Get to know the SCQF: A guide for parents and carers

Crystal Mark 18838
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

scqf®
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Did you get your O' Grades in the '70s or '80s? Then it's possible you were a Glam rocker or a New Romantic – nothing 'Ordinary' about that.

But do you know what qualifications your child is taking now?

And do you know how the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) helps young people as they move through school, college, university and the workplace? As parents, it's natural to try to relate your child's school experience to your own, but the Scottish education system has changed a lot since you were at school.

What is the SCQF?

The SCQF:

- is Scotland's lifelong learning framework;
- can help you understand and compare the wide range of Scottish qualifications;
- covers achievements from school, college, university, youth clubs and the workplace;
- clearly shows that qualifications have the same worth whether achieved through school, college, university, the workplace or another route;
- has 12 levels (the learning programmes become more difficult as SCQF levels increase);

Did you know?

The qualifications that your child might study in fourth year at school are called Nationals and they are directly linked to their SCQF level. While these qualifications continue to develop learners' knowledge and understanding, they also focus on developing skills.

SCQF credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving each qualification (one SCQF credit point represents 10 hours of learning).

SCQF levels and credits are included on your son's or daughter's SQA Scottish Qualifications Certificate issued every August.

The SCQF can:

- help your child understand the benefits of vocational qualifications;
- help your child plan their learning and be really useful at times of change, for example, when choosing subjects, moving from third to fourth year at secondary school, or from school to college, university or training;
- help employers understand the different types of qualifications your child may have achieved and which they will use on CVs and job applications;
- help universities or colleges identify the level your child has studied at in a particular subject, and make it easier to transfer SCQF credits between different learning programmes; and
- recognise other learning programmes that may contribute to your child's personal development and goals for the future.

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				

This diagram shows the mainstream Scottish qualifications that SQA, colleges and universities have given an SCQF level and credit points to.

Don't worry if you don't know some of these qualifications, you will learn more about them as your child moves through school. For more information, visit the interactive Framework at **www.scqf.org.uk**.

Other learning programmes and wider achievement

Some other learning programmes that your child might take at school, college or a local youth club may have an SCQF level and credit points. Apprenticeships, which are available in many industries, are also included on the SCQF across levels 5 to 12. To check if a programme is on the SCQF, click on *search our programmes* at **scqf.org.uk/**. This database shows the SCQF level and number of credit points awarded to each learning programme.

SCQF level	Award owner	Award name	Credit points
7	REHIS	Food Hygiene REHIS Intermediate Certificate	3
7	The Boys' Brigade	King George VI Leadership Programme	13
5	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Duke of Edinburgh Leadership Programme	5
5	The Outward Bound Trust	Adventure & Challenge Award (5 day)	5
5	Direct Devitt	Direct Devitt Confidence Award	1
4	The British Sports Trust Sports Leaders UK	Sports Leadership	7
4	Reserve Forces and Cadets Association	Army Cadet Achievement, Teamwork and Citizenship Award	20
3 and 4	SQA	Employability Award	6
3	Skills Development Scotland	Introduction to Workplace Skills	33
3	Youth Scotland	Dynamic Youth Awards One-Five Star Awards	1-31

Frequently asked questions

What do the level and credit columns on my child's SQA qualifications certificate mean?

These refer to the SCQF levels of the qualifications your child 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, which is equal to 240 hours of learning. For more information, have a look at our helpful video at **www.scqf.org.uk**, *Support for Learners, Secondary School Learners*. SQA also has lots of information on its certificates at **www.sqa.org.uk/sqc**.

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

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides a rounded education experience for your child. The National qualifications directly link to their SCQF level. For more information on CfE visit the Parentzone website at **https://education.gov.scot/parentzone**. For more information on Nationals visit **www.sqa.org.uk/parents**. The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) has also produced a series of 'Nationals in a Nutshell' subject guides for parents and carers. Visit **www.npfs.org.uk** to find out more.

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 fourth to sixth year) 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 and helps learners to plan their learning. See **www.scqf.org.uk/media/1103/dyw-diagram.pdf** for more information.

How do the new qualifications compare with the ones that I took at school?

We have developed a simple guide called Old v New that helps people understand how current and older qualifications relate to one another in terms of their SCQF level. You can download it from our website at **www.scqf.org.uk/resources**.

You will find more frequently asked questions for parents and carers on our website at **www.scqf.org.uk/faqs**.

@SCQFPartnership
www.facebook.com/scqfp
www.linkedin.com/company/1843096

A registered Scottish charity SC037958