

**Referencing the  
Scottish Credit & Qualifications  
Framework (SCQF)  
to the  
European Qualifications  
Framework  
(EQF)  
  
Report 2019**

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## PREFACE

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) was first referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in 2009. This referencing was published in 2010 as part of a report on the referencing of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) of the four UK countries to the EQF. In the intervening eight years since publication, the SCQF has developed considerably, with the revision of SCQF Level Descriptors, the redefinition of SCQF Principles and a considerable expansion in the range and number of qualifications on the Framework. In 2015/16, a pilot project was undertaken to establish if the original referencing outcomes continued to be a true reflection of links between the SCQF and EQF. This report builds on the work completed in the pilot and provides a revised and updated analysis of the SCQF/EQF referencing.

This report sets out the evidence that the SCQF continues to meet the ten criteria and ten quality assurance principles which govern referencing to the EQF. To provide a context for the reader, it also describes political, legal and social context in which the SCQF operates, explains the nature of the learning landscape in Scotland insofar as it relates to the SCQF, and describes the different kinds of qualifications in the Framework. The design of the report has been influenced by the many published referencing reports of EU Member States and by the guidance published by the European Commission. It has also been informed by the reflections on drafts provided by three international experts and by the comments received from Cedefop and a group of other EQF AG readers. In particular, we have borne in mind that the report will have an international readership and we have tried to avoid, where possible, national familiarities, such as abbreviations and acronyms. We have adopted a “neutral” terminology where possible, and have included a glossary of Scotland-specific terms and abbreviations. Importantly, the SCQF uses the terms 'learning programmes' when speaking about learning which is assessed, quality assured and assigned SCQF Level and credit. The term 'learning programmes' is often used to describe certificated learning which is not part of the suite of mainstream qualifications. However, in EQF terms, 'qualification' is used to describe all such certificated learning. For the avoidance of doubt, the term 'qualification' is used in this report to describe all assessed, quality assured and certificated learning, regardless of the context in which that learning took place.

It is important to note that whilst the UK referencing reports will be presented separately to the EQF Advisory Group, strong links between the Frameworks of the UK exist to support the learner and worker mobility. The UK NCPs, relevant Quality Assurance Bodies and Government representatives meet on a regular basis as the UK Co-ordination Group for European VET Initiatives and produce an information leaflet 'Qualifications can Cross Boundaries' for learners, employers and others to indicate the comparison of qualifications across national boundaries within the UK (and Ireland).<sup>1</sup> However the education, training and skills systems are very different in Scotland from the rest of the UK and the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://scqf.org.uk/media/1105/quals-can-cross-boundaries-2017-final-web.pdf>

underpinning philosophy of the Scottish Government towards a recognition and use of a wide range of types of learning and assessment is broader than the other countries. Scotland has had a different education system since 1800 and a Parliament with fully devolved education powers since 1999.

In the past the one area which provided a very common approach was the use of National Occupational Standards to develop vocational qualifications but over the last two years the update and use of those standards has remained only with Scotland, Wales and N Ireland. It was therefore agreed that to try to look at synergies and areas of commonality with Scotland was not appropriate given the very different Government agendas in this area.

The drafting of the report has been managed by the SCQF Partnership, and overseen by a Steering Group composed of senior representatives of organisations covering all the education, training and lifelong learning sectors in Scotland, plus four national and international experts and three executive officers from the SCQF Partnership Executive.

At the time of writing, there were no plans to revisit the self-certification for qualifications of the higher education sector against the QF-EHEA therefore this is not addressed within this report. However as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Scotland (FHQEIS) is integrated into the SCQF, the legal basis and structure, qualifications and quality assurance within the HE Sector are reported on.

SCQF Partnership's processes and plans for monitoring and further developing the Framework are also set out in this report.

We hope that you find the report helpful.

**The SCQF Partnership**

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## Executive Summary

1. The referencing of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) involves testing the extent to which an individual NQF can be shown to align with the EQF, both in terms of Framework levels and in the principles and practices that underpin Framework implementation.
2. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) was first referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in 2009/10. Following the revision of the SCQF level descriptors in 2012 and development work culminating in the publication of the new SCQF Handbook in 2015, a pilot project was undertaken in 2015/16 to establish if the original referencing outcomes continued to be a true reflection of links between the SCQF and EQF. This report builds on the work completed in the pilot and provides a revised and updated analysis of the SCQF/EQF referencing.
3. A number of features of the SCQF make it unusual, with the result that the referencing process continues to be complex. There are structural issues: the SCQF has 12 levels whilst the EQF has only 8 so direct matching between levels is unlikely. There are also issues related to the context in which the SCQF has developed and operates. Unlike many NQFs which have been developed in response to government legislation, the SCQF emerged from many years of development and partnership working between education bodies keen to find a mechanism to support learner transition and progress. It continues to operate outside a legislative and regulatory framework and this makes it unusual. Its position as a voluntary framework, and its reliance on partnership working rather than legislation for its implementation create challenges in referencing to some of the EQF principles which anticipate a more linear and regulated approach to NQF development
4. It should also be noted that much of the terminology used in the Scottish context does not fully align with the definition used within the EQF. Most evidently, the SCQF uses the term 'learning programmes' when speaking about learning which is assessed, quality assured and assigned SCQF Level and credit. The term is often used to describe certificated learning which is not part of the suite of mainstream qualifications. However, in EQF terms, the term 'qualification' is used to describe all such certificated learning. For the avoidance of doubt, the term 'qualification' is used in this report to describe all assessed, quality assured and certificated learning, regardless of the context in which that learning took place.
5. The referencing involved comparing SCQF levels, principles and processes against the ten criteria and ten quality assurance principles which govern referencing to the EQF. The report contains detail of the alignment between SCQF and EQF in relation to each of these criteria and principles.
6. Three of the EQF principles relate to the reporting of the referencing, and one to the need for inclusion of international experts in the referencing process. The remaining six principles relate directly to the principles and processes of the SCQF. They require evidence that NQFs demonstrate the following:

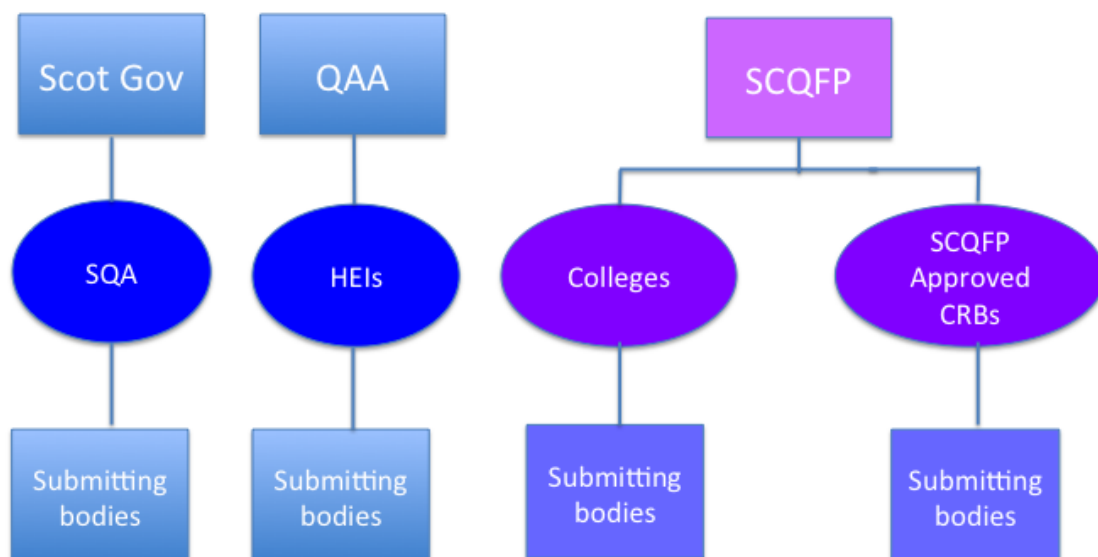
- **Criterion 1:** clearly determined roles and responsibilities for the national bodies responsible for the NQF
  - **Criterion 2:** clear and demonstrable links between the levels of the NQF and the EQF level descriptors
  - **Criterion 3:** qualifications which are based on learning outcomes, with associated arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and for learning credit
  - **Criterion 4:** transparent procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the Framework
  - **Criterion 5:** national quality assurance systems which are consistent with the EQF's 10 quality assurance principles
  - **Criterion 6:** agreement from national quality assurance bodies that the referencing is consistent with national quality assurance arrangements, provision and practices.
7. The SCQF Handbook, which includes the 25 SCQF Principles along with guidance on their implementation, provides evidence of a very clear and direct alignment the 10 EQF quality assurance principles. The report details these links.
8. In order to address Criterion 2, a 'best fit' approach was taken to the referencing between the SCQF Levels and the EQF levels descriptors. A linguistic analysis reviewing the original referencing outcomes was first completed in 2015/16 and reviewed in 2018. This compared the wording of the two sets of level descriptors to identify the strength of the match. Three categories of match were identified: Good match, best fit or *no match*. This analysis was then tested further in cross-referencing using the Framework for Qualifications of the Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), which is aligned with the EQF. These elements were taken into account in the final referencing decisions.
9. The findings of the analysis confirmed the outcomes of the level-to-level matching undertaken in 2009/2010 and 2015/16. The table below shows this matching, and indicates the strength of the match at each level.

