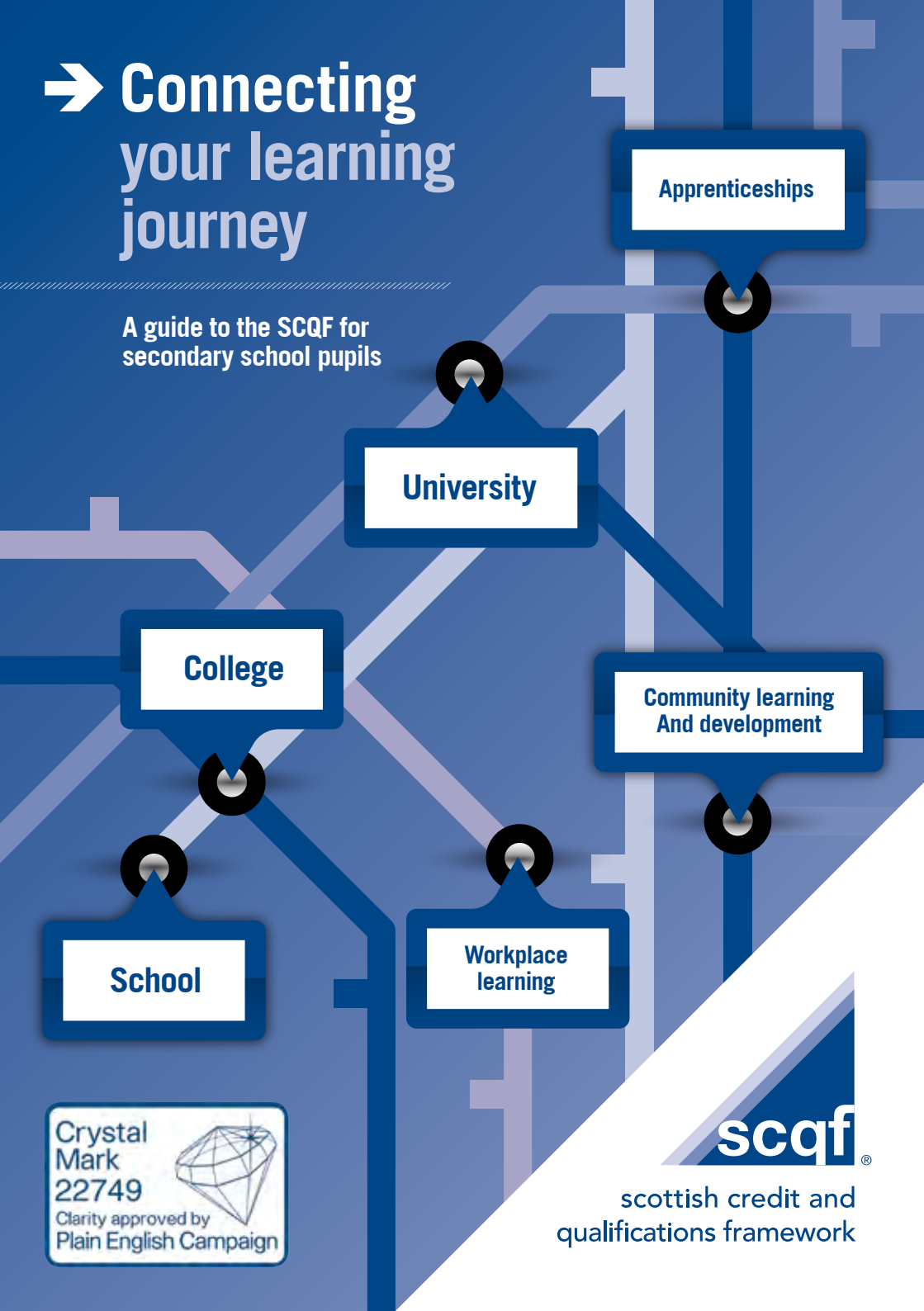
Connecting your learning journey

A guide to the SCQF for secondary school pupils



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scqf®
scottish credit and qualifications framework

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Apprenticeships & SVQs
12				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship SVQ
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Graduate Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma Of Higher Education	Higher Apprenticeship Technical Apprenticeship SVQ
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher				Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3				
2	National 2, Awards				
1	National 1, Awards				

You will get to know about the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as it appears on your SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate which is issued in August.

