

A DECADE OF RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2011 – 2012



10 years of
recognising
achievement

scqf

scottish credit and
qualifications framework



Michael Russell MSP Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

“I am delighted to contribute once again to the SCQF Partnership’s Annual Report. Last year saw the SCQF celebrate its 10th anniversary, allowing us to recognise the significant contribution the Framework has made to Scotland’s lifelong learning system. As I said then, it brought a focus on what still needs to be done and our consultation on post-16 reform, *“Putting Learners at the Centre”* did just that. The consultation recognised and

supported the role of the SCQF. But there were differing views on how it might better support progression through the learning system. If we are to improve the learner’s journey, we need a flexible and fair system which meets the needs of learners and employers with positive outcomes at all stages. And this in turn will create better life chances for young people and support our ambitions for sustainable jobs and growth. The SCQF Partnership has been closely engaged with our work and I look forward to continuing that engagement with them in the coming months.”

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

scqf scottish credit and qualifications framework

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			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	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 credit rated 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 providers, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the database.

WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011-2012



CHAIR'S REPORT

Sir Andrew Cubie CBE, FRSE

We enter our eleventh year confident that the SCQF is gaining recognition, both in Scotland, and consolidating its position internationally.

At home we are very much part of the educational framework, referred to frequently by Ministers and others as part of a distinct Scottish offer in bringing vocational and academic qualifications together. 2011/12 was an important year for us in ensuring that we moved to recognise a wider range of informal and non formal learning. We know that this will ensure that Scotland's learners can be allowed to play their part in personal and economic development. We need greater employer engagement in our work and, whilst our various business organisations offer us support, we need more champions from all sectors to explain our exceptional contribution. The video clips referred to later by Aileen Ponton are part of our case, but only part. To employers across all sectors, please refer to our levels in recruitment, or if recruitment is on hold, plan for reference to SCQF levels in the future.

Internationally, be it in Hong Kong or Fiji, our stock continues to rise. I and my colleagues on the Board and the Executive continue to be willing ambassadors for a singular Scottish proposition, but that will always be more powerful in partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Cubie'.

CEO'S REPORT

10TH ANNIVERSARY OVERSARY



Aileen Ponton

During 2011/12 we tried to focus on some key areas of priority suggested by our partners and stakeholders. These included supporting Credit Rating Bodies directly, engaging employers and other organisations considering trying to have their learning and training recognised, and finally, supporting the recognition of achievements of young people alongside the mainstream qualifications system.

To support Credit Rating Bodies we used a variety of approaches including delivering a mix of workshops, seminars of best practice and the development of guidance materials to support the SCQF Handbook. We also ran a very popular set of workshops for employers and other organisations on preparing for credit rating and finally we delivered hands-on workshops for institutions on embedding the Recognition of Prior Learning. The evaluation of all of these provided us with clear feedback that this mix was extremely helpful.

We also commenced the review of our Level Descriptors and consulted widely throughout the year with interested stakeholders. The final outcome of all of that work will be published in 2012-13.

We supported a number of organisations in having programmes credit rated onto the SCQF. These were all programmes aimed at young people, including those furthest from mainstream provision. This work was also supported by some funding from the MacRobert Trust.

Other work included the development and piloting of an employer toolkit supporting employers in using the SCQF level descriptors for developing job descriptions, conducting appraisal and looking at staff development.

We commissioned a range of video clips which provided a snapshot of the use of the SCQF by learners, employers, colleges and Higher Education Institutions. We hope that you will take the opportunity to view at least some of these to see just how widely the SCQF is now being used.

Finally, I need to take this opportunity to remind you that 2011 was the year in which we celebrated 10 years of the SCQF. Launched with its level descriptors in 2001 the following 10 years have seen the SCQF, we believe, surpass all expectations in terms of diversity of content, use of the Framework and its descriptors and perceptions of those across the UK and beyond. This success has been down to the hugely successful partnership approach and all of the work our partners and stakeholders have invested in implementing the SCQF as envisaged 10 years ago - here's to the next 10!

Aileen M Ponton

The Framework, the Partnership and Partnership Board and our strategic aims

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) supports individual learners and exists to sustain a vibrant lifelong learning culture in Scotland. It is our aim to include, where appropriate, qualifications and assessed learning in Scotland into the SCQF so that learners can identify their current position in relation to the Framework and can plan their future learning pathways. The Framework supports all of Scotland's citizens, learning providers and employers by:

- helping people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime, so as to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential;
- enabling employers, learners and the public in general to understand:
 - the full range of Scottish qualifications;
 - how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of assessed learning;
 - how different types of skills and qualifications can contribute to improving the development, and utilisation of, the skills of the workforce;
 - how Scottish qualifications relate to qualifications in other countries;
 - how using level descriptors can assist with qualifications development;
 - how using level descriptors can assist with benchmarking skills and experience.
- providing a Framework which fully supports both credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
 - this provides a route for individuals, employers and institutions to achieve value for money, optimise efficiency savings and ensure that learning does not have to be repeated. It is recognised that this may require initial investment but would, we believe, provide significant savings in the long run for individuals, organisations and society in general.



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Framework:

- describes the courses and programmes that lead to qualifications;
- helps with the development of progression routes; and
- provides opportunities to transfer credit points between qualifications and other learning programmes.

The Partnership and Partnership Board:

The SCQF is in the custody of, and managed by, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF Partnership). The Partnership is a company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish registered charity.