#### EQF:SCQF level to level referencing

EQF Level	SCQF Level	Strength of match
8	12	Good match
7	11	Good match
6	10	Good match
6	9	Good match
5	8	Good match
5	7	Best fit
4	6	Good match
3	5	Good match
2	4	Best fit
1	3	Best fit
No match	2	No match
No match	1	No match

10. The devolved nature of the SCQF made complex the task of demonstrating alignment with the EQF's 10 principles of quality assurance (Criterion 5). The sharing of responsibility for the integrity of the Framework between the SCQF Partnership, SQA, QAA (Scotland) and the credit rating bodies (CRBs) means that there is no single national quality assurance system. Instead, responsibility for quality is devolved to different levels, all within the overarching framework of the SCQF Principles. In such a devolved approach, it is important to ensure that lines of accountability and areas of responsibility are clearly defined. The report contains a detailed response to Criterion 5 and also provides an illustration of the main lines of accountability supporting the integrity of the Framework. As the figure below demonstrates (Figure 19 in the body of the report), the quality assurance arrangements of qualification owners (the 'submitting bodies') are monitored by the bodies which credit rate their qualifications (CRBs): SQA, HEIs, Colleges and other CRBs. In turn, the quality assurance arrangements of the CRBs are monitored by SCQF Partnership (College and 'other' CRBs), QAA (Scotland) (HEIs) or the Scottish Government (SQA).

#### Quality assurance of credit rating bodies.



11. With such a devolved approach to quality assurance, it is important that the referencing process has engaged the organisations responsible for monitoring quality assurance in the SCQF. All of the organisations have confirmed the outcomes captured in this report. Organisations including Education Scotland and College Development Network (CDN) also play important roles in assuring the quality of education and training in Scotland and, with this, a keen interest in assuring the integrity of the SCQF. They, too, have been represented on the Steering Group. This level of representation has enabled the referencing process to demonstrate alignment between the various quality assurance systems that operate at national level and EQF Criterion 6.
12. In addition to addressing the EQF criteria and associated principles, the referencing report has also provided the opportunity to highlight many of the significant changes to



the landscape of lifelong learning that have taken place since 2010 in Scotland. These include:

- the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence and how this has influenced developments in National Qualifications;
- the reforms to the structure of the college sector, and how this has influenced the qualifications that colleges offer
- the growth in SCQF credit-rated work-based qualifications. This includes the expansion of the apprenticeship offer, and the increase in the credit rating of qualifications offered by employers and other organisations.
- the increased use of SCQF credit-rated qualifications to support the community learning and development (CLD) sector, including the introduction of Adult Achievement Awards and the increased use of credit-rating in this sector.

13. The referencing process has also enabled the SCQF Partnership to highlight its many achievements since the 2010 referencing report was issued. The impact assessment commissioned in 2016 highlighted the growing reach of the SCQF, both in terms of the increasing numbers of qualifications listed in the SCQF Database, which is Scotland's national NQF register, and in terms of the awareness and use of the framework by different stakeholder groups. The impact assessment provided evidence of a growing influence of the SCQF, both nationally and internationally, and this is highlighted in this report.

14. This referencing report also highlights the SCQF Partnership's commitment to future growth and development, with key objectives from the 2018/19 Annual Plan providing clear examples of current objectives.

15. Finally, this referencing report enables the SCQF Partnership to restate its commitment to adding value to the lifelong learning landscape of Scotland through continued development of the Framework, expansion of credit rating of qualifications, and its commitment to working in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure that the SCQF continues to support all sectors of the learning landscape.

## Introduction

### 1. Purpose and structure of the report

1. This report sets out the evidence to support the referencing of the levels of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), Scotland's National Qualifications Framework (NQF), with the levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It also demonstrates how the SCQF has addressed the criteria and procedures which underpin the referencing.
2. This report reflects the changes that the education and training system in Scotland has undergone since the preparation of the first referencing report in 2010. These changes include revisions to the SCQF level descriptors, the addition of new qualifications to the SCQF and changes to national qualifications, and developments in the recognition of prior learning (RPL). It also identifies how changes to national priorities for the education and training system are influencing the ongoing implementation and use of the SCQF, and how the SCQF is, in turn, influencing changes in education and training at a national level.
3. The report is divided into 3 sections:
  - **Section A** is designed to provide context for the reader. It describes:
    - the political and social context in which the SCQF operates
    - the different kinds of qualifications in the Framework
    - the nature of education and training in Scotland insofar as it relates to the SCQF
    - the background to the establishment of the SCQF and how it is intended to be used
    - the context for this revised and updated referencing report.
  - **Section B** gives a detailed account of how the SCQF addresses the criteria and procedures for referencing to the EQF.
  - **Section C** provides an overview of key developments in the implementation of the SCQF since 2009, along with development planned for the future.

### 2. The context for this report

4. The original referencing of the SCQF to the EQF was completed in 2010 and contained in the *Report Referencing the Qualifications Frameworks of the United Kingdom to the European Qualifications Framework*<sup>2</sup>. This document also contained the country reports of England and Northern Ireland (using a single Framework) and Wales.
5. Between 2010 and 2015, there were a number of changes to education and training in Scotland which affected the SCQF, and the progressive implementation of the SCQF led to new priorities and processes, and to re-stated principles. The SCQF level descriptors were reviewed and revised in 2012, and a range of development work, support materials and guidance documents on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) were introduced, all culminating in the publication of a new SCQF Handbook in 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.isfol.it/eqf/eqf-in-europa/rapporti-europei/regno-unito>

6. As a result of these developments, it was decided to revisit the referencing undertaken in 2010 to test its ongoing relevance. A 're-referencing' pilot report was produced in 2016 to set out the evidence to confirm that the SCQF continued to address the ten criteria and eight quality assurance principles that govern referencing to the EQF. This report was completed but not submitted as the intention at that time was to submit all of the UK reports in one document as in 2010.
7. This current report builds on the work undertaken in 2016, and addresses the EQF principles and criteria as set out in the revised EU Recommendation of 2017<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. Terminology

8. In presenting the information above, we (Scotland) are mindful that the report will have an international readership. Therefore, we have tried to adopt a “neutral” terminology where possible. For example, we have used the term “approve” when talking about quality assurance in broad terms, although the terms “approve”, “validate” and “accredit” are used for different aspects of the Scottish system. We have also used the term 'qualification' to describe all types of SCQF credit-rated learning. This is intended to make the processes more transparent to an international audience. We have also included a glossary (Figure 1) to those terms which apply specifically to Scotland along with a list of abbreviations used to describe organisations and processes in Scotland. In addition, we have included short explanations of matters relating to the legal basis of our institutions, agencies and the non-statutory basis of many of our qualifications, as these issues may differ markedly from counterparts in other countries.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/cee970-518f-11e7-a5ca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

