

scqf.org.uk

What is the SCQF?

A guide for parents and carers



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Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign

scqf[®]

scottish credit and
qualifications framework

What is the SCQF?



The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's national qualifications framework.



It helps you understand and compare all types of qualifications in Scotland – in schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and the community.



It shows the learning pathways that are available to your child, and helps them plan their next steps in education.

The SCQF has 12 levels and features over 10,000 qualifications.

SCQF Levels	Qualifications of Qualifications Scotland (formerly SQA)		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			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		SVQ
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3			
2	National 2, Awards			
1	National 1, Awards			

Professional Development Award (Levels 8-12)
National Progression Award (Levels 4-6)



Can't find your qualification?
Visit the SCQF Register.



The SCQF Register is a database of all the qualifications on the SCQF. It features more than 10,000 qualifications.

SCQF levels and credit points made simple



The SCQF level shows the difficulty of a qualification, with 12 being the most challenging.



Credit points show the average time needed to complete the qualification. 1 credit point = 10 hours of learning. For example, a Higher has 24 credit points, which means around 240 hours of learning will be needed to complete it. This includes time in the classroom, studying outside the classroom and assessments.

Qualifications

Young people can achieve a wide range of qualifications at school and in the community

National Qualifications

SCQF levels 3 to 7

These include National 3 to Advanced Higher courses. They help pupils build knowledge and skills across subjects.

Foundation Apprenticeships

SCQF level 6

Foundation Apprenticeships combine classroom learning with workplace experience, helping pupils gain skills that employers value.

Personal achievement awards

SCQF levels 3 to 7

Personal achievement awards recognise learning that takes place beyond the classroom, such as through the Outward Bound Trust or Youth Achievement Award.

Vocational qualifications

SCQF levels 3 to 6

Skills for Work

Practical, work-related courses that introduce young people to different career areas such as construction, childcare or hospitality.

National Progression Awards

These focus on specific sectors or skills, such as digital media, sports leadership or business.



Find out the SCQF levels of these qualifications, and see how they compare with others on the Framework.



Learner journey:

Meet Alex

When 12-year-old Alex starts secondary school she enjoys science, sport and working with others. Over the next six years, she builds a learning path that mixes academic subjects with practical learning and wider achievements.



S3: First qualifications

Alex chooses to continue with science, maths, English, PE, geography, and art and design. During S3 she begins working on National 3 Maths, National 3 Biology and level 4 Leadership Award through PE.

S4: Building confidence

Alex sits a mix of National 4s and National 5s. She sits National 5 English, National 5 PE, National 4 Biology, National 5 Art & Design and National 4 Maths. She continues volunteering as a sports leader with younger pupils.

S5: Moving up levels

Alex chooses Higher PE, Higher English, National 5 Biology and National 5 Maths. She also begins a Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeship in Scientific Technologies and spends two afternoons a week in a laboratory at a local college.

S6: Preparing for her future

As Alex prepares to leave school, she focuses on science and sport, studying Higher Biology and Advanced Higher PE. She completes her Foundation Apprenticeship and achieves the level 6 Creative Thinking.

Where Alex goes next

With a strong mix of SCQF levels, plus workplace experience from the Foundation Apprenticeship, Alex studies an HND Applied Science (level 7/8) at college. Her long-term ambition is to become a sports scientist.

Understanding your qualifications can help you support your child to plan their future learning. Find your qualifications in the illustration below to check the SCQF level and how they compare with today's qualifications.

SCQF level	Your qualification	Today's qualification
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Certificate of 6th Year Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Advanced Higher
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Higher
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">O GradeStandard Grade CreditIntermediate 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National 5
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">O GradeStandard Grade GeneralIntermediate 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National 4
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Standard Grade FoundationAccess 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National 3

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