The SCQF Partnership has a Board of Directors which comprises nominees of the following organisations:

- Scotland's Colleges (John Henderson);
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Dr. Bill Harvey);
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (Dr. Janet Brown);
- Universities Scotland (Alastair Sim).

Plus

- a co-opted Director representing the interests of employers (Jack Matthews); and
 - an independent Chair, Sir Andrew Cubie, CBE, FRSE.
- Plus
- Scottish Ministers (Michael Cross - Observer).

All of those bodies represented on the Board have a significant interest and involvement in, and influence on, learning in Scotland.

Strategic aims of the SCQFP:

- to maintain the quality and integrity of the Framework;
- to promote and develop the Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning; and
- to develop and maintain relationships with other frameworks in the UK, Europe and internationally.



LOOKING BACK - THE LAST 10 YEARS

In the year 2011/12 we celebrated 10 years of the SCQF recognising achievement.

The Framework was launched in 2001 as a result of discussions between the then Scottish Executive, the SQA, Universities Scotland and QAA Scotland. There was a real recognition that this was a genuine opportunity to create a lifelong learning system of education underpinned by the Framework itself.

The Garrick Committee was informed of the work that was taking place to develop a lifelong learning framework in Scotland and, as a result, a delegation was invited to meet with the Committee to discuss these developments further. Subsequently, the Report of the Scottish Committee of the Inquiry into Higher Education, by the Garrick Committee (1997) recommended the development of an integrated framework:

“We recommend to providers of higher education programmes in Scotland, the QAA, the SQA and the SACCA that they should together consider and adopt an integrated qualifications framework based around level of study and Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme credit points.”

- (SHEFC/SACCA 1999)

The SCQF was then launched at a national conference in December 2001 where its structure, aims and purposes were set out. Widely distributed at the launch was the publication *An Introduction to the SCQF* which included the *SCQF Level Descriptors* and the arrangements and timetable to develop and implement the SCQF.

Due to the importance of the task to implement the SCQF across all sectors of education and training, an Implementation Group, chaired by the Scottish Executive, was established in 2002 to co-ordinate activities. Its remit was to:

- develop and propose general policy, strategy and a timetable for the implementation of the SCQF;
- co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy and timetable; and
- inform and advise the SCQF Joint Advisory Committee on issues of policy concerning the implementation of the SCQF.

By 2002 the main design principles were in place and *The National Plan for Implementation of the Framework* was published in December 2002. The Plan set out the seven aims for the period 2003-2006. These are summarised below:

- Development and implementation of the main structure and principles of the Framework;
- Public information on programmes of learning/ qualifications;
- Harmonising the recording of achievement across the SCQF;
- ‘Extending’ the Framework – credit rating and levels;
- ‘Extending’ the Framework – qualifications and programmes of professional and statutory bodies;
- The development of clear routes for progression and credit transfer;
- Support for implementation of the SCQF; and
- National awareness and understanding of the Framework.

At the second SCQF Conference in December 2002, the Scottish Executive announced additional funding of £1.5m over three years to implement the Framework. This funding was used to support full-time dedicated officers in both SQA and the higher education sector. Funding was also made available to the Association of Scotland’s Colleges to further the implementation of the Framework within the college sector, and this was taken forward on a consultancy basis. Subsequently, supported by funding from the SCQF, dedicated project officers were employed in key sectors - Community Learning and Development, Social Services and Health - to develop and implement plans to promote the Framework within their respective sectors.

Finally in 2006, towards the end of the implementation period, the Development Partners commissioned legal advisors to conduct a feasibility study to explore potential structures to take the SCQF forward. Several options were considered and after some deliberation it was agreed that the optimum structure was to form a company limited by guarantee. This would give the SCQF the locus it needed to meet its aims of being a Framework that had the confidence of learning providers, employers and the public which would become the national vocabulary for learning in Scotland. The company was called the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership.

Memorandum and Articles of Association were drawn up and presented to the Boards of each of the Partner Organisations. Agreement was secured and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership was incorporated in November 2006.



By Summer 2007, the CEO, Aileen Ponton, was in place, supported by two existing members of staff, to drive the strategic direction, impact and momentum of the SCQF, and in Spring 2008, the SCQF Executive Team cohort was increased to eight, covering the crucial operational areas of quality, European and international activity and communications and marketing.

Skills for Scotland (2008) reinforced the SCQF as central to education and training in Scotland. Describing the SCQF as the ‘golden thread’ that connected all learning and training provision in Scotland, the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop, challenged the SCQF Partnership to:

“Move quickly to ensure that the SCQF embraces more learning opportunities by increasing the number of credit rating bodies, facilitating the inclusion of work-based learning programmes and encouraging the recognition of prior learning.”

Some highlights of the past 10 years include:

- December 2002 - first implementation plan published
- December 2002 - the Scottish Executive announced additional funding of £1.5m over three years to implement the Framework
- October 2005 - first employer working group established
- February 2006 - first version of *Achievement Counts* published and distributed to every school in Scotland
- 2006 - SCQF Quality Committee established
- 2007 - SCQF Forum established
- 2007 - *SCQF Guidelines* and *Level Descriptors* brought together in one document known as the *SCQF Handbook*
- March 2008 - SCQF Partnership took up residence in standalone premises
- Spring 2008 - first SCQF leaflet receives the Crystal Mark for use of Plain English
- Summer 2008 - conclusion of extension of Credit Rating Bodies pilot
- March 2009 - SCQF International Conference took place in Glasgow
- Summer 2009 - revised *SCQF Handbook* published
- Summer 2009 - all SQA exam certificates now list SCQF levels and credit points
- December 2010 - launch of *RPL Toolkit*
- Summer 2011 - relaunch of SCQF Database
- Summer 2011 - first set of SCQF video clips available

PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-2012

Objective 1

Maintain the quality and integrity of the Framework

LAUNCH OF THE SCQF DATABASE

The new SCQF database was launched in August 2011 and all Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) were notified. Along with a letter launching the database, CRBs received a short document giving guidance on how to access and use the facility. The SCQFP Executive Team worked closely with staff at the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to populate the database with over 900 qualifications and learning programmes, including Highers, HNCs, HNDs and SVQs. In addition, approximately 400 learning programmes were entered which belong to over 120 different programme owners; for example, employers, voluntary organisations and professional bodies. By the end of 2011, there were around 1340 entries on the database. This figure has increased to over 1500 entries with approximately 180 learning programmes added since November 2011 (an increase of 11.9%). The number of programme owners has also increased by 5.3%, indicating that CRBs are engaging successfully in Third Party credit rating. Of the total number of 68 CRBs, 21 have added entries to the SCQF database since its launch. These include SQA, 6 HEIs, 8 colleges and 4 other CRBs.

The following Table gives information about which subject areas are most popular:

DATABASE ENTRIES BY SUBJECT HEADING

Subject heading or learning programmes	*No. of qualifications	% of total
Management	212	14.0
Creative Industries	130	8.6
Health and Social Care	127	8.4
Business & Administration	109	7.2
Sport and Leisure	99	6.5
Other	96	6.3
Engineering	91	6.0
Computing	85	5.6
Public Services	77	5.1
Sciences	76	5.0
Land Based Industries	73	4.8

** NB This is only a selection of the highest number of qualifications or learning programmes entered on the database. Also, qualifications or learning programmes can appear under more than one heading, therefore percentages will not add up to 100%.*

Since the launch of the database, the Executive Team has monitored its functionality and appearance and a number of enhancements have been made with the database designers.

REVIEW OF THE SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

The SCQF Level Descriptors have been in place since 2001. As part of its remit to maintain the quality and integrity of the SCQF, the Quality Committee agreed that a review of the Level Descriptors should be undertaken in 2011-12 to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

In April 2011 the SCQF Partnership appointed consultants to undertake the review. Under the auspices of the Quality Committee, the scope of the review was clear: the 12 levels of the SCQF were to remain, but the Level Descriptors were to be subject to review and revision. With this remit in mind, the consultants began seeking feedback from CRBs and other users of the Level Descriptors to ascertain whether there were issues arising from their application and, if so, what those issues were. To this end, an electronic survey was conducted between June and early September 2011. Each CRB received an email with a link to the survey and the survey was also added to the SCQF website. In addition, a series of five focus groups was held, with participants from colleges, HEIs, SQA and other CRBs to look at a first draft of suggested revisions to the wording of the Level Descriptors and provide comment. Following this stage of initial consultation, the consultants produced a second version of the revisions. In November 2011, these amendments were considered by Quality Committee members and a third version of the Level Descriptors was produced. In January 2012, Stage 2 of the review began with the issuing of a 20-page consultation document to all CRBs, Sector Skills Councils, SQA Awarding Bodies and other users. This document presented the latest version of the proposed changes and asked a series of questions about the suggested revisions. In addition, four CRBs participated in a live testing exercise, where previously credit-rated provision was subjected to a credit rating exercise against the suggested revisions. All of the outputs of this review will be passed to the SCQF Partnership Board in June 2012 for approval.



Dr. Janet Brown
Chief Executive, SQA

“SQA embeds the SCQF in the design and development of all its mainstream qualifications and this includes the new qualifications developed to support the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). This enables all learners who undertake an SQA qualification to map their progression on the learner journey.

Through our dedicated SCQF page on SQA's website, we continue to encourage and support all SQA users, customers, and stakeholders to use the SCQF. Our SCQF page has received almost 77,000 hits in the last 12 months - a testament to its popularity and use - and is the vehicle for providing information through a variety of publications, leaflets, and ready reckoners. Our range of ready reckoners is growing and now includes a version in Gaelic and another that maps SCQF levels to those on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). We also use the 'Latest News' section on SQA's Homepage to alert users to new SCQF publications, events and news.

Using our expertise and many years of experience in credit rating, we continue to provide a credit rating service to other companies and organisations that develop their own learning programmes. We are positive that this benefits learners and employers and makes a significant contribution to the growing SCQF database.”

RECOGNITION OF COLLEGE PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING WIDER ACHIEVEMENT

The SCQF wished to build on the success of the 2010/11 project which focused on the recognition of programmes supporting wider achievement in young people. Many colleges offer this type of programme but they are not always recognised on the SCQF as not all colleges are actively credit rating. It was felt therefore that the 2011/12 project should support colleges in developing credit rating processes and to credit rate a programme which recognised the wider achievements of young people.

The project's four main aims were:

- to help overcome any perceived barriers to credit rating within colleges;
- to further assist in increasing capacity for credit rating within the Further Education sector;
- to increase the amount of youth centred programmes on the Framework; and, most importantly,
- the building of sustainability in credit rating within FE colleges in Scotland.

Four colleges were successful in having their submissions accepted by the judging panel: John Wheatley College, Borders College, Kilmarnock College and Adam Smith College.

Although no two programmes within the project were the same, the group welcomed the opportunity to work together to maximise learning from each other's experiences and minimise duplication of effort in establishing systems. Their intention was also to share their increased credit rating expertise with other partners including sister colleges to further develop capacity building in credit rating across Scotland. All four projects completed to schedule and the programmes are now on the SCQF database. Each college completed a report of their experiences which were very positive and a number have already credit rated further programmes.