**Figure 1: Glossary: Terms relating specifically to the Scottish context**

- **Apprenticeships** are designed to train people entering or progressing through defined occupational or professional sectors. All apprenticeships combine formal learning with workplace practice. Scotland's apprenticeships are available in a wide range of sectors, and range in level from SCQF 5 upwards. Six different types of apprenticeships have been developed in Scotland (Foundation; Modern; Technical; Higher; Graduate; Professional) to serve the varied needs of employers. Apprenticeships are explained in more detail in Figure 8.
- **Articulation** refers to a process of credit transfer allowing a learner to gain entry into either the second or third year of a university degree course after completing a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) at a college. Both HNCs and HNDs are short-cycle higher education qualifications.
- **Awarding Body:** In this report, the term “awarding body” means any organisation or institution which awards qualifications. It includes universities and other higher education institutions along with organisations such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and City & Guilds, whose remit is the development of qualifications and the quality assurance of assessment and certification. Some colleges also act as awarding bodies for some qualifications.
- **Credit Rating** is the process of allocating SCQF Level and Credit Points to qualifications.
- **Credit Rating Body (CRB)** is an organisation that carries out credit rating for the SCQF. These are Scotland's Colleges; Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); SQA; and other organisations that have been approved by the SCQF Partnership.
- **Credit Transfer** is the transfer of SCQF Credit Points from one programme into another to minimise the duplication of learning.
- **Further Education Colleges ('Colleges')** offer qualifications in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects at many levels. Some specialise in particular industry sectors such as art and design, catering, engineering or finance. They often have links with employers, so that students studying vocational courses can combine classroom learning with work experience.
- **Group Award** describes SQA qualifications which are made up of a combination of individually-assessed **units**. The named Group Award is included in the certificate awarded to candidates who complete the appropriate combination of units for the qualification.

- **Learning Outcomes** are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.
- **Learning Providers:** refers to organisations across all education and training sectors that provide SCQF credit-rated qualifications.
- **Mainstream Qualifications** are the main national qualifications offered through schools, colleges and universities
- **Notional Learning Hours** is the term for the time required for a typical learner at a specified SCQF Level to achieve the learning outcomes. Includes all the learning activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes as well as the assessment
- **Qualification** means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards In the Scottish context, the term 'learning programme' may also be used to describe outcome-based, assessed and credit-rated learning. However, for the purposes of this report, the term 'qualification' covers all outcome-based, assessed and credit-rated learning irrespective of where that learning takes place.
- **SCQF Credit Points** are allocated to a qualification to indicate the typical amount of time that it would take a learner to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification. Ten notional learning hours equates to one SCQF Credit Point.
- **SCQF Principles** are the 25 statements that all credit rating bodies (CRBs) must adhere to in order to ensure the integrity of the SCQF. The SCQF Principles, along with guidance on their application, are contained in the SCQF Handbook.
- **Senior Phase:** is the senior phase of the school curriculum and extends from the fourth year of secondary schooling (S4) to the sixth year (S6). Students in this phase are generally aged 15 to 18.
- **Submitting body** is an organisation that submits qualifications for entry onto the SCQF. A submitting body may be either an internal department within a CRB which has developed a qualification or an external third-party organisation submitting their qualification to a CRB.
- **Third-party Credit Rating:** is the process credit rating bodies apply to qualifications developed by submitting bodies which are not part of their own organisation (i.e. third parties).
- **Units and/or Modules** are a feature of many Scottish qualifications. They are individually-assessed components which may be certificated as stand-

alone 'mini qualifications' or may be combined into a larger qualification. For a unit-based or modular qualification, learners may have to complete a number of mandatory units/modules, and may also have to select and complete a number of units/modules from a list of options. This approach is particularly suited to vocational qualifications, where the combination of mandatory and optional units/modules may be adapted to suit the needs of different roles in an occupational area.

#### 4. Abbreviations

9. The following is a list of abbreviations used in this report

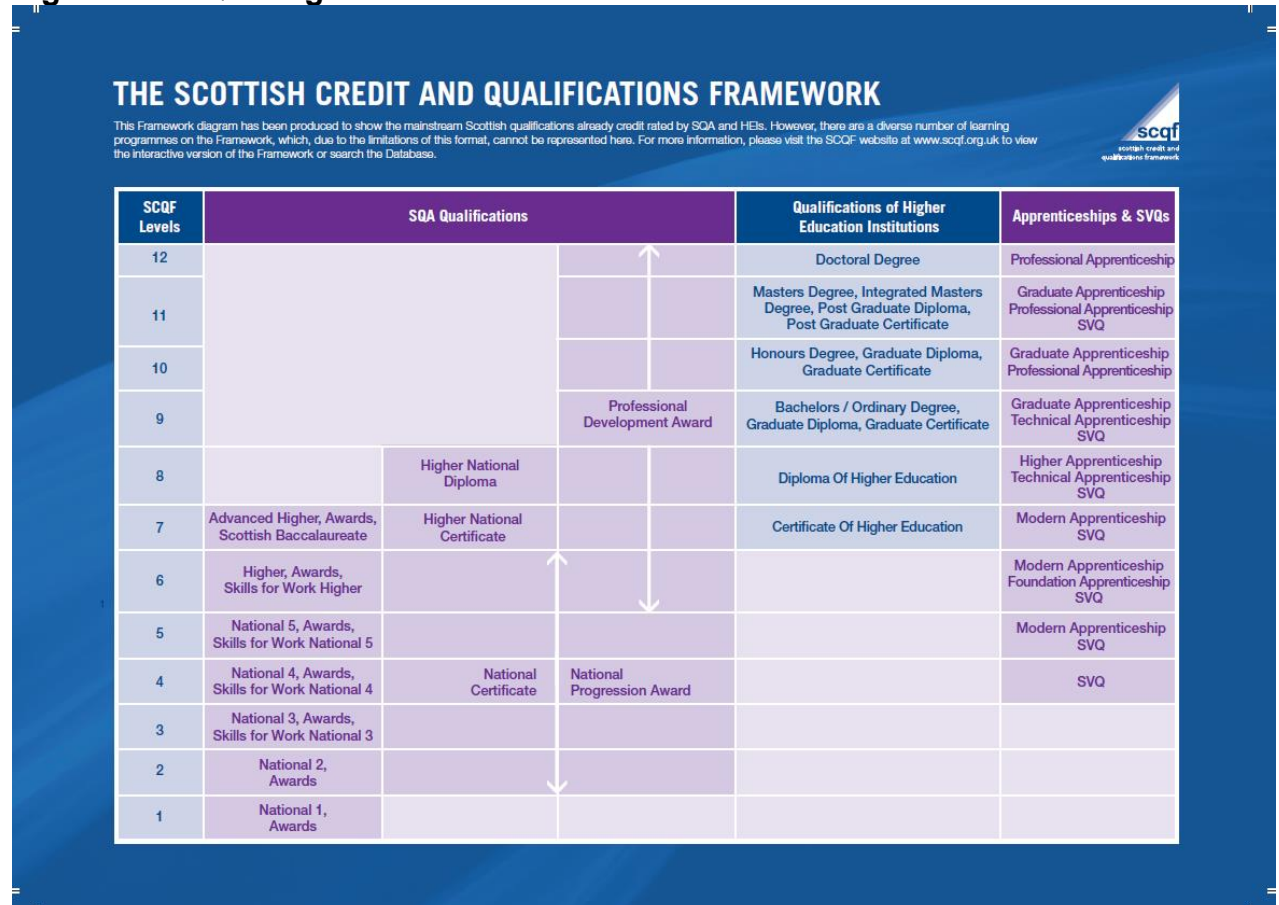
- CBQ Competence-Based Qualification
- CIAG Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
- CLD Community Learning and Development
- CRB Credit Rating Body
- EQF European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
- FHEQ Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- FQ-HEIS Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland
- HEI Higher Education Institution
- HNC Higher National Certificate
- HND Higher National Diploma
- NDPB Non Departmental Public Body
- NQF National Qualifications Framework
- QAA The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (in the UK)
- QAA Scotland The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland
- RPL Recognition of Prior Learning
- SCQF Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
- SCQF Partnership Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
- SDS Skills Development Scotland
- SFC Scottish Funding Council
- SQA Scottish Qualifications Authority
- SVQ Scottish Vocational Qualification

## Section A: The Background to the SCQF

### 1. Overview of the aims of the SCQF

1. The SCQF was formally launched in 2001. Since that time, it has become the standard means for describing the level and credit value of all mainstream qualifications and many other qualifications offered in Scotland. The mainstream qualifications are shown on the SCQF diagram below.

