

Crediting Learning

Understanding Qualifications

Introducing the new

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

An Initial Guide for Employers



The Scottish Credit and
Qualifications Framework

There are so many qualifications on CVs today, how do you tell what is what?

'Qualifications have changed so much since I was at school, I don't know where to start.'

'What's an Intermediate 2?'

If you're sometimes confused by the range of qualifications available today, the new Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has been developed to help you. It's a new way of looking at, comparing and understanding Scottish qualifications.

By giving every qualification a **level** and a **credit** value, the SCQF makes it easy to compare qualifications and see where they stand. What's an Intermediate 2? Look at the framework and you'll see.

The work to implement the Framework across all education and training sectors is underway. Most mainstream Scottish qualifications are now being placed within the Framework and in due course, other qualifications and learning will be included.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is designed to help both employers and learners understand and compare the range of qualifications available in Scotland.

What is the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework?

Levels

The framework has 12 levels: from level 1 for very basic education, to level 12 for postgraduate doctorates.

Qualifications are designed to meet particular needs. At any level, some qualifications cover a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding, while

others focus on a narrower, perhaps specialised area. Qualifications might be 'small' or they might be 'large', but the fact that they are at the same level means that they are dealing with the same level of complexity. This means that the level of learning gained is **comparable** but not the same in content or purpose.

Credits for all learning

Another new feature of the framework is that qualifications are described in terms of the number of credits required. At any one level a qualification that covers a wide range of learning or skills will require more credits than a smaller qualification. For example, at level 7 one Advanced Higher course has 32 credit points, but an HNC has 120.

This number of points gives you an idea of how much learning has to take place.

Credits, known as SCOTCAT credits, are simply a way of describing the amount of learning — of knowledge, skills, or competence — that is covered by the qualification.

(SCOTCAT — Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer)

Other benefits of the SCQF

Credit Transfer

In the framework, credit points can be used to transfer from one qualification to another. For example from a training programme to an SVQ, or from an HNC to the second year of a degree course. This will help reduce the repetition of learning some people experience.

It is important to state that there is **no automatic** transfer route through the framework, but an aim of the framework is to help these routes develop.

Before long, SCQF levels and credit points will be shown on certificates and may appear on CVs.

As is the case now, learners will continue to achieve qualifications at their own pace. This is not connected to the number of credits for each qualification.

The SCQF and business

In the future the framework will help you...

- plan ongoing training and development by showing clear progression routes and the range of qualifications available
- avoid costly training mistakes — by providing a simple reference to check the level and credit value of a training package and give an overview of how it compares to others in terms of subject content, skills development and transferability
- gain credit for in-house training packages — an aim of the framework in due course is to include all forms of assessed learning in the framework so that all learning can be given a level and a credit rating

The UK and European context

Talks are underway to link with qualifications frameworks in the rest of the UK and Europe.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF level	SQA National Units, Courses and Group Awards	Higher Education	Scottish Vocational Qualifications	SCQF level
12		Doctorates		12
11		Masters	SVQ 5	11
10		Honours degree Graduate Diploma		10
9		Ordinary degree Graduate Certificate		9
8		Higher National Diploma Diploma in Higher Education	SVQ 4	8
7	Advanced Higher	Higher National Certificate Certificate in Higher Education		7
6	Higher		SVQ 3	6
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade		SVQ 2	5
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade		SVQ 1	4
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade			3
2	Access 2			2
1	Access 1			1

The positioning of SVQs in the table gives a **broad** indication of their place in the framework. A major project is underway to clarify the position of SVQs within an overall UK context. The diagram above does not show every type of qualification however, the main Scottish qualifications are represented.

How can I find out more?

On these back two pages there is a list of further contact points where advice and information on qualifications, training programmes, SCQF level descriptions and credit points is available to you free of charge.

If you need further information, or advice on qualifications or training, the following organisations will be happy to help.

Small Business Gateway Network

This service is provided throughout lowland Scotland by **Scottish Enterprise** and its network of Local Enterprise Companies. It provides a range of integrated services for business information, business start-up and business growth.

You can visit the Small Business Gateway website at www.sbgateway.com or call 0845 609 6611 for more information.

Business Information Source

This service is provided by **Highlands and Islands Enterprise** through its network of Local Enterprise Companies. It provides advice and assistance on issues such as business start-up, finance, property, innovation and ICT.

You can visit the Business Information Source website: www.bis.uk.com or call 01463 715400 for detailed information on your local Business Information Officer.

CBI Scotland

Provides a range of services to over 26,000 businesses in Scotland. Call them on 0141-222 2184 for detailed information or visit the Scotland section of the CBI website at www.cbi.org.uk

learndirect scotland

Do you want general information on learning/training providers and what they offer?

The national freephone learning Helpline and database service provides information on over 40,000 learning opportunities throughout Scotland. Contact them by using the learndirect scotland Helpline on 0808 100 9000, or their website: www.learndirectscotland.com

For more specific business advice contact learndirect scotland for business on 0845 6000 111 or their website for business: www.lids4b.com

More contacts overleaf....

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

SQA can provide information on:

- National Qualifications (including Standard Grade, National Units and Courses at Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher levels)
- Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC/HND)
- Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and Scottish Group Awards (SGAs)
- Scottish Progression Awards (SPAs)
- Customised Awards and Professional Development Awards (PDA's)

Contact them by phone at their Helpdesk on 0141-242 2214 or by e-mail at helpdesk@sqa.org.uk or on their website: www.sqa.org.uk

Your Local College or University

Contact your local institution(s) for detailed information on courses and training provision. Use the PlanIT database mentioned across to access

Want more information on the SCQF?

A guide to the new framework, *Introduction to the SCQF*, is available from the **SCQF Development Officer** or the **SQA** website listed above, the **QAA** website: www.qaa.co.uk or **Universities Scotland** website: www.universities-scotland.ac.uk or on www.scqf.com.

The guide details the definitions of levels and gives the credit points attached to a wide number of well-known qualifications.

detailed information on the institutions, including direct links to their websites. The Association of Scottish Colleges' website is www.ascol.org.uk

If you want to find out about awards at universities and higher education institutions then visit: www.universities-scotland.ac.uk which lists contact details.

PlanIT and SkillUp

Need information on learning opportunities and how they relate to careers and career development?

PlanIT and SkillUp are web-enabled databases providing information on learning opportunities throughout Scotland. Courses are grouped into broad Career Areas. General careers, learning and business information is also provided.

Visit PlanIT at www.ceg.org.uk and SkillUp at www.skillup.org.uk

You can contact the **SCQF Development Officer** by e-mailing lorraine.judge@sqa.org.uk

If you want information on gaining credit for in-company training, contact a university or SQA.

Other information will be available as the SCQF develops.