John Henderson
Chief Executive, Scotland's Colleges

"Scotland's Colleges exists to support, represent and promote the Scottish college sector. The value of the Framework is considerable in extending possibilities for college learners through recognition of previous learning and in smoothing progression to more advanced programmes. Use of the SCQF is essential in avoiding unnecessary duplication of learning.

Much of the learning in colleges leads to SQA qualifications in which SCQF level and credit value have been defined and this facilitates the curriculum design process and partnership working. Nevertheless, there has been much to do in embedding the Framework in colleges and in exploiting further opportunities. We have been working with a number of our communities in colleges to ensure a high level of awareness of the SCQF. For example, the colleges' Marketing Community of Practice helps ensure the Framework is reflected in all college promotional material to learners and we continue to work with them to ensure consistency of use.

More specific work has been undertaken in writing a guide for credit rating and levelling to extend application of the Framework. There remain a number of learner experiences in college which are not recognised in formal, national qualifications and this is a priority for colleges. A second version of the guide is underway. We have also worked within the partnership to promote greater use of the Framework at level 1 reflecting the inclusive nature of college provision.

As we move forward in an uncertain world, it is clear that the SCQF will play a greater part in college life. On a pilot basis, we have established a Community of Interest to build further capacity in the sector and to sustain our ongoing work in embedding the Framework in sector activities."

PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-2012

Objective 2

Promote and develop the Framework as a tool to support lifelong learning

SCQF TOOLKITS

Testing the RPL Toolkit

The generic RPL toolkit was developed in 2010/11 for general use by practitioners in colleges, universities, the Community Learning and Development (CLD) sector and by employers. The aim of the toolkit was to assist professionals in using RPL processes for progression in learning and career development. During 2011/12 the SCQF Partnership appointed Learning Link Scotland (LLS) to manage a project which tested the toolkit with both learners and practitioners in the adult learning sector. LLS worked with two of their member organisations to meet the following outcomes:

- SCQF/LLS would have increased evidence of how the RPL Toolkit can be used within the voluntary adult learning sector;
- SCQF/LLS would have a greater understanding of how the RPL toolkit can be improved; and
- Voluntary Sector Adult Learning Organisations involved in the project would have a greater understanding of the role of RPL in working with learners.

The project took place between January - March 2012 and feedback from both learners and practitioners was extremely positive. All participants in the project expressed their general approval of the toolkit and found much in it that was useful. A great deal of evidence was found to meet the overall outcomes and the outcomes of the individual coaching sessions that formed part of the project. There were clear indications of how the toolkit could be used in a variety of settings within the voluntary sector. By participating in the coaching sessions, participants offered insights into how the toolkit could be improved and adapted for use in a variety of sectors. There was also increased evidence of how coaching session methodology and the toolkit had furthered thinking about RPL within the organisations involved. Participants offered a number of useful ideas around how the toolkit could be further improved and these will be taken forward in 2012/13.

Employer Toolkit

After some revisions to our existing product, we embarked on a pilot project to test the use of the SCQF Employer Toolkit. Working with Minerva People, a well-established and respected training, recruitment and consultancy business, we set about trialling the use of the toolkit with a number of businesses, particularly SMEs. We have now received a report on this pilot activity and plan to take on board a number of recommendations to make the toolkit even more useful to employers. Of particular note was the need to ensure that business needs were the starting point for any process of reviewing job descriptions. The need to keep processes flexible and simple to ensure that all businesses can easily use the SCQF in this context was also highlighted. The SCQFP intends to undertake a final review of the Employer Toolkit, making changes to reflect the recommendations of employers, before promoting its use more widely.

Schools Toolkit

The SCQF Toolkit for Schools and Learning Communities was launched in 2011 for use by those delivering learning in schools and the broader learning community. The toolkit is available on the SCQF website and contains useful presentations and publications that will aid schools and learning communities in understanding and communicating the Framework to learners, parents and carers. Created in partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the toolkit will assist schools and learning communities in understanding how the Framework supports Curriculum for Excellence and the recognition of achievement for young people. It will also help them to support parents and carers in understanding the SCQF so that they in turn can help young people to choose how they move forward in their learning, understand less familiar qualifications and recognise other areas of learning that may contribute to their personal development and goals for the future.

One year on from its launch we have conducted a number of focus groups as a way of evaluating the usage and relevance of the toolkit. Schools in Glasgow, West Lothian and Perth provided valuable feedback and, as a result, we have added more links to the resource. We will also be continuing to link with schools to ensure the resource is up to date and remains a central source of information for schools and learning communities.



EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

The Employer Engagement Project, supported by funding from the Scottish Funding Council, has been bringing together institutions and employers, or employment sectors, through use of the SCQF. By engaging in targeted activity in selected sectors we hope to increase demand for credit rating, the development of employability opportunities, pathways and progression routes and promote skills utilisation using SCQF tools. This project is due to run over a three year period with 2011/12 being the first of those three years.

In 2011/12 we have undertaken work on four projects:

Oracle, the world's largest enterprise software and hardware company, worked to have three courses credit rated for the SCQF. The three programmes, Database Design and Programming with SQL, Database Programming with PL/SQL and Introduction to Java Programming and Java Fundamentals will form a vital part of the Introduction to Computer Science programme offered through the Oracle Academy. The Oracle Academy aims to prepare young people for 21st century careers and provides teachers and lecturers with world-class training and professional development opportunities. Oracle worked with the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and James Watt College to carry out the credit rating process. UWS developed a partnership with the College to build on the College's own capacity to credit rate.