**Figure 2: SCQF Diagram**



2. The main purpose of the SCQF is to make the Scottish system of qualifications, and the way in which they relate to each other, easier to understand and use. It is intended to:





- support lifelong learning
- clarify entry and exit points for qualifications at whatever level
- show learners and others possible routes for progression and credit transfer
- show the level and credit (size) of the different types of Scottish qualification



- enable credit transfer to be made between qualifications so as to assist learners to build on previous successes
3. The SCQF is in the custody of, and managed by, the SCQF Partnership. This is the organisation formed to oversee all aspects of the SCQF and to ensure that the integrity of the Framework is maintained at all times. More detail about the SCQF Partnership is included in Section B in response to EQF Criterion 1.
  4. The scope of the Framework has extended considerably since it was launched and it now contains an increasing number of important local, national and international qualifications. Examples of these include:
    - qualifications developed by employers for their staff
    - proprietary qualifications (e.g. developed by major companies to support use of their products)
    - professional body qualifications
    - qualifications developed by third-sector and voluntary organisations.
  5. The SCQF was always intended to be the Framework for lifelong learning in Scotland and, as such, to include a diverse range of qualifications. However, the integrity of the SCQF is paramount and this inclusive approach can only be achieved by ensuring that all qualifications on the SCQF are underpinned by a consistent approach to quality assurance. A number of technical and enabling documents support this consistency in quality assurance. These are highlighted in Figure 3 below, and more detail on quality assurance processes is included in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 5. Because there is no legal requirement to use the Framework (although there are some political and funding levers) the SCQF Partnership has had to focus strongly on how to support those bodies which use the Framework and as such therefore has developed a very wide range of tools and resources for use by different audiences.
  6. It is important to note that the SCQF was established on a voluntary basis and not by law. Its use is voluntary and there is no legal requirement for any organisation to have their qualifications included on the Framework. The information which follows in this section highlights how the political, social and education context in Scotland has supported the use of this approach to the development and implementation of the SCQF.



**Figure 3: SCQF Partnership documents supporting effective quality systems**

	<p><b>The SCQF Handbook</b> is the technical document which details the 25 SCQF Principles which all credit rating bodies (CRBs) must adhere to in order to ensure the integrity of the SCQF. The SCQF Handbook is arranged around five themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning Arrangements</li> <li>2. Credit Rating</li> <li>3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</li> <li>4. Quality Assurance</li> <li>5. Third Party Credit Rating</li> </ol> <p>It provides extensive guidance on credit rating process and clear signposting of other relevant information within each theme.</p>
	<p><b>The Quality Assurance Model</b> sets out the application, approval and on-going quality assurance processes which SCQF Partnership-approved credit rating bodies must adhere to in order to ensure approval and review are transparent and robust. The application of the Quality Assurance Model is discussed in more detail in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 5.</p>
	<p><b>The SCQF Level Descriptors</b> are fundamental to the SCQF. They describe in broad terms what learners should be able to do or demonstrate at a particular level. Within an integrated framework, these level descriptors provide a common vocabulary to assist with the comparison of qualifications.</p>
	<p><b>Criteria Explained</b> provides guidance on the key features and technicalities of the SCQF for all users of the Framework. It also describes approaches that should be used in its implementation. This includes the guidance on writing learning outcomes included in Figure 15.</p>

## 2. The political and social context of the SCQF

7. Scotland has a long history of education and qualifications which are distinct and different from those of the other countries in the United Kingdom, beginning with a separation of education systems in the 17th and 18th centuries. Prior to 1998, legislation governing education in Scotland was within the remit of the Secretary of State for Scotland, sited within the Scottish Office of the UK Government, rather than within the Ministries responsible for education in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. This separation allowed for the development of systems and processes which differ markedly from those in the rest of the UK. The Scotland Act 1998 established the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive (renamed Scottish Government in 2007) with legislative powers over a range of areas, including education and training.
8. It is also important to note that within higher education there are also differences between Scotland and the rest of the UK. The FQHEIS and the FHEQ are separate qualifications frameworks. The need to have a separate framework for Scottish undergraduate HE arose from the fact that the structure of Scottish undergraduate degrees is different from those in the rest of the UK, due to the different structure of the preceding school qualifications. This different structure makes it very tricky to set out Scottish undergraduate degrees in the same QF as those in the rest of the UK. Once we reach Honours level, the qualifications across the UK align and therefore it's possible to have a common Post Graduate Qualification Framework. In addition, quite some time before the FQHEIS was developed, the Scottish HEIs had agreed to use the ScotCAT framework for credit rating their provision. Crucially, they were accustomed to using notions of credit as well as level. At that time, there was no agreement across the rest of the UK on a single credit framework or even on whether to use credit. There were regional consortia in England but no wider agreement on the use of credit. This provided a further argument for Scotland having a separate QF. Furthermore, the creation (and now existence) of the much wider SCQF means that has become the key QF reference point for Scottish HEIs.
9. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, along with subsequent acts, set much of the legislative framework for Scottish school education which still exists today. This included a delegation of authority and responsibility for state-funded schools to Scotland's local government authorities, and a requirement for students to receive career guidance to help with transition to the next phase, whether this was employment or further or higher education. Subsequent Acts continued this delegation of responsibility and authority away from centralised government control and maintained a focus on transition from school. They also led to the establishment of a number of non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) responsible for different aspects of the education system.
10. NDPBs play a central role in the Scottish education system. Although funded by the Scottish Government, these bodies are not part of a government department and are not staffed by civil servants. They operate at a distance from the Government and have their own governance structures. They are, however, accountable to the Scottish

Government for the delivery of key national policy outcomes. In addition, there is one Executive Agency (Education Scotland) directly linked to Scottish Government which has a central role in the education system. Figure 4 below outlines the roles of these key bodies in the Scottish education sector and summarises their areas of responsibility.

**Figure 4: Scotland's Public Bodies in the Education Sector**

Name	Established	Remit
Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFC funds Scotland's Colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), formed by the merger of two predecessor funding bodies.</li> <li>Funding decisions are based on a number of criteria, including performance outcomes for institutions. These Outcome Agreements are seen as a key mechanism for driving development in the Further and Higher Education sectors.</li> </ul>
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	Education (Scotland) Act (1996); amended by SQA Act (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQA is the national body responsible for the accreditation and awarding of qualifications other than degrees. It comprises two distinct functions: an awarding body function and an accreditation body function.</li> <li>In its role as an Awarding Body, SQA has a statutory duty to set and maintain the standards of its qualifications. It is responsible for the design, development and validation of a wide range of qualifications and for the quality assurance of assessment and certification of learners completing those qualifications. The qualifications for which SQA is responsible for include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Qualifications, which are primarily delivered in the school sector</li> <li>Awards, National Certificates (NCs), National Progression Awards, Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) which are primarily delivered in the college sector</li> <li>A range of different qualifications primarily developed to support learning in and for work. These qualifications include Professional Development Awards (PDAs) National Progression Awards (NPAs), and a range of other award types.</li> </ol> </li> <li>In its role as an Accreditation Body, SQA approves awarding bodies and accredits qualifications, other than degrees, submitted by these approved awarding bodies. It subsequently regulates and quality assures both the awarding bodies and their accredited qualifications.</li> <li>The Accreditation function trades as SQA Accreditation to differentiate it from the awarding function of SQA. It is accountable to a statutory</li> </ul>

