phase of the SVQ Credit Rating project came to an end in March this year with 24 qualifications now formally credit rated and levelled against the SCQF. This is a collaborative project, taken forward by SQA and funded by the Scottish Executive. Feedback has been gathered from those who have participated in this work, and Awarding Bodies, Sectors Skills Councils and Standard Setting Bodies have all valued the opportunity to work together. A final report is available on both the SCQF and SQA websites.

The next phase of the project aims at credit rating a further 40 SVQs, covering the mandatory elements of the top 9 Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks – an important and exciting step.

The SCQF continues to work closely with other frameworks in the UK – both those that are operational and in development. In order to look at the relationship between vocational qualifications in the SCQF and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), a project is being taken forward to credit rate some UK wide qualifications in both frameworks and funding has been allocated from the Welsh Assembly Government to support this work. For further information contact Lynn Forsyth ([lynn.forsyth@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.forsyth@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)) or Amanda Laing ([Amanda.Laing@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Amanda.Laing@sqa.org.uk)).

### Credit Rating of Professional Qualifications

As the Framework is further extended, more professional qualifications are being credit rated and levelled against the SCQF. Having

recognised the benefits of their programmes being on the SCQF, Castle Craig Hospital recently had their **Diploma in Addiction Counselling** and **Certificate in Addiction Studies** credit rated by Napier University. The Diploma has been awarded 120 credit points at SCQF Level 8 and the Certificate, 60 credit points at SCQF Level 8. According to Dr Glynis Read, Addictions Therapist and main tutor at Castle Craig Hospital, the rationale for having their provision credit rated was to “provide a recognised standard of education and to enable students to continue to build upon academic credits”.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority also continues to offer a Credit Rating Service for qualifications and learning programmes of other providers. Provision credit rated by this service can be viewed at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) (search for Credit Rating Service) where more information is provided.

For further information on credit rated provision, contact the **SCQF Core Team** ([info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk))

## The SCQF and Recruitment

Some employers have started to refer to SCQF Levels when advertising their vacancies. **Aberlour Childcare Trust** recently used the SCQF within their recruitment process. A representative for the organisation has commented;

*“Job Evaluation Panels have found the SCQF Framework useful in helping to understand how different qualifications relate to one another, e.g. SVQ and HNC. In addition, it has also been used to identify the level of qualification for each post advertised. Prior to the job evaluation project, job descriptions might have said, ‘educated to degree level’, or ‘must have HNC in Social Care or SVQ 3’. They now read; ‘qualified to SCQF level 7’, followed by an example of a relevant award at this level -such as HNC in Social Care”.*

The Aberlour Childcare Trust use job descriptions not just for recruitment, but also for performance management, appraisal, job evaluation, identification of training needs, grievance/disciplinary matters, and workforce planning.

## THE SCQF POSTHOLDERS AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

### Community Learning and Development

Community Learning and Development partnerships throughout the country are now more aware of the SCQF. Partnership Lead Officers and CLD managers have supported presentations and practical seminars to encourage debate around the issues and benefits of the SCQF and promote the application of the Framework. A network of contacts interested in the use of the SCQF within CLD is being developed through the CLD Managers’ group. This network will support the development of understanding of the SCQF at a local level.

Partnership working is a key aspect of community learning and development work. A Consortium of Training (ACT) is a joint approach to CLD training from Scottish Borders, Midlothian, West Lothian, Dumfries and Galloway and Craigmillar Capacity Building Project. A formal launch of training developed by ACT and credit rated by SQA, was held in Linlithgow on the 20 June. The success of this pilot has led others in the CLD sector to consider credit rating their programmes. Youthlink, the National Youth Work Organisation for Scotland, is working in partnership with the Adam Smith College who are credit rating the Young People’s Panel training programme.

Through funding from the Fife and Tayside Access Forum, Angus Council CLD and Dundee University have developed a project which will explore how the SCQF can support progression and transition. The post is based within Angus Council Community Learning and Development Service.

An expert group of practitioners informed the development of materials to support the Recognition of Prior Learning within youth work practice. An online RPL tool is currently being piloted and packs have been developed for mentors and learners. These form part of a series of publications developed by Learning Connections. The publications aim to provide examples to stimulate debate and reflect the growing understanding and application of the SCQF within the CLD sector. Edith MacQuarrie, SCQF Co-ordinator for Learning Connections, Communities Scotland said:

*“Along with colleagues in the voluntary sector and local authorities we’ve developed an online tool for youth workers, to begin to recognise their learning. This builds confidence and can lead to other opportunities, learning or qualifications. We think the SCQF gives learners choice they would not otherwise have.”*

For more information on this sector, contact

**Edith MacQuarrie**  
([Edith.MacQuarrie@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Edith.MacQuarrie@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk)).

