

NOMENCLATURE EXPLAINED:

A Guide to Naming Qualifications and
Learning Programmes for the SCQF

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's lifelong learning framework. It contains the qualifications frameworks of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Scottish Higher Education (HE). The SCQF aims to:

1. help people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential;
2. enable employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how the qualifications relate to each other and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

The SCQF is managed by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership whose members include Scottish Government, higher education and college sectors, employers and SQA. Although it is not a regulatory body the SCQF Partnership maintains the quality and use of the Framework as a whole.

The SCQF diagram portrays the frameworks of HE, SQA and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). However, the Framework also currently contains over 400 qualifications and learning programmes such as non-formal learning programmes offered in the community or by employers, professional bodies, vendors such as Microsoft and those offered by Awarding Bodies other than SQA.

The SCQF uses two measures to recognise learning: Level and Credit. **Level** provides an indication of the level of difficulty of a qualification or learning programme. This is based on one set of SCQF Level Descriptors which are developmental from SCQF Level 1 to 12. The Level Descriptors are used by SCQF Credit Rating Bodies to determine the level of learning irrespective of whether the qualification or learning programme is academic, vocational or non-formal.

The SCQF Level is an important feature for learning provision that has been credit rated as this indicates the level of complexity of the learning and clarifies how qualifications and learning programmes relate to each other. It also provides clarity for both articulation and progression. Two qualifications or learning programmes at the same level on the SCQF indicates that they are comparable in terms of difficulty. For example, provision credit rated at SCQF level 7 indicates that it is more demanding than learning at SCQF Level 6.

The number of SCQF **Credit Points** allocated to a qualification or learning programme indicates the typical amount of time that it would take a learner to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification or learning programme. Ten notional learning hours equates to one SCQF Credit Point.



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SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12			DOCTORAL DEGREE	
11			INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREE / MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10			HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			BACHELORS / ORDINARY DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA	DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
7	ADVANCED HIGHER SCOTTISH BACCALAUREATE	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SVQ3
6	HIGHER			
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT STANDARD GRADE			SVQ2
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL STANDARD GRADE	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD	SVQ1
3	ACCESS 3 FOUNDATION STANDARD GRADE			
2	ACCESS 2			
1	ACCESS 1			

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credited by SQA and Higher Education Institutions, however, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information on other credit rated provision, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the database.

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NOMENCLATURE IN THE SCQF

With the increased use of the SCQF as a means to add value to learning from many sources the SCQF Partnership has issued this guidance on nomenclature which provides a useful explanation on the use of titles within it.

PROTECTED TITLES

There are a significant number of qualifications depicted in the SCQF diagram that have 'protected titles', protected by law and/or trademark. This means that these titles **cannot** be used by others. For example the use of degree titles, including research degree titles such as MPhil and PhD, can only be used by those institutions with degree awarding powers and other institutions which award the qualifications of institutions with degree awarding powers. By virtue of trademark, SQA titles such as National Progression Award (NPA) are also protected.



AWARD, CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA

Traditionally SQA and its predecessor bodies in Scotland have used certificates and diplomas in qualifications titles to display a hierarchical association. For example HNDs are more demanding than HNCs and this is reflected by their levels on the SCQF, HNDs being at SCQF Level 8 and HNC at SCQF Level 7.

However, the situation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is different following the emergence of its qualifications framework, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) the design rules for which permit the use of Award, Certificate and Diploma at the **same level**. The reason for this is that titles in the QCF are not used to differentiate the **level** of learning but rather the amount of **time** that it takes to complete. Therefore an Award is a qualification with less than 12 QCF credits, a Certificate has 13 to 37 QCF credits and a Diploma has 38 or more QCF Credits.

In Scotland, learning providers, learners and employers are generally aware that the use of the titles Certificate and Diploma typically indicate vertical progression. As this is not the case in the rest of the UK the use of these titles at the same level for the same subject within the SCQF could potentially cause confusion. The SCQF Partnership therefore strongly encourages Credit Rating Bodies and Submitting Organisations to title qualifications in a manner which will not lead to confusion in a Scottish context.

AWARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education (Cert HE and Dip HE) are awards of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and these qualifications are distinguished by their different level (and credit volume) e.g. Cert HE sits at SCQF Level 7 and Dip HE is at SCQF Level 8.

The titles of Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma were introduced in 2001 as part of the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions. These qualifications can sit at either SCQF Level 9 or Level 10 on the SCQF and are distinguished by the number of credits.

At postgraduate level the Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert)¹ and Post Graduate Diploma (PGDip)² are traditionally awarded by HEIs. Both sit at SCQF Level 11 and are distinguished by the number of SCQF Credit Points.

The SCQF Partnership is aware that a number of Chartered Bodies and Institutes use Post Graduate in their qualification titles. With these exceptions the SCQF Partnership advises that all other bodies use the SCQF Levels to illustrate the level of their qualification or learning programme rather than to use the restricted title of Post Graduate e.g. Risk Management SCQF Level 11.

¹The PGCert has 60 SCQF Credit Points, of which at least 40 Credit Points must be at SCQF Level 11.

²The PGDip has a minimum of 120 SCQF Credit Points with at least 90 of these being at SCQF Level 11.



VISIBILITY OF OTHER FRAMEWORKS

In terms of certification the SCQF Partnership has agreed that certificates should only display the SCQF Level and credit value and should not contain any reference to the qualification's level on other frameworks. Information on the relationship of the SCQF to other qualifications frameworks is often provided by other means e.g. Higher Education Diploma Supplement, the Higher Education Achievement Report, and Certificate Supplements.

Resources are also available on the SCQF website to help compare the level of qualifications and learning programmes in Scotland with other frameworks. For example the leaflet *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries: a rough guide comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland* illustrates the ways in which qualifications are organised throughout the UK and Ireland and enables a broad comparison of levels to be made.

Levels of qualifications can be compared across Europe via the European Qualifications Framework which can be accessed at <http://ec.europa.eu/eqf>.

MAINTAINING THE CLARITY OF THE SCQF

In Scotland the aim of the SCQF is to help learners, employers and others to understand the range of Scottish provision. With the greater use of the SCQF and the increasing number of qualifications and learning programmes that are on it, it is important that clarity in the use of qualification titles is maintained. Although non-regulatory by nature, the SCQF Partnership is responsible for the governance of the Framework which is central to the Education System and Skills Strategy in Scotland. The SCQF Partnership therefore requests SCQF Credit Rating Bodies, Awarding Bodies, submitting bodies and others to give due consideration to the nomenclature of qualifications and learning programmes that are placed on it.



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