		<p>Accreditation Committee and thence onto Scottish Ministers. The SQA Board of Management has no locus over the accreditation function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are certain qualifications that must be accredited by SQA Accreditation and these include Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). Any awarding body, including SQA, which wishes to award an SVQ must seek accreditation from SQA Accreditation. Certain qualifications which lead to a licence to practice, such as in the security sector, must also be accredited and regulated by SQA Accreditation.</li> <li>• Approved awarding bodies can also, on a voluntary basis, submit qualifications to SQA for accreditation and regulation.</li> </ul>
Skills Development Scotland (SDS)	2008	<p>SDS is the national skills agency in Scotland. It delivers a range of services to individuals and employers across the country. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing the national Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service</li> <li>• managing and developing the Scottish apprenticeship programmes</li> <li>• working with employers to support and respond to their skills needs</li> <li>• developing a robust evidence base to articulate the current and future skills demands of Scotland and ensure that skills investment is evidence-based and aligned with skills demand</li> <li>• managing a range of employability programmes to support individuals to take their first steps into the labour market, or to make successful career changes and progression</li> </ul>
Education Scotland	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed to merge Her Majesty's (HM) Inspectorate of Education and Learning &amp; Teaching Scotland, the predecessor agency responsible for issues relating to teaching and the school curriculum.</li> <li>• Unlike SFC, SQA and SDS, Education Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. It operates independently but is directly accountable to the Government for its work.</li> <li>• Its role is to support quality and improvement across a range of learning providers. It has responsibility for school inspections and for conducting reviews of colleges, careers information, advice and guidance services, and Modern Apprenticeships. It reports against the outcomes for education set by the Scottish Government.</li> </ul>

11. In addition to the structures put in place by the Scottish Government and predecessor legislation, the approach to the development and implementation of the SCQF has been influenced by the emphasis put on partnership working in Scottish politics and society. There has long been an expectation that publicly-funded agencies and others will work together to deliver outcomes which will benefit the country. This approach is a central feature of many Scottish Government policies. The Government's National Performance Framework (NPF)<sup>4</sup> contains the outcomes against which national performance is measured, and there is an expectation that organisations and stakeholders will collaborate to achieve those outcomes. This focus on partnership and collaboration underpins the SCQF.

### 3. The learning landscape: education, training and lifelong learning in Scotland

12. A diverse range of institutions and organisations are involved in the delivery of qualifications in Scotland. Furthermore, recent years has seen a marked increase in the provision of qualifications which straddle traditional educational boundaries.

13. The main contexts for learning leading to qualifications on the SCQF are shown in Figure 5 below. This shows the school system, and, in broad terms, the main contexts of education and training available to people on completion of compulsory education.

14. Further information about each of these contexts is given in this section of the report, with information about the legal status and structure of the types of institutions involved, the kinds of qualifications offered, and the main features of the quality assurance which apply in each context.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The NPF outcomes are designed to measure national economic, social, health and environmental outcomes against 81 national indicators. Examples of indicators related to the education and lifelong learning sector include educational attainment, skills levels across the population and skills utilisation. For more information see <http://nationalperformance.gov.scot>

<sup>5</sup> More details of the design of the qualifications in the SCQF are given in Annex 3, *Qualifications on the SCQF*, and information about quality assurance arrangements in the different sectors is given in Section B of this report in the response to EQF criterion 5.

**Figure 5: Learning contexts for qualifications on the SCQF**

Age ↓	In School	In Colleges	In Higher Education Institutions	In Communitie s	In Workplaces
17+		Qualifications at SCQF levels 1-12.	Higher education institutions Qualifications at SCQF levels 7-12.	Qualifications at all SCQF levels.	Qualifications at SCQF levels 3-12.
16+	Secondary School Senior Phase – years S5&S6. Mainly qualifications at SCQF levels 5-7.				
16	Secondary School Beginning of the Senior Phase – year S4 (Compulsory) Qualifications at SCQF levels 1-5.				
13-15	Secondary School – years S1-S3 (Compulsory) – broad general education Experiences and outcomes – no national qualifications.				
5-12	Primary school – years P1-P7 (national learning outcomes).				
3-4	Pre-school (national learning outcomes).				

a) Scottish Schools

**Legal Basis and Structure**

15. The Scotland Act 1998 gives the Scottish Parliament legislative control over all education matters, but much of the structure of Scottish education was set by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. These Acts and other more recent Acts are supplemented by regulations issued by the Scottish Government, which have the force of law, and by guidance issued by Education Scotland, which sets de facto norms and standards for the quality of teaching and learning.
16. Compulsory education takes place between the ages of 5 and 16. There is an option at the upper end of this age group for students to complete their education in colleges or other types of institutions rather than in school.
17. The school curriculum is not governed by legislation in Scotland and there are no compulsory subjects or qualifications that a pupil must take within the Scottish education system. However, guidance on the curriculum – now the Curriculum for Excellence – sets standards which schools are expected to meet. Inspections of

educational standards and capacity-building activities in schools are conducted by Education Scotland.

### **Curriculum for Excellence**<sup>6</sup>

18. A new “Curriculum for Excellence” based on a structure of experiences and outcomes for young people from 3-18 was introduced in schools and colleges in 2010. It resulted from a “National Debate on Education” which led to the identification of four key purposes of education: i.e. enabling young people to become:
- successful learners,
  - confident individuals,
  - responsible citizens, and
  - effective contributors.

Mainstream school qualifications reflecting the Curriculum for Excellence have been phased in since 2013/14.

### **Qualifications**

19. SQA is responsible for the design, development, assessment and certification of the majority of qualifications delivered in Scottish schools. This is carried out through engagement with partners. These qualifications are referred to as National Qualifications and are listed in the first column of the SCQF Diagram (Figure 2). In addition to these qualifications, schools also have the opportunity to offer some apprenticeships. More detail about these apprenticeships is included later in this Section. Some of the key features of each type of National Qualification are listed in Figure 6 below.

**Figure 6: Key features of National Qualifications**

Type of Qualification	SCQF Level(s)	Key Features
Advanced Higher Higher	7 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General subject-based qualifications made up of a syllabus based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills<sup>7</sup>.</li> <li>• Assessment based on summative assessment in coursework and usually an external examination.</li> <li>• Usually provided in schools but also available in colleges.</li> <li>• These are the predominant qualifications used for entry to university.</li> </ul>
Scottish Baccalaureate	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners complete 2 Advanced Highers, 1 Higher and a Specialised Interdisciplinary Project at SCQF Level 7.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Further information can be found at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/index.asp>

<sup>7</sup> At the time of writing, a process of revision is underway transforming Advanced Highers and Highers from unit-based qualifications to syllabus-based qualifications. The revision of Highers was completed in June-August 2018. The revision of Advanced Highers is still ongoing and from June-August 2019, they will have been fully revised to remove the units and become syllabus-based qualifications.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently four Baccalaureate frameworks available - languages; science; social sciences; and expressive arts - to enable learners to develop specialisms in one of the four broad curricula areas.</li> <li>• Usually provided in schools but also available in colleges or through partnerships between schools and colleges or universities.</li> <li>• The Scottish Baccalaureate is not as widely used as Advanced Highers and Highers.</li> </ul>
National 5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General subject-based qualifications made up of a syllabus based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Assessment based on summative assessment in coursework and usually an external examination.</li> <li>• Usually provided in schools but also available in colleges.</li> </ul>
National 4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General subject-based qualifications made up of a several units of study based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Internal summative assessment of each unit, including an Added Value unit designed to demonstrate learner depth and/or breadth.</li> <li>• Usually provided in schools but also available in colleges.</li> </ul>
National 1-3	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General subject-based qualifications made up of a several units of study based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Internal summative assessment of each unit.</li> <li>• Usually provided in schools but also available in colleges.</li> </ul>
Skills for Work	3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational subject-based qualifications made up of several units and based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Internal summative assessment of each unit.</li> <li>• Assessment requires learners to provide evidence of experience and understanding of practice.</li> <li>• Designed with employer involvement and based on National Occupational Standards (NOS)</li> <li>• Assessment requires candidates to provide evidence of experience and understanding of practice so are based on partnerships between schools, colleges and employers.</li> </ul>