City of Glasgow College worked with People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for hospitality, passenger transport, travel and tourism. They took the World Host programme, a world renowned customer service award, through the credit rating process to place it in the Framework.

NHS Education Scotland worked with the SCQFP to benchmark the outcomes of its Quality Improvement Curriculum Framework against the SCQF. This process will enable FE and HE sectors to incorporate outcomes from the Framework into courses at the appropriate level whilst ensuring consistency. The outcomes will help to ensure that the needs of the National Health Service as an employer are met and that courses address the critical issue of quality improvement on a national basis.

Finally, the University of the West of Scotland worked with its staff, and staff from the FE sector, through a process of recognition of prior learning (RPL). The aim was to recognise the experience of its staff with a recognised University award at the end of a development programme. UWS also undertook, as part of this work, a short feasibility study into the demand for a Modern Apprenticeship in the areas of Academic Administration and Student Support and Guidance. The outcomes of both of these projects should help other institutions to explore these issues as employers in the Education sector.

Initiation of four further projects is underway for 2012/13.

SCQF RESEARCH – THE IMPACT OF THE SCQF IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In August 2011 the SCQFP commissioned Kerson Associates to carry out a piece of research to examine the use and impact of the SCQF in the College, HEI and Training Provider sectors. This research forms the first year of a three year programme using funding from the Scottish Funding Council. In year two we will focus on learners across all sectors and on management and teaching staff in schools and in year three the focus will shift to employers. The aim of this year's research was to:

- evaluate the progress in embedding the SCQF in the Higher Education, Further Education and Training Provider sectors, specifically to establish how providers are using the Framework and how that usage has impacted on their provision and strategic direction; and
- evaluate the extent, nature and impact the SCQF has had in HEIs and Colleges and among Training Providers, and to establish the current level of understanding and awareness of the Framework among individuals in these sectors and whether increased levels of understanding and usage are placing more demands on learning providers.

The final report will be published in Summer 2012.



Alastair Sim
Director, Universities Scotland

“The SCQF has become firmly embedded in Scotland’s terms of debate about how learning can best meet peoples’ needs and recognise their achievements. As we look to develop further the way in which learners interact with school, college, university and work, the SCQF provides an essential Framework for a discussion where all parties start with shared terms of reference. The work of the Partnership has been central to ensuring that this Framework is robust and evolving, so that we can all serve learners’ needs effectively.”

PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES FOR 2011-2012

Objective 3

Develop and maintain relationships with other frameworks in the UK, Europe and internationally

EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

It is extremely important to the SCQF Partnership as an organisation to participate in activities which strengthen our relationships with our European and international partners and which, as a result, may bring benefit to Scotland and its learners, employers, employees and institutions.

The SCQF Partnership continued to support its objective to maintain links with European and international frameworks. During 2011/12 we hosted a number of study visits:

- Polish study visits in June 2011 and February 2012: these were specifically focused on the processes and criteria for credit rating and the referencing between the SCQF and the EQF. SCQFP CEO, Aileen Ponton, also acted as an international expert to the Polish steering group managing the referencing of their Framework to the EQF.
- We provided input to a study visit of a large Turkish delegation in March 2012 particularly looking at vocational education and training and how this related to the SCQF.
- We had a visit from the Netherlands in October 2011 which specifically looked at the makeup, roles and responsibilities of the SCQF Partnership as a charity.
- We supported the British Council in the organisation of a two-day visit in May 2011 from the Gulf Co-operation Council Technical and Vocational Education Committee comprising senior representatives from six Gulf states.

In addition, our Chief Executive had her appointment as a Council member to HKCAAVQ extended for a further two years until 2013. Also during 2011, The Honourable Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region visited Scotland and met with Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. This was a very positive meeting looking at areas of joint interest and as a follow up to that Kenneth Chen, the then Hong Kong Under Secretary for Education visited Scotland in March 2012 along with a wider delegation from the Higher Education Sector in Hong Kong. During that visit a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the SCQF Partnership and the Education Bureau for Hong Kong. This was signed in the Scottish Parliament and witnessed by Michael Russell. Discussions are underway to identify areas of joint interest over the next two years.

RPL IN SECTORS

On behalf of the UK Frameworks, the SCQFP invited written estimates for consultancy work on a European Commission funded project entitled Working with Sectors to develop RPL. This project built on work carried out in 2010/11 to map recognition and transferability of skills in major sectors and continued to work on these key sectors to identify companies/employers who are looking at or have developed strategies for coping with mobility and recognition. The principal focus was the role of qualifications frameworks, in particular the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and five case studies were developed as part of this project reflecting on how the sectors were using the RPL process. A secondary focus was the extent to which the companies highlighted in the case studies validate/credit rate non formal learning and recognise informal learning. The project also set out to ascertain from the companies identified the extent to which they use RPL to:

- help employees use their existing skills and knowledge for career development, personal progression and mobility; and
- advise employees on matching their skills and knowledge to existing qualifications and national occupational standards.

The project culminated in a major dissemination event to be held in Glasgow in May 2012 with 55 delegates attending from across the UK and Europe.



Dr. Bill Harvey
Director, QAA Scotland

“QAA Scotland works to support the Scottish higher education sector in making full use of the opportunities created by the SCQF. A major strength of the Framework is that it provides clear and transparent definitions of credits and levels, and so helps to facilitate effective articulation pathways to allow learners to progress flexibly. Many Scottish HEIs have exploited these features to offer opportunities such as articulation routes from other educational programmes, evaluation of personal portfolios, and other ways of recognising prior learning.

