

# Credit where credit's due

A guide to the SCQF for parents and carers

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Clarity approved by  
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scqf

scottish credit and  
qualifications framework



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# Understanding the SCQF

If your child is studying SQA qualifications, you will become more aware of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), as it is included on your son or daughter's SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate which is issued every August. This leaflet tells you about the SCQF and what it means for your child.

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## What is the SCQF?

The SCQF is Scotland's lifelong learning framework. It can help you compare the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It covers achievements such as those from school, college and university, and work-based qualifications.

The SCQF has 12 levels. Qualifications at level 1 are the simplest to achieve, and qualifications at level 12 are the most demanding. The SCQF credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving each qualification. One SCQF credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning.

For example, one person may study a course at National 4 (SCQF level 4) and another at Higher (SCQF level 6). Both award the same number of SCQF credit points, but they are at different levels of difficulty.

## What is the SCQF for?

The SCQF makes qualifications easier to describe and understand. Before the SCQF,

there was no easy way to compare different types of qualifications. Now it is easy to see that, for example, an Advanced Higher is at the same level as a Higher National Certificate (HNC), the first year of a degree or an SVQ level 3. They are all at level 7 on the SCQF because, although they have a different focus, content and types of assessment, the demands on the learner are roughly the same. This means that your son or daughter can be confident that their qualification has the same worth whether it was achieved through college, the workplace, school, university or another route.

## How is the SCQF being used?

All Scottish universities and colleges are now using SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses, if these are included in the Framework. A wide range of other learning is also recognised on the SCQF and we have provided some examples over the page. Employers are increasingly using SCQF levels instead of, or as well as, types of qualifications when they advertise jobs.

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
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					

## The SCQF can:

- help your son or daughter choose how they progress with their learning;
- help you and your son or daughter understand qualifications you or they are not familiar with;
- help employers understand different types of qualifications which your son or daughter may have achieved;
- help universities or colleges identify the level your son or daughter has studied at in a particular subject, and make it easier to transfer credits between different learning programmes; and
- recognise other areas of learning that may contribute to your son or daughter's personal development and goals for the future.

## Table tip

Don't worry if you are not familiar with some of the qualifications mentioned above. You will learn more about them as your son or daughter moves through school. For more information on each award and its credit points, visit the interactive Framework at [scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm](http://scqf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm).

## Table notes

We have produced this Framework diagram to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications that SQA, colleges and universities have already given an SCQF level and credit points to. However, there is a varied range of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, we cannot show here. For more information on other learning that has an SCQF level and credit points, please visit the SCQF database at [scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/](http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/).

## Other learning programmes and wider achievement

Some other learning programmes that your son or daughter might take at school, college or a local youth club which recognise non-academic wider achievement may have an SCQF level and credit points. This area of the Framework will continue to develop, so it is worth checking the SCQF database at [scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/](http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/).

SCQF level	Award owner	Award name	Credit points
9	Young Enterprise Scotland	Can, Plan, Do: Supporting the Enterprise Journey	4
7	The Boys' Brigade	King George VI Leadership Programme	13
6	City & Guilds	Diploma in Site Carpentry at SCQF level 6	67
5	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme	5
5	The Outward Bound Trust	Adventure & Challenge Award (5 day)	5
4	Skills Development Scotland	Certificate of Work Readiness	34
4	The British Sports Trust Sports Leaders UK	Sports Leadership	7
4-6	Co-operative Education Trust Scotland Ltd	Certificate in Co-operative Studies	18 (each)
3 and 4	SQA	Employability Award	6
3	Youth Scotland	Dynamic Youth Awards One-Five Star Awards	1-31

## Frequently asked questions

**What do the level and credit columns mean on my son or daughter's SQA exam certificate?**

These refer to the SCQF levels of the exams your son or daughter has taken, and reflect the knowledge and skill they needed to achieve that particular award. So, for example, a Higher will have a '6' in the level column and a '24' in the credit column, as the credit value reflects the amount of learning involved in a qualification. For more information, have a look at our helpful video at [scqf.org.uk/videos/scqf-in-your-sqa-exam-results/](http://scqf.org.uk/videos/scqf-in-your-sqa-exam-results/). The SQA also have lots of information on their exam certificates at [www.sqa.org.uk/sqc](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqc).

**How do the Nationals and Curriculum for Excellence fit with the SCQF?**

Curriculum for Excellence will provide a rounded education experience for your son or daughter, and give them the qualifications they need for the fast-paced world we live in. The national qualifications which have replaced Standard Grades and Intermediates 1 and 2 are Nationals 4 and 5, which directly link to their SCQF level. Curriculum for Excellence also recognises that not all learning takes place in the classroom, and this is also a feature of the SCQF, where credit can be given for informal learning. For more information on Curriculum for Excellence, visit the Parentzone website at [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk). For more information on the new qualifications visit [www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents](http://www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents).

**How do SCQF credit points relate to UCAS tariff points? Are they the same?**

SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS is the organisation that processes applications for higher-education courses, and tariff points relate to the grade at which a qualification has been achieved. SCQF credit points are a measure of how much learning needs to be done to achieve a particular qualification, whatever the final grade.

**Are Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) now on the SCQF?**

Yes, they are available in many industries across SCQF levels 5-12. There's lots more information on MAs on the Skills Development Scotland website at [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot).

**How does the SCQF link with Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy, Developing the Young Workforce?**

Developing the Young Workforce is the Scottish Government's response to *Education Working for All*. The strategy outlines a seven-year programme to offer all young people in Scotland a broader range of choices in the Senior Phase (from S4 to S6) of their school years and higher-quality work experience. It also aims to build closer connections between schools, colleges and employers. The SCQF supports the strategy by showing the equality between vocational and academic qualifications.

You will find more frequently asked questions for parents and carers on our website at [scqf.org.uk/more/faqs/learners-parents-and-carers/](http://scqf.org.uk/more/faqs/learners-parents-and-carers/).

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