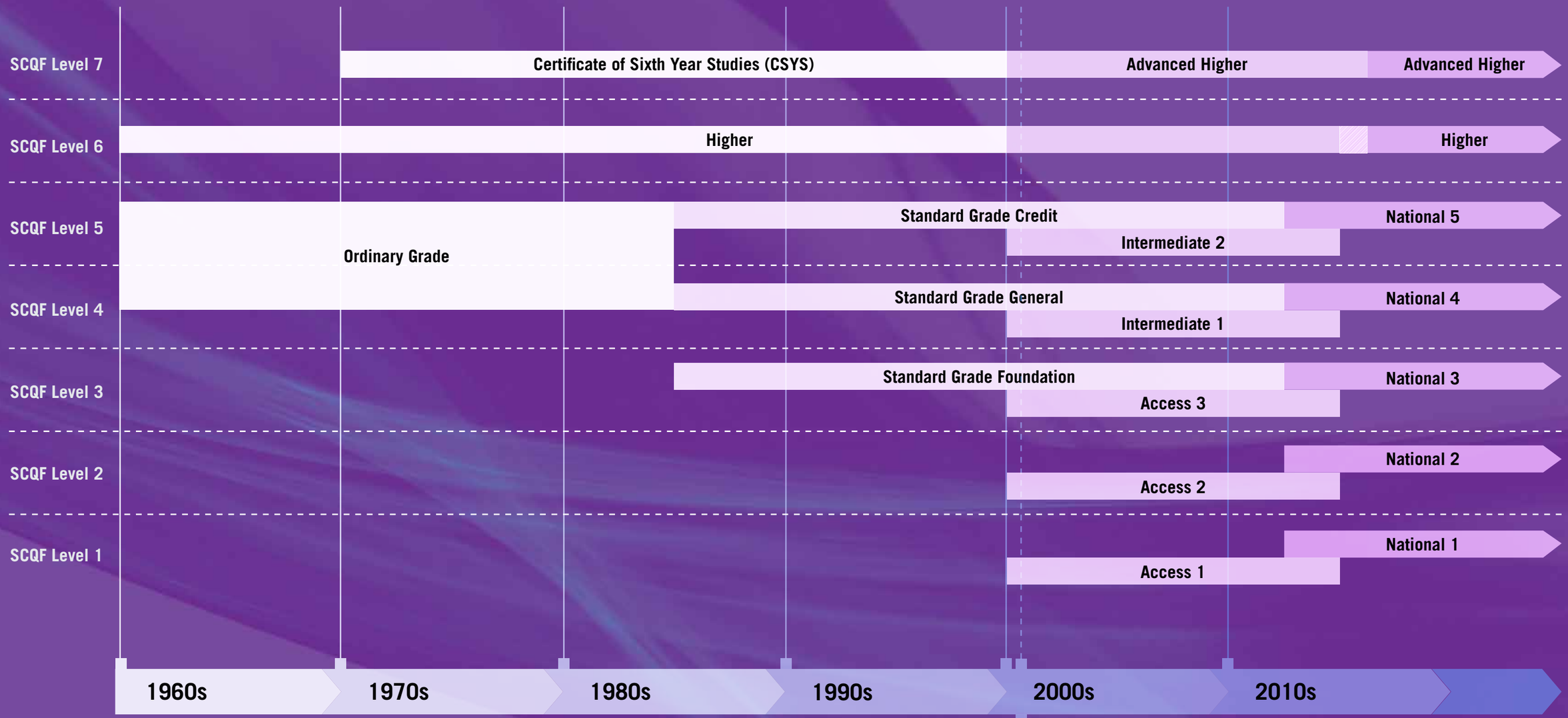
SCOTTISH NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS - SCQF LEVELS AND TIMELINES

This table shows how current and old qualifications relate to one another in terms of their SCQF level. The SCQF level of a qualification provides a way of comparing how demanding or difficult the learning involved in achieving a qualification is. This table can be used by anybody with a need to understand National Qualifications (normally awarded at school), for example employers when recruiting. More information on the SCQF can be found on our website (www.scqf.org.uk). More information on current qualifications in the table can be found by visiting the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk/cfe).

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework



2001: Creation of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. All levels are approximate for qualifications delivered prior to this date.

www.scqf.org.uk

QUALIFICATIONS – KEY INFORMATION

scqf
scottish credit and qualifications framework

Qualification	SCQF level	First certificate issued	Last certificate issued	Certificate title	Awarded by
Advanced Higher	7	2000	-	Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC)	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
CSYS	7[a]	1970	2002	Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS)	Scottish Examination Board (SEB) then SQA
Higher	6	1888	-	Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE)[b] then SQC	Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board (SCEEB)[c] then SEB, then SQA
Ordinary Grade	4[a] & 5[a]	1962	1994	SCE	SCEEB then SEB
Standard Grade	3, 4 & 5	1988	2013	SCE then SQC	SEB then SQA
Intermediate 1 & 2	4 & 5	2000	2015	SQC	SQA
Access 1, 2 & 3	1, 2 & 3	2000	2015	SQC	SQA
National 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	2014	-	SQC	SQA

Advanced Higher	This qualification was introduced as part of the "Higher Still " reform. It is at SCQF level 7 and is awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) (www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58062.html).
Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS)	The CSYS predates the SCQF and is estimated to have been at SCQF level 7. The qualification was awarded from 1970 until 1999 on a separate certificate called the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies by the Scottish Examination Board (SEB). From 2000 to 2002 it was awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). It was replaced by Advanced Higher between 2000 and 2002.
Higher	The Higher has been awarded for over 100 years. During that time it has undergone a number of reforms. It has always had the purpose of providing qualifications for progression to Higher Education or employment. SCQF level 6 is the standard level for progression to HE. From 1963 to 1982 it was awarded on the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) by the Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board (SCEEB), which later became the Scottish Examination Board (SEB). Since 2000, it has been awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). (www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58062.html).
Ordinary Grade (O Grade)	The O Grade was awarded from 1962 until 1990. It predates the SCQF and is estimated to have been at SCQF levels 4 and 5. It was awarded on the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) by the Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board (SCEEB), which later became the Scottish Examination Board (SEB). It was gradually replaced by Standard Grade from 1986.
Standard Grade	Standard Grade was introduced over a number of years from 1984 – different subjects were introduced in different years. It is awarded at three levels – Credit (SCQF level 5), General (SCQF level 4) and Foundation (SCQF level 3). It was awarded on the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE) by the Scottish Examination Board (SEB). Since 2000 it has been awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). It has been replaced by National Qualifications at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5.
Intermediate 1 & 2	These qualifications were introduced as part of the "Higher Still" reform. Intermediate 1 and 2 are at SCQF levels 4 and 5 respectively. They were awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). They have been replaced by National Qualifications at levels 4 and 5.
Access 1, 2 & 3	These qualifications were introduced as part of the "Higher Still" reforms. Access qualifications are at SCQF levels 1, 2 and 3. They were awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). They have been replaced by National Qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3.
National 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5	National Qualifications were introduced as part of Curriculum for Excellence and have been awarded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) since 2014 (www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58062.html).

a indicates an estimated SCQF level as the qualification predated the SCQF
b The Scottish Certificate of Education was awarded by the Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board from 1965 to 1982, and by the Scottish Examination Board from then until 1999. The Scottish Qualifications Certificate was introduced by SQA in 2000
c The Scottish Certificate of Education Examination Board existed from 1965 until it was replaced by the Scottish Examination Board in 1982. SQA replaced the SEB in 1997.