### **Social Services Sector**

The SCQF Post holder for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), continues to work with a range of organisations and working groups to implement the SCQF to support this sector and to further learning opportunities. The main focus of the work is centred around three core strands including the Recognition of Prior Learning; work based learning and collaboration work with colleges. A Social Services and the SCQF newsletter entitled, 'In the Frame', was published to capture the range of projects and activities that are using the SCQF as an enabling tool and to inform of further developments in the sector. The first edition of this publication can be downloaded from the SCQF website <http://www.scqf.org.uk/who18.asp>, with the second edition due at the end of 2006.

For further information, contact Dr Alison Harold ([Alison.harold@sssc.uk.com](mailto:Alison.harold@sssc.uk.com)).

### **New BA Degree for Integrated Services**

The SCQF was used to develop an innovative new degree programme – the **BA Education and Social Services**, which will provide an opportunity for students with an HNC in Early Education and Childcare; Health Care; Social Care or Supporting Learning Needs to progress to higher education and build on their HNC qualifications. This new programme was developed in partnership with James Watt College and the Faculty of Education at the University of Strathclyde.

### **Health Sector**

The SCQF Post holder for NHS Education Scotland, continues to raise awareness of the SCQF and to explore its potential for the NHS in Scotland. Work is underway to map current NHS learning and development provision including in-house, academic and vocational, against the SCQF and to search for pathways of interconnectedness with other frameworks including the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and the emerging Careers Framework in NHS Scotland. Marie Cerinus, Education Project Manager (SCQF) for NES said,

*"The NHS welcomes learning and development and the SCQF is a way of understanding the qualifications people already have, of giving credit for learning already undertaken – and supporting learning between public sector bodies."*

### **Cross-sector Work**

The SCQF Post holders from CLD, Health and the Social Services Sectors are planning a joint input to both the Orkney and Shetland Islands on the SCQF. Using a combination of video conferencing and direct presentation the team will offer a combined perspective.

Joint work on recognition of prior learning and work-based learning continues. Multi-sector regional workshops are being organised and will be held later this year to support the development of knowledge around the SCQF credit rating process. These workshops will be set up to help facilitate access for organisations interested in having their provision formally credit rated and levelled against the SCQF. More information will be available in due course from **Marie Cerinus** ([marie.cerinus@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:marie.cerinus@nes.scot.nhs.uk)).

## **THE SCQF AND OTHER FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENTS**

### **UK Developments**

The SCQF Postholder for SQA, along with other SQA staff, are participating in work to develop the new national qualifications and credit Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland which will replace the current NQF. This work includes exploring the impact on SVQs and the equivalent NVQs, which are based on UK nationally developed and approved standards. Trial and testing of the new system is underway and the first evaluation report is due in July 2007. For more information, contact Lynn Tully at

SQA ([lynn.tully@sqa.org.uk](mailto:lynn.tully@sqa.org.uk)) or visit [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk) (choose Framework developments).

The SCQF is participating in the '5 Country Qualification and Framework Group', a forum which promotes transparency of qualifications across the borders. The group produced the highly successful 'Rough Guide to Qualifications: Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries' leaflet which is now being developed as an interactive website. More information will be available soon on the SCQF website.

## European Developments

Following the consultation and support for a European Qualifications Framework proposed to the European Parliament for approval, a consultation for a European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is to be conducted in September 2006. Moira McKerracher, Business Manager for SQA, is the UK representative on the Technical Working Group for the development of an ECVET and has been working with the Group to develop criteria for the system. She has also contributed to the consultation document that will be published and circulated from mid September. The consultation document will be made available on the SCQF website.

## International Framework Developments

The SQA and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago have been working together over a number of years in the development of the vocational education and training system in Trinidad and Tobago. The initial work carried out by SQA was to build capacity within the Agency to award its own certificates for the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualifications, from designing a management information system to the development of an Assessment and Quality Assurance system. The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) requested further assistance from SQA to explain the process of credit rating in July 2006 and took the opportunity to promote the SCQF as a leading example of a national qualifications framework.

## INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The SCQF Core Team is continuing to deliver presentations and provide updates on the SCQF to Information, Advice and Guidance Practitioners. The Team has been working closely with Careers Scotland to help support and raise further awareness of the Framework amongst learners. Practitioners from this sector are welcome to contact the Team for further information on how the SCQF can be used to benefit learners and presentations can be delivered on request. For further information, contact the **SCQF Core Team** ([info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk)).

**For more information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website on [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)  
or contact the SCQF Core Team at [info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk),  
telephone 0141 331 3303, fax: 0141 331 3575**