One highlight of the past year is that a member of staff from QAA Scotland (Heather Gibson) has served as the Chair of a European network for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This has provided opportunities for showcasing existing good practice in the Scottish HE sector and also acted as a very useful forum for exchange of good practice. The role of chair is now passing to colleagues in Estonia.

QAA conducts a national programme of Enhancement Led Institutional Reviews of all Scottish HE institutions, which considers each institution’s arrangements for managing quality. An important part of this process is a focus on how the institution takes account of the SCQF in developing and operating its programmes, and commentary on this issue is included in published reports of the review outcomes. During 2011/12 we have been working with our partners to revise and update our review methodology for our next cycle of reviews which will run from 2012-16. However, SCQF will continue to play a key part as one of the major external reference points for all Scottish HEIs. In the coming year, we also intend to review and revise the documentation which defines the HE qualifications framework which forms a major part of SCQF.”

YEAR AT A GLANCE

SCQF WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Across the year, the SCQFP Executive Team has been extremely busy delivering and organising events for the various user groups associated with the SCQF. These include:

WYCI Workshops

Demand for the Would You Credit It? workshops was extremely high and all workshops for 2011/12 were fully subscribed with a waiting list in place. The workshops were aimed at organisations and individuals working in the private, public or third sectors that are interested in, or are in the early stages of, making a submission for credit rating to an SCQF Credit Rating Body. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, both at the time of the workshops and in formal feedback through evaluation forms. Facilitators have been responding to comments and feedback on an ongoing basis after each workshop by reviewing timings, content and delivery method. The greatest concern for facilitators and participants has been simplicity and practicality, balanced against the need to ensure an understanding of the criteria for credit rating that gives confidence and ensures that the quality and integrity of the SCQF is promoted and protected. A total of 43 organisations received support through these workshops and the SCQFP has scheduled seven further workshops for 2012/13.

Building Capacity Workshops

Building Capacity: Credit Rating for the SCQF is an interactive workshop aimed at staff in CRBs who want to find out more about the SCQF and the credit rating process. It is a hands-on practical session that explains the credit rating process in terms of allocating a level and credit points to units/modules and to whole programmes. The SCQFP offered one bespoke and four free workshops throughout the year, with 34 delegates representing 19 organisations.

Becoming a CRB Information Sessions

These sessions are intended to provide information for organisations that are interested in finding out more about what is involved in becoming an SCQF Credit Rating Body. The SCQFP delivered three sessions in 2011/12, with 14 participants from 9 organisations in attendance. Following on from these events, it is likely that we will receive applications to become a CRB from at least two organisations who participated in the sessions. Any developments in this area will be communicated to stakeholders via the SCQF website and SCQF Update newsletter.

RPL Workshops

These interactive workshops on RPL cover topics such as the relationship between the SCQF and RPL, credit transfer, assessment of prior learning and quality assurance. The team ran three events in 2011/12 and 33 delegates from 18 organisations participated. The workshops proved very popular and there are plans to offer more RPL workshops in 2012/2013.

The SCQF Partnership Forum

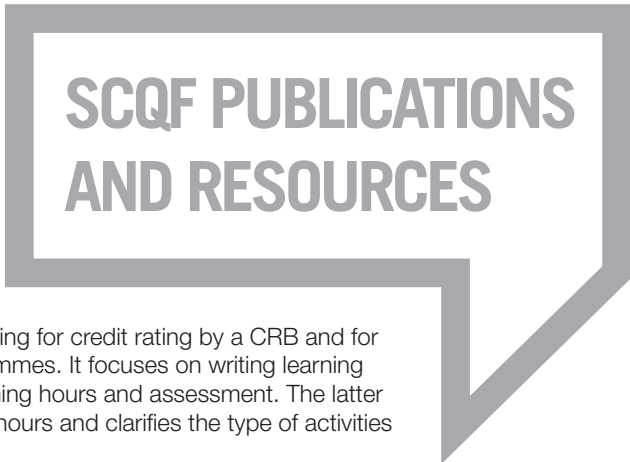
The SCQFP Forum event was held in Glasgow in February 2012. The aims of the event were to provide partners with an overview of highlights from the last six months, showcasing some of the work done with partners, to introduce a selection of newly produced video case studies which feature on the SCQF website and to discuss a number of pertinent issues relating to the future activity of the SCQFP, giving Forum members the opportunity to contribute ideas and actions for the way forward. Aileen Ponton, Chair of the SCQFP Forum, chaired the event and gave an update on some SCQFP activities and also welcomed two main speakers for the day. Gavin Gray from Scottish Government Post-16 Review Team gave a presentation on Post-16 Reform and the Implications for the SCQF. This was followed by Robin Parker, President of the National Union of Students who talked about the Post-16 Review and the implications and opportunities for learners. After the main presentations delegates attended the workshop sessions:

- Consultation on the review of the level descriptors;
- SEMTA – Employers and the SCQF; and
- The impact of the SCQF among HEIs, Colleges and Private Training Providers.

Following the workshops delegates had the opportunity to attend the SCQF Café. This comprised a series of facilitated round table discussions addressing a series of questions which originated from a proposed set of self-assessment questions originally suggested at the previous Forum meeting. These questions were further developed based on feedback from Forum members to form the basis of discussion and open dialogue at the Café. The event was attended by over 40 delegates representing 18 different organisations from across Scotland and the UK.