Awards	1-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General or vocational subject-based qualifications based on expected outcomes of learning, aims, purpose, rationale, knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Awards are often single-unit qualifications often designed to recognise wider achievement (e.g. safety awards; employability awards; internet safety awards).</li> </ul>
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20. The senior phase of secondary school begins in year 4 (known as S4) which is the final year of compulsory education. Students in S4 are typically aged 14-15 at the beginning of the school year. In the senior phase, students will take National Qualifications in a wide range of general and vocational subjects at SCQF levels 1-7 and may also take other qualifications offered by the SQA or other awarding bodies to reflect their wider achievements. Importantly, students may complete their senior phase in school, or may move to college.
21. In Scotland, pupils can go to university at age 16/17 with Highers typically providing the entry requirements for Scottish universities. However increasing numbers of young people stay on for a 6<sup>th</sup> year, taking more Highers and/or Advanced Highers, and leave school at age 17/18. It is the Higher (EQF level 4) which provides the main access to universities. Typically 5 subjects at that level will be required for entry to most degree programmes. However if a student stays on and undertakes an Advanced Higher (EQF level 5) this may give them an advantage in highly competitive subjects such as medicine or it may give them some credit transfer into year 2. The number of student undertaking Advanced Highers is much smaller than the main entry qualifications of Highers for example in 2018 there were 191,951 registrations for Highers and 24,331 registrations for Advanced Highers. Examples of the learning outcomes at both these levels in one subject area have been included as Annex 11 to demonstrate the difference
22. The learning outcomes, assessment arrangements and criteria, and quality assurance requirements for each National Qualification are published by SQA on their website. SQA also provides resources to support schools and individual teachers to understand the standards required by the qualifications, and how to take these standards into account in the formative assessment of learner progress.
23. SQA has a statutory responsibility to set, monitor and maintain the standards of the national qualifications. This is carried out in a range of ways by SQA to maintain standards over time. There has been significant focus on the embedding of the new qualifications, as these are key tests of the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence. During 2017, the Scottish Government asked SQA to remove unit assessment for all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications in order to reduce the assessment burden on students and the workload for teachers. The work to redesign the assessments will be completed for session 2019/20.

### **Quality Assurance**

24. Publicly-funded schools are normally deemed to be competent to offer the National Qualifications described above. However, they are subject to periodic inspection by Education Scotland<sup>8</sup>.
25. Where schools offer additional qualifications, they have to meet the quality assurance requirements of the awarding body for the qualification. This also applies to some SQA qualifications where the teaching, learning and resource requirements go beyond the usual capacity of schools.

#### **b) Scottish Colleges**

### **Legal basis and structure**

26. Scottish colleges are self-governing organisations in the public sector. They were established with this status in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Acts of 1992 and 2005 and they are treated as part of Scottish Government for budgeting, reporting, and accounting purposes. The recent Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 brought about significant changes to college governance and established a new legal framework for a regional structure of colleges. Scottish colleges now consist of 26 organisations in 13 geographic regions: 10 regions have a single regional college; and three regions have more than one college, but a single regional board that is responsible for strategic planning and allocating funds to the colleges in that region. In the northern region, Highlands and Islands, there are ten colleges. This takes account of the particular geography of that region. There is also a small residential adult education college which is outside the regional structure. Each college meets the needs of local and regional stakeholders, monitored through delivery of a Regional Outcome Agreement, and responds to national priorities. Each college is managed by an autonomous Board of Management, with the College Chair/Regional Boards appointed through the public appointments process. A full list of Scottish colleges can be found in Annex 2: *SCQF Credit Rating Bodies*.

### **Qualifications**

27. Scottish colleges offer a wide range of general, vocational, technical and professional qualifications. Across the sector, they offer provision at all levels of the SCQF, but the majority of provision in most colleges is at SCQF levels 3-8.
28. Courses are delivered in colleges through day, evening or weekend classes, in the community, by distance learning and online, or in the work place. Some are short courses and others are designed to incorporate extensive periods of skills development – up to three years – in college workshops, restaurants, studios or other specialist areas, or by combining off-the-job and on-the-job learning. Most of the

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<sup>8</sup> <https://education.gov.scot>

qualifications offered in Scottish colleges are awarded by SQA, but colleges also offer the qualifications of a wide range of other awarding bodies.

29. All Scottish colleges are also SCQF credit rating bodies (CRBs). As a result, colleges can create their own qualifications and credit-rate them onto the SCQF. Most of these are associated with youth work, adult education and community learning or specific to a local industry, such as access to employment, digital literacy, training of volunteers involved in community learning, sport and leisure qualifications and employer specific training. Colleges can also credit rate qualifications owned by other organisations at their request (should they wish to do so).
30. Scottish colleges also offer a range of higher education qualifications. In particular they offer Higher National Certificates (HNCs) at SCQF level 7 and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) at SCQF level 8 across a range of subject specialisms. These are short-cycle higher education qualifications under the Qualifications Framework – European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) definitions. HNC and HND qualifications provide both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to do a job at a technical level. Many of these qualifications are designed to facilitate articulation to university degree courses with arrangements in place for recognition of prior learning, including exemptions and credit transfer. For example, completion of an HNC at SCQF level 7 would generally allow access directly into year 2 of a related degree. A small number of taught degrees are available in Scottish colleges by the authority of a university or other competent higher education institution.

### **Quality assurance**

31. Colleges also have their own quality systems and carry out continuous self-assessment as part of a national programme of enhancement. Education Scotland provides external assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) of the ability and effectiveness of colleges to carry out evaluation and plan for improvement. SFC is the body which allocates public funds to colleges and universities. Additional quality assurance processes may be operated by bodies such as Skills Development Scotland (SDS) for vocational education and training schemes such as Modern Apprenticeships<sup>9</sup> and awarding bodies in relation to the quality assurance of their qualifications. In addition, the SCQF Partnership reviews all colleges in terms of their responsibilities and activities as SCQF CRBs.
32. Quality assurance mechanisms within Scottish colleges include an active element of student participation and feedback. The College Development Network (CDN), which is a partner organisation in the SCQF Partnership, supports colleges to develop and share their understanding of best practice in quality assurance through its Quality Development Network and associated workshops and events<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Further information about apprenticeships, including Modern Apprenticeships, is included later in this section, under the heading '**Workbased learning**'.

<sup>10</sup> More information about the legal status, role and remit of CDN is included in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 1.

c) Scottish Higher Education Institutions

**Legal basis and structure**

33. Although many colleges provide higher education qualifications, the principle providers of higher education in Scotland are the nineteen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): sixteen universities and three other higher education institutions.
34. University status is conferred by the UK Privy Council<sup>11</sup> on the advice of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK, the UK's Quality Body for Higher Education. There are sixteen universities in Scotland which have the authority to award academic degrees.
35. There are three other HEIs: Glasgow School of Art, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (previously the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama), and Scotland's Rural College<sup>12</sup>, which was formed in 2012 from a merger of three Scottish colleges specialising in land-based studies. Only the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland has degree awarding powers (for taught, but not research degrees).
36. Universities and the other HEIs are all public bodies funded by the Scottish Government through the SFC on the basis of Outcome Agreements. There are no private universities and only a small number of private higher education institutions in Scotland.
37. A full list of Scottish universities and other HEIs can be found in Annex 2: *SCQF Credit Rating Bodies*.

**Qualifications**

38. All Scottish universities award degrees at SCQF levels 9-12: i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. Institutions use SCQF credit points for students entering or transferring between institutions or programmes leading to qualifications, and use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for transfers within the European area.