What is the SCQF?

The SCQF is a way of comparing and describing Scottish qualifications. It covers the qualifications you will achieve at school, college, university and in the workplace. It does this by giving each qualification a level and credit points.

The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is. The credit points show how much time it takes you to achieve that qualification. For example, one person may study a course at National 4 (SCQF level 4) and another at Higher (SCQF level 6). Both qualifications have 24 SCQF credit points but have different levels of difficulty.

What is it for?

The SCQF helps you make sense of qualifications and plan the next stage of your learning journey. You can also compare vocational and more traditional qualifications and see that, although they are very different types of learning, in many cases they sit at the same SCQF level.

The SCQF can:

- help you plan your learning journey and make the right choices;
- help employers understand different qualifications;
- help universities or colleges identify the level that you have studied in a particular subject;
- recognise other areas of your learning that can help your personal development and goals for the future; and
- increase your confidence and self-esteem by showing you the level of learning you have achieved.

Don't worry if you're not familiar with some of the qualifications mentioned above. You will learn more about them as you move through school. We explain each one on the interactive Framework diagram on our website at scqf.org.uk/interactive-framework/. The website also contains a helpful video clip which explains the SCQF in relation to your SQA exam certificate. Visit scqf.org.uk/case-studies and click on page 2.

This Framework diagram shows the main SQA qualifications studied at secondary schools in Scotland. You may be surprised to know that other types of learning that you might do in your school or youth club are included on the SCQF. To check if a programme is on the SCQF, visit scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/. Turn over for information about some awards you might have heard of.

Other awards you may know

SCQF level	Award owner	Award name	Credit points
7	SQA	HNC Police Studies	96
7	The Boys' Brigade	King George VI Leadership Programme	13
7	University of Glasgow	Top-Up Programme	10
6	ASDAN	Certificate of Personal Effectiveness Level 3	15
5	The Outward Bound Trust	Adventure & Challenge Award (5 day)	5
5	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme	5
5	REHIS	Food Hygiene Elementary Certificate	1
3 and 4	Playback ICE	Essential Skills for Employment	27 (each)
3	The British Computer Society	Digital Skills	22
3	Youth Scotland	Dynamic Youth Awards One-Five Star Awards	1-31 (each)

Frequently asked questions

Are SCQF credit points the same as UCAS tariff points?

SCQF credit points are not the same as UCAS tariff points. UCAS tariff points relate to the grades you have achieved. SCQF credits are a measure of how much you need to learn to achieve a qualification, no matter what grade you get.

Why does an 'A' at Higher get the same number of SCQF credit points as a 'C' at Higher?

The number of SCQF credit points you've gained doesn't change depending on your grade at any particular level. SCQF credits reflect how much learning you've done, not how well you've learned a subject.

Will my qualifications be recognised if I move abroad?

SCQF levels are referenced against the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), so learning institutions and employers in Europe can easily compare your qualifications against their own country's qualifications framework.

If I build up SCQF credit points, will I get into college or university?

Not directly, although SCQF credit points help admissions officers in colleges and universities know exactly how much learning you have done and at what level. The admissions officers still have other factors to consider, such as the subjects you studied and grades you achieved.

I am taking part in an award at my local youth club that has an SCQF level and credit points. What are the benefits of this?

Having an SCQF level and credit points means that the award is formally recognised by employers and admissions officers in colleges and universities. If you are applying for a job or to college or university having these extra awards can strengthen your application and make you stand out from other candidates.

Will the SCQF help me to get a job or an apprenticeship?

Not directly, but it will help employers understand the level of difficulty of each qualification, as well as the number of credit points you have achieved as part of your personal development. As your career develops, any work-based qualifications you achieve may add to the number of credits you already have.

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