The number of standalone SCQF publications available to stakeholders has continued to rise, particularly in relation to guidance on quality and the SCQF database.



The suite of guidance materials relating to the *SCQF Handbook* continued to expand, with the publication of two new guides: *SCQF Credit Rating Criteria Explained* and *SCQF Credit Points Explained: Notional Learning Hours*.

The former is a 28-page guide for organisations preparing learning for credit rating by a CRB and for staff across all sectors that develop and deliver learning programmes. It focuses on writing learning outcomes, activities that can be counted towards notional learning hours and assessment. The latter goes into more detail about what is meant by notional learning hours and clarifies the type of activities that can be counted towards them.

We also produced a *database flyer* which provides CRBS with a quick-guide on how to add new qualifications and learning programmes to the database, and lists the benefits of using the database.

As ever, we published two editions of the popular SCQF newsletter, *SCQF Update*, in 2011-12. This continues to be a useful source of news and information for our stakeholders and hard copies are distributed to more than 5000 contacts across the UK. The Update can also be downloaded as a pdf from the SCQF website.

During 2011, the countries of the UK and Republic of Ireland collaborated to produce an updated version of the popular *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries* leaflet. This rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland is available as a hard copy leaflet once again, and reflects any new qualifications brought into each country's Framework in the two years since the guide was first produced. The updated leaflet now also includes information on the referencing to both the EQF and the FQ-EHEA for Higher Education.

We also developed the various toolkits already referred to elsewhere in this report and revised a number of existing publications such as the *Achievement Counts* and *Realising Your Potential* leaflets.

Finally, we commissioned and produced a number of short films highlighting a range of ways in which employers, CRBs and learners can engage with the Framework. These clips showcase the versatility of the SCQF and the various ways it can be used to fully realise the potential of businesses of all sizes and the individual.

All publications and resources are available to download from the SCQF website, www.scqf.org.uk.



The SCQF Partnership said farewell to Margaret Cameron (Manager) and Frances Thom (Quality Officer) and welcomed two new members of staff in 2011:

Paula Cleary – Development Officer

Paula joined the SCQFP in June 2011 from the West of Scotland Wider Access Forum (West Forum) where she worked as Senior Programme Coordinator

for Adult Learners and Communities. In her role at the SCQFP, Paula works closely with the Quality Committee, supporting both new and existing credit rating bodies, delivering workshops on building capacity for credit rating and other topics, maintaining the SCQF database and carrying out monitoring visits for approved CRBs.

Ryan Reed – Project Officer

Ryan was most recently employed as National Development Officer for Outdoor Learning at Learning and Teaching Scotland where he led national developments in outdoor learning within the context of Curriculum for Excellence. His role within the SCQF Partnership focuses on engaging and supporting employers and others in understanding the benefits of using the SCQF within the context of recruitment and the workplace, and also in regards to having their own learning and development provision credit rated and placed on the Framework.





Jack Matthews

“The engagement between the SCQF and Sector Skills Councils continues to develop with the promotion of unit based and credit recognised courses developed from their standards and frameworks. This is being matched by the increasing take up by the private training sector of unit based courses to meet the needs for short, focused training programmes, recognised on the Framework, delivered at the workplace and which can be built on through accumulation. This flexibility is increasingly seen by employers as giving them the incentive and ability to invest in the training and skills of their employees and receive the payback in performance and productivity they require.

The development of the SCQF’s flexible approach to unit/credit based recognition and its application to the credit rating of SVQs has contributed to the significant and continuous growth in the take-up of Modern Apprenticeships across sectors in Scotland both at juvenile and adult level. As such the criticism of the take up of funding for adult Modern Apprenticeships is not matched by the views of employers who see this investment as delivering the skills required to grow their business and the Scottish economy.

In the SCQF we have the vehicle to support the delivery of this no matter at what level a young person enters work. This can be achieved as a result of the SCQF’s unique position and foresight that developed it from inception as a fully integrated framework covering national qualifications, vocational qualifications and higher qualifications. It is one of only two credit and qualification frameworks in the world to be designed to be so, the other being the Australian qualifications framework. It should be noted however that this capability has not gone un-noticed and an increasing number of countries are looking to the Scottish model to meet the skills development needs of their employers and population.”

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (including Income and Expenditure Account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2012

		Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2012 Total £	2011 Total £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from voluntary funds					
Voluntary income	3	553,778	258,306	812,084	873,307
Investment income	4	47	-	47	3
Incoming resources from charitable activities	5	27,616	-	27,616	20,914
Total Incoming Resources		581,441	258,306	839,747	894,224
Resources expended					
Charitable activities	6	510,102	258,306	768,408	848,551
Governance costs	7	13,395	-	13,395	12,153
Total Resources Expended		523,497	258,306	781,803	860,704
Net income for the year		57,944	-	57,944	33,520
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		57,944	-	57,944	33,520
Reconciliation of Funds					
Balance at 1 April 2011		211,373	-	211,373	177,853
Total funds carried forward		15,16 269,317	-	269,317	211,373

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The information presented above is not the charity's statutory accounts but a summary of information relating to the Statement of Financial Activities.

The statutory accounts have been externally scrutinised by Wylie and Bisset LLP who audited the statutory accounts and their report thereon contained an unqualified audit opinion. The statutory accounts were formally approved by the Trustees of the charity on 30 August 2012.