**Quality Assurance**

39. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland (QAA Scotland) is part of the UK-wide Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK higher education. QAA Scotland has devolved responsibilities for the work of QAA in Scotland. QAA Scotland's work is enhancement-led, in line with the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). The QEF supports higher education institutions in managing the quality of the student learning experience and provides public confidence in academic standards. QAA Scotland delivers the external quality review of institutions through the Enhancement-led Institutional Review process and review reports are published on the web. Particular features of Scotland's quality approach (the QEF) are a strong element of student participation in the review process and a

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<sup>11</sup> The Privy Council formally advises the Queen on the exercise of her powers. It advises the Queen on the issuing of Royal Charters, which are used to grant special status to incorporated bodies.

<sup>12</sup> Although it is a higher education institution, Scotland's Rural College offers qualifications at most levels in the SCQF on sites throughout Scotland. It plans to achieve university status by 2021.

national programme of enhancement, aimed at developing and sharing good practice.

40. Higher education provision is developed within the parameters of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, introduced in 2012 to replace a previous Code of Practice. The UK Quality Code was developed by the higher education sector to ensure that higher education provision and outcomes are comparable and consistent at a threshold level across the UK. A revised UK Quality Code is being developed by QAA on behalf of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assurance (UKSCQA), in consultation with the higher education sector. The revised Quality Code is based on three elements that together provide a reference point for effective quality assurance: expectations; practices (core and common); and advice and guidance. The revised Quality Code is a more streamlined instrument which continues to apply across the UK and which is fit for purpose in an evolving regulatory and quality assurance landscape, and accessible to the full diversity of the sector. The Expectations and Core and Common practices were published in March 2018. Over the course of 2018 there has been rapid work with the sector to develop the underpinning advice and guidance. The revised version of the Code continues to articulate fundamental principles that should apply to all higher education providers irrespective of changing contexts. These principles include supporting student engagement, encouraging continuous improvement, and ensuring external referencing is brought to bear on the integrity of awards and the quality of provision<sup>13</sup>.

41. Scottish universities approve and quality assure their own qualifications making use of the UK Quality Code, including subject benchmarks, and the *Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland*, which aligns fully with levels 7-12 of the SCQF. In some cases, qualifications have to be endorsed by professional bodies to allow holders of the qualifications to become registered in the profession (teaching, nursing, medicine, law, etc.).

42. Universities are responsible for the quality of a range of processes including: programme design and maintenance; SCQF credit rating of their own provision; SCQF credit rating of the provision of other organisations (if they choose to offer that service); assessment of learners; and making awards to successful learners. This is underpinned by the use of external examiners to ensure the consistency of standards across the sector. SCQF provides the baseline for determining this and justifying confidence in the comparability of standards.

d) Community Learning and Development (CLD)

**Legal basis and structure**

43. Community Learning & Development (CLD)<sup>14</sup> is a field of learning that enables people to identify their own individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and take

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<sup>13</sup> For further information about the revised UK Quality Code, visit <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-revised-uk-quality-code>

<sup>14</sup> For more information about the scope of CLD in Scotland see <http://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/about-cld/what-is-community-learning-and-development-cld/>

action to bring about change for themselves and their communities. It uses a range of formal and informal methods of learning and social development with individuals and groups in their communities. This learning is almost always non formal and based in work within social partners. Its client group tends to be those furthest from the labour market and those furthest from education. The purpose is to invite those individuals to take part in learning in a non-formal setting and may often be without any formal assessment. It has been shown to build confidence and can often help those learners realise that they could potentially move into employment or further formal education. CLD programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. An example of one of the types of qualifications developed in the CLD sector is the Adult Achievement Awards, described in more detail later in this section in Figure 9.

44. The legal basis for CLD is established in the *Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013*. This places legal requirements on every local government authority in Scotland for the delivery of CLD. Policy on CLD is set out in a number of areas, such as youth work, community regeneration, employability, tackling poverty, early years provision, the skills strategy, a greener Scotland and the SCQF. As indicated earlier in this report this is very much in keeping with a Government agenda which recognises and values attainment of all types and at all levels.

### **Qualifications**

45. A key principle of CLD is that it is planned in partnership. Partnerships involve all kinds of organisations from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. This means that schools, colleges, HEIs and other learning providers are part of CLD. Many of the qualifications used in CLD are on the SCQF, including qualifications developed specifically to support CLD. Examples include qualifications to recognise the professional development of CLD practitioners, for youth achievement and adult achievement, and for community capacity-building. Examples of these qualifications are shown below.



**Figure 7: Examples of CLD and other qualifications on the SCQF**

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK					
<p>This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the Scqf website at <a href="http://www.scqf.org.uk">www.scqf.org.uk</a> to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.</p>					
SCQF Levels					
12	<b>Examples of other qualifications on the SCQF</b>				
11					
10					
9					
8	COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate	Foundation for Social Improvement Certificate in Fundraising Practice	The Governance Forum The Governance Certificate Course	College Development Network Cooperative Learning Principles and Practice	Listen Well Scotland Effective Listening for Life, Health and Community
7	The Boys' Brigade George VI Leadership Programme	Youth Scotland Youth Achievement Awards - Platinum	Institute of Counselling Introduction to Counselling Skills	Scottish Amateur Swimming Association Early Childhood Swim Teaching	Lanarkshire Recovery Consortium Advocacy Practice
6	Sports Leaders UK Sports Leadership	Direct Devitt Comedy and Confidence	NHS Education for Scotland Caring for Smiles	Deaf Action Introduction to Tutoring British Sign Language	Diversity Matters Everyone Together
5	Cycling Scotland Cycle Training Assistant	Duke of Edinburgh's Awards DoE Leadership	The Outward Bound Trust Adventure & Challenge Award	Glasgow Kelvin College Certificate in Youthwork Practice	Rural & Urban Training Scheme Bikefix Leadership Award
4	Street Soccer Scotland First Steps to Employment	West College Scotland Vocabulary in Action	Learning Alliance Scotland Effective Mentoring & Peer Education	New College Lanarkshire Relationships	South Lanarkshire Council Exploring and Sharing Youth Work Practice
3	Shetland College, UHI Letters, Leaflets and Labels	West Lothian Council Everyday Art and Media Literacies	Glasgow Clyde College Click 2 Connect	Rathbone OneLife	Lead Scotland Community Action and Leadership
2	ASDAN Employability Qualifications	Playback ICE Moving on Transition in Action	Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 2 Newcastle Abbey College	SQA Awarding Body Steps to Work Award	Youth Scotland HIS Three Star Award
1	SQA Awarding Body Cycling Award	Borders College Ready for Retail		SQA Awarding Body Personal Achievement Bronze, Silver and Gold	

46. One notable approach in the CLD sector is the Awards Network <sup>15</sup>a forum of 21 learning providers working mainly in the third sector. One of the aims of the Network is to develop a Scottish framework for valuing, recognising and accrediting young people's achievements through non- formal learning. They recognise young people's contributions in a variety of settings including youth work, volunteering, and active citizenship. Some youth awards have their own long-standing internal processes for validation and accreditation. However, others have formal recognition on the SCQF.

### **Quality Assurance**

47. Organisations in the CLD sector wishing to have qualifications credit rated and placed on the SCQF must ensure that their provision meets the criteria laid out in the SCQF Handbook when they are submitting their provision for credit rating. Information about the credit rating process is included in Section B in response to EQF Criterion 4.

