Qualification Design Principles

Awards (June 2021)

Rationale

Every Award must have a clear rationale that:

♦ justifies the need for the qualification and its uniqueness

♦ provides evidence of demand for the qualification

♦ explains how it fits with other qualifications

♦ identifies the progression opportunities into and from the qualification

♦ outlines the aims, purposes and intended learning outcomes of the qualification, and explains how the award structure enables them

♦ gives information about who the course is for

An Award must:

♦ have value and be worthy of certification in its own right
♦ meet a defined purpose, which may be broad or specialist

Qualification design

Awards may be made up of mandatory units only, or both mandatory and optional units.

If the Award is made up of a single unit, the unit must be the same level as the Award. If the Award is made up of more than one unit, more than half the units must be at the level of the Award.

An Award must contain at least one whole unit. There is no limit to the number of units an Award can contain.

Awards can be any combination of Higher National (HN) Units, Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Units, National (Workplace) Units and National Units. The units can be of any credit value.

Awards can contain courses or other group awards.

An external assessment from a National Course may not contribute to an Award.

SCQF level and credit points

Awards and their component unit(s) can be set at SCQF levels 1–12.

There is no restriction on the value of SCQF credit points. Units can be of any SQA credit value. However, fractional SCQF credits must be rounded up or down as appropriate to the correct SCQF credit value.

Assessment

Units within an Award are assessed internally.

Award of qualification

Candidates must achieve the required number of units (mandatory and/or optional) in the Award framework.

Grading

Candidates must pass the units within the chosen framework pathway of the Award. They are ungraded.

Skills

Awards can provide opportunities to develop skills from the following frameworks:

♦ Core Skills
♦ Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
♦ Essential Skills

Given the flexible nature of Awards, there is no design requirement for any of the above skills to be included within an Award unless it is appropriate.

Equality

Awards must take into consideration the needs of all candidates. These qualifications should be as accessible and inclusive as possible to candidates who will achieve in different ways and at a different pace.