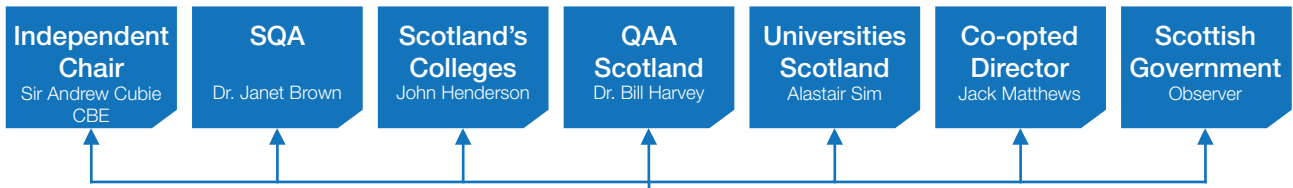
We confirm that the above summarised financial information is consistent with the audited financial statements of the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework Partnership for the period ended 31 March 2012.

Wylie & Bisset LLP
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditor

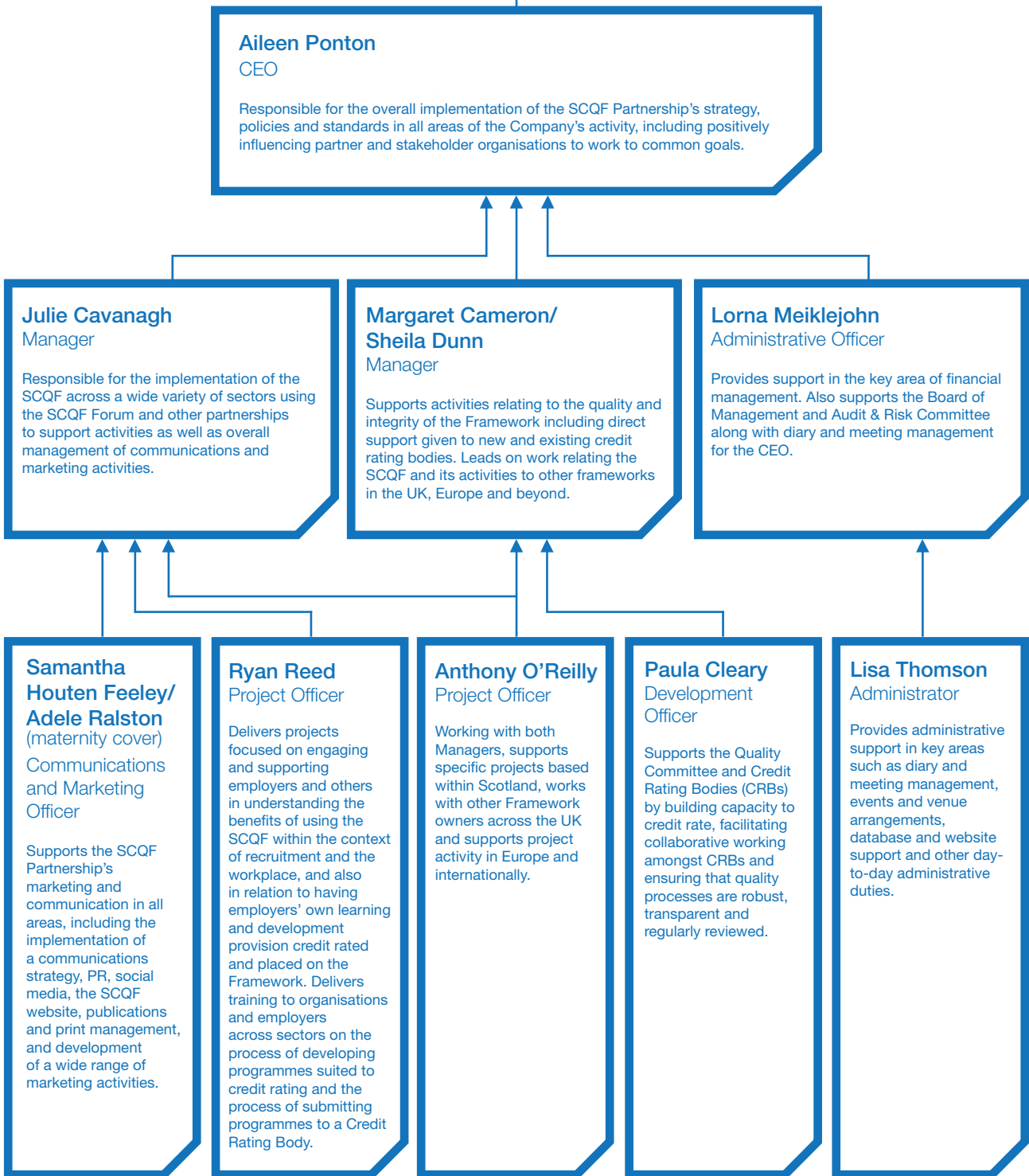
Signed on behalf of the Trustees



SCQF PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:



SCQF PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE TEAM:



GLOSSARY

CLD - Community Learning and Development

CRB - Credit Rating Body

EC - European Commission

EQF - European Qualifications Framework

FE - Further Education

FQ-EHEA - Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

HE - Higher Education

HKCAAVQ - Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications

HEI - Higher Education Institution

HNC - Higher National Certificate

HND - Higher National Diploma

LLS - Learning Link Scotland

QAA Scotland - Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland

QCF - Qualifications and Credit Framework

RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning

SACCA - Scottish Advisory Committee for Credit and Access

SCQF - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQFP - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership

SDS - Skills Development Scotland

SEMTA - Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies

SMEs - Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

SQA - Scottish Qualifications Authority

SVQ - Scottish Vocational Qualification

UWS - University of the West of Scotland

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