

**COMMUNICATING  
THE SCOTTISH CREDIT  
AND QUALIFICATIONS  
FRAMEWORK (SCQF):**

**ADVICE TO UNIVERSITY MARKETING  
& COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS**



## What is the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework?

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is the national qualifications framework for lifelong learning in Scotland and a way of comparing the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It covers achievements such as those from school, college, university and many work-based qualifications. It does this by giving each qualification a level and a number of credit points.

This guide has been prepared for staff in universities who are responsible for developing promotional materials. It aims to help those in marketing & communication departments to accurately reference the SCQF in a way that will help potential students and which supports your university's specific policies on admissions and wider access.

## Why reference the SCQF in promotional material?

Potential students from Scottish schools and colleges will be used to seeing their qualifications described in terms of SCQF level and credit, for example on SQA certificates. The SCQF shows the qualifications that they hold and the qualification they are hoping to gain on the same framework, giving them a route map to plan their learner journey from school or college to university. The SCQF, accurately referenced, helps potential students make a well-informed choice of programme and institution.

Potential students from elsewhere in the UK or Europe will be less familiar with the SCQF and can be directed to materials such as *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries* that show how a Scottish degree and other Scottish qualifications on the SCQF compare with qualifications elsewhere in the UK and Europe.

## What is meant by 'accurately referencing the SCQF' in your communications?

You want to be accurate and up to date in your promotional materials and on your website. So you want to be accurate in referencing all the different school and college qualifications that potential students may hold, for example for example the National 4 and 5 qualifications which have replaced Standard Grades and Intermediate 1 and 2. You also want to be accurate in how you describe the SCQF. This guide aims to help you with this. It will be re-issued whenever there is a change in the SCQF so that you can update your promotional materials accordingly.

## Where should you mention the SCQF?

Prospective students look at your website and your prospectuses, in print or online, so you should make reference to the SCQF on all of these. Check when you mention the SCQF on your website that the link to the SCQF site [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk) works. Check also that the search facility on your website directs people to the sections of your site and your prospectuses where you are describing the SCQF as well as directing them to the SCQF site itself for further information.

## Understanding the SCQF

The following text or sections of it can be introduced early in a prospectus or in the admissions section on a website:

### **What is the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)?**

*The SCQF is a way of comparing the wide range of Scottish qualifications. It covers programmes in school, college, university and in the workplace. It does this by giving each qualification on the Framework a level and a number of credit points. The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is. The credit points show how much learning is involved in achieving that qualification. Each credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning.*

### **The SCQF can:**

- *Help you decide how you progress in your learning;*
- *Help you understand qualifications you are not familiar with;*
- *Help employers understand different types of qualifications and help with the development of your skills;*
- *Help colleges and universities identify the level that has been studied in a particular subject and make it easier to transfer credit points between different learning programmes; and*
- *Provide recognition of other areas of your learning that may contribute to your personal development and your goals for the future.*

*Many Scottish universities and colleges use SCQF levels and credit points to describe their courses if these are included in the Framework. A wide range of other learning is also being recognised using SCQF levels and credits e.g. Youth Achievement Awards. Some employers are using SCQF levels instead of, or as well as, types of qualification when they advertise jobs.*

*The SCQF can also assist you to compare your qualifications with the rest of the UK and Europe. This is especially helpful if you are planning to study or work outside Scotland. A leaflet called *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries* is available to download from the Resources page of the SCQF website.*

*For more information on The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, visit [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk). For information on the SCQF level and credit points for learning programmes which have been credit rated, search the SCQF database online [www.scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/).*

## Explaining Scottish degrees

It is not just potential students from outside Scotland who will need an explanation of the Scottish four year Honours degree. Many potential students from Scotland will be the first in their family to enter higher education and they will find an explanation of higher education qualifications useful. The SCQF provides a useful framework for doing this. Possible text and then the SCQF framework diagram are provided:

*Undergraduate degree programmes in Scotland are designed to be studied over three or four academic years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time study. The starting point at Year 1 is level 7 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and each full year of study comprises 120 credit points with each credit point being equivalent to ten hours of learning. Students may be able to graduate after three years of study, at SCQF level 9, with 360 credit points and a general degree, but most students continue to SCQF level 10 (Year 4) to achieve 480 credit points and an Honours degree. An Honours degree is the normal entry point for a Masters degree which generally requires at least a further calendar year of study, and awards the learner 180 credit points at SCQF level 11.*

*The SCQF shows the degrees and awards available from Scottish universities alongside the qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, including Scottish Vocational Qualifications, and other awards. Depending on the programme applied for, the subjects previously studied and the grades achieved, potential students may be able to enter an undergraduate degree with advanced standing (i.e. not at the beginning of year 1, or SCQF level 7) if they already hold skills and/or qualifications at level 7 or 8 on the SCQF. More information can be found in the description of each degree programme and its entry requirements.*

## A diagram helps

The SCQF framework diagram provides a comprehensive picture of the levels of types of qualification and you are encouraged to use it on your website and in your prospectuses. The full SCQF framework diagram can be reproduced and obtained by contacting the SCQFP Communications and Marketing Officer.

We are also happy to send out hard copies of the Framework diagram.

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

## What about workplace and vocational learning?

Some potential students may have gained credit for learning in the workplace. For instance, a university or college may have credit rated their employer's training programmes. The best place to refer to the SCQF for this purpose would be in sections relating to **Alternative Entry Qualifications** and/or **Mature Students**.

Possible text:

*As well as qualifications gained in school and college, the university may be able to recognise learning undertaken in the workplace as a basis for entry to a programme of study. We will consider employer-provided training that has been credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Evidence of learning that has been credit-rated at SCQF levels 5, 6 or 7 may be relevant to entry to an undergraduate degree programme. Please contact XXXX to find out more.*

## Example of how to refer to the SCQF in an individual programme entry

**Named award:** Bachelor of Science (Biological Sciences) Honours Degree

**Award Type:** Honours Bachelors degree

**Level:** SCQF Level 10

**Awarding body:** University of Strathness

**Credit value:** 480 credit points

**Entry:** Entry to SCQF Level 7 (Year 1) with Scottish Highers at BBBB including Biology, Mathematics and English.

*Entry to SCQF Level 7 (Year 1) with Higher National Certificate or Diploma in a non-articulating subject and with A in the graded unit.*

*Entry to SCQF Level 8 (Year 2) with Advanced Highers at BB in Biology and Mathematics or another Science, as well as Higher Mathematics and English.*

*Entry to SCQF Level 8 (Year 2) with Higher National Certificate in Biological Sciences with A in the graded unit.*

*Entry to SCQF Level 9 (Year 3) with Higher National Diploma in Biological Sciences with A in the graded unit.*

*Please see section X on page Y for other qualifications considered comparable to those above.*

*Please see section Z on page ZZ for particular advice to those with qualifications gained in the workplace.*

## Where can I find out more?

The SCQF website ([www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)) provides a wide range of useful materials and the SCQF Partnership Executive Team is always willing to provide briefing sessions.

Contact the SCQF Partnership on 0845 270 7371 for more information.

[www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)  
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