<sup>15</sup> For more information see <https://www.awardsnetwork.org>

e) Work-based Learning: Apprenticeships

**Legal basis and structure**

48. The main type of qualification for work-based learning on the SCQF is the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ). These qualifications are developed by Sector Skills Councils or Standards Setting Bodies, are based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) that cover specific employment sectors in the United Kingdom, and are approved for use in Scotland by SQA Accreditation. SVQs are a requirement, or a recognised qualification, for registration or practice in a number of sectors, including workers in social services, healthcare and early years education, and construction workers, plumbers and electricians. They are also used to underpin apprenticeship programmes in a wide range of sectors. There are National Occupational Standards and SVQs in around 80% of the occupational areas in Scotland. The use and uptake varies. Sectors with high use of SVQs include Social Services and Healthcare, Business and Administration, Retail, Hospitality, Logistics, Construction Craft, Engineering, and Management. SVQs are widely used for workforce development. In particular, they form an important element of the majority of apprenticeships undertaken in Scotland.
49. The use of apprenticeships has expanded considerably in recent years as a number of government policies have focused in particular on access to vocational learning for young people. Chief among these policies is *Developing the Young Workforce*<sup>16</sup>, the Scottish Government's 7-year strategy for addressing youth employment. Key aims within the strategy include strengthening the links between schools, colleges and employers, and expanding the numbers of young people involved in vocational learning.

**Types of apprenticeships**

50. The Scottish Government has established a number of mechanisms which use the SCQF to support progression into work. These include the expansion of employability programmes which enable young people to develop employability skills, and the use of different types of apprenticeships: Foundation, Modern, Technical, Professional, Higher and Graduate. Modern Apprenticeships are the most widely used of these various types of apprenticeships. They were introduced in the 1990s, and their use has expanded considerably in recent years. The other types of apprenticeship are still in relatively early phases of implementation. Apprenticeships, which are designed in partnership between employers, sector bodies and education providers, are available for more than 20 sectors. The table below highlights some of the key features of Scotland's growing apprenticeship offer.

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<sup>16</sup> *Developing the Young Workforce* information available at [https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20\(DYW\)](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20(DYW))



**Figure 8: Types of Apprenticeships in Scotland**

<p><b>All Apprenticeships:</b> Each apprenticeship in Scotland is underpinned by a Framework which specifies what the apprentice must do to complete the apprenticeship. All apprenticeships in Scotland share a number of key features. They require apprentices to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combine experience in the workplace with a period of study</li> <li>• successfully complete one or more qualification as specified in the Apprenticeship Framework</li> </ul> <p>Successful completion of the apprenticeship leads to the award of the individual qualifications in the Framework and an overall Apprenticeship certificate.</p>	
Type & SCQF Level	Key features
<p>Foundation Apprenticeships</p> <p>SCQF Level 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed for students in the senior phase of school taking National 5 or Higher qualifications</li> <li>• Delivered in partnership with employers and learning providers</li> <li>• Designed to introduce apprentices to the world of work and to support transition into either employment or further study.</li> <li>• Requires students to undertake work experience.</li> <li>• Students usually complete a National Certificate and selected SVQ Units in the specified occupational area</li> <li>• Currently available in 12 subject areas.</li> </ul>
<p>Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)</p> <p>Various (SCQF Levels 5-7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of a suite of Apprenticeships sitting in the suite of National Training Programmes managed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scotland's national skills agency.</li> <li>• Designed for apprentices entering the workplace (although employers may use MAs to upskill existing staff)</li> <li>• Modern Apprentices normally complete a relevant SVQ or alternative competence-based qualification (CBQ) and additional qualifications as required by the relevant Framework</li> <li>• Apprentices must be employed in the role relevant to their apprenticeship</li> <li>• Delivered in partnership between employers and learning providers</li> <li>• Public funding available as a contribution towards the cost of training the apprentice.</li> <li>• Apprentices combine work with study: some may attend a learning provider centre whilst others learn entirely in the workplace</li> <li>• MAs generally take between 1 year and 4 years to complete, depending on the occupational area</li> <li>• Designed to ensure that the individual is competent in the occupational area of their apprenticeship</li> <li>• More than 80 MA Frameworks now in use</li> </ul>

<p>Technical Apprenticeships SCQF Levels 8-9</p> <p>Professional Apprenticeships SCQF Levels 10+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like MAS, Technical and Professional Apprenticeships are part of the suite of National Training Programmes.</li> <li>• Designed primarily to upskill existing staff</li> <li>• The core qualifications included in Technical and Professional Apprenticeships can be: SVQs, CBQs, HNDs, Professional Qualifications and any other qualifications informed by current National Occupational Standards (NOS) at SCQF Level 8 and above</li> <li>• Also include career skills, which are pan-sector units on the SCQF</li> </ul>
<p>Higher Apprenticeships SCQF Level 8</p> <p>Graduate Apprenticeships SCQF Levels 9-11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed for apprentices entering a role requiring higher-level skills.</li> <li>• Apprentices must be employed in a role relevant to their apprenticeship: These apprenticeships are funded by the employer</li> <li>• Delivered in partnership between employers and colleges and/or universities</li> <li>• Apprentices combine work and study over the length of their qualification</li> <li>• Designed to ensure that the individual has developed higher-level knowledge, skills and competence in a professional area</li> <li>• Currently available in 12 subject areas</li> </ul>

### **Quality assurance**

51. Frameworks for Foundation, Modern, Technical and Professional Apprenticeships (Apprenticeship Frameworks) are developed by Sector Skills Councils and other standards-setting organisations, in consultation with employers and education providers. They must provide evidence of need for any new Apprenticeship Framework, demonstrating how the Framework is addressing an economic and skills need. Justification is needed for qualifications selected for inclusion in the Apprenticeship
52. Framework and potential progression routes for apprentices who complete the Framework must be identified.
53. All Modern, Technical and Professional Apprenticeship Frameworks are submitted to The Modern Apprenticeship Group (MAG) for approval. This is an independent group which draws its authority from the Scottish Government. Members of the group include representatives from key stakeholders involved in the management and delivery of these Apprenticeship programmes in Scotland.
54. Higher and Graduate Apprenticeships are a relatively new addition to the apprenticeship family and are approved by SDS in conjunction with Technical Expert Groups. However, there is work underway to change the remit of MAG into an Apprenticeship Approval Group which will encompass the entire apprenticeship family and provide a consistent and coherent approach to approval of all apprenticeships..

55. In addition to the SDS requirements, the organisations providing Apprenticeship programmes based on these Frameworks must also be approved by the awarding bodies responsible for the qualifications within the relevant Framework(s). As most Frameworks include an SVQ, most providers must be approved by the relevant awarding body for the delivery of the qualification. In the majority of cases, the awarding body is SQA. In cases where the Framework includes a number of different qualifications, providers may need to seek approval from a number of different awarding bodies.

56. Once Frameworks are approved, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the national skills body, is responsible for the overall quality assurance monitoring of the system of Foundation Modern, Technical and Professional Apprenticeships. This includes ensuring that the colleges, private training providers and employer organisations who deliver Modern Apprenticeship training programmes meet national quality assurance standards for national training programmes<sup>17</sup>.

57. Graduate Apprenticeships are delivered by the universities which offer them, in partnership with SDS and some colleges.

f) Qualifications for work-based and wider learning

58. The development of the SCQF was always intended to allow for the inclusion of a wide range of qualifications on the Framework, and there has been a significant increase in the number of employers and other organisations seeking to have SCQF level and credit points allocated to their qualifications. The benefits of this are seen in the potential to integrate work-related learning into the mainstream system. This reflects a growing market for this type of recognition in Scotland. Now that the SCQF is fully functional and embedded and there are examples of where non mainstream qualifications have been recognised this has encouraged a range of qualification owners – in business, in trade associations and trade unions, in social agencies to consider having their qualifications credit rated onto the SCQF. The SCQF Partnership delivers free workshops for this – around 8 per year and these are always well attended.

59. Both private sector and public sector employers have developed significant qualifications, and a clear route is available to them for inclusion of those qualifications on the SCQF through the process of credit rating. This is expanded on in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 4.

g) The influence of the learning landscape

60. As the information above demonstrates, a number of aspects of the learning landscape in Scotland have influenced how Scotland has approached the development, implementation and use of the SCQF. Some of the key features are:

- the absence of statutory requirements for most types of qualifications

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<sup>17</sup> *Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework for Modern Apprenticeships and Employability 2018:*  
<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44493/qualityassuranceplusimprovement-frameworkfinal-apr18.pdf>

- the delegation of responsibility and authority for qualifications systems to a range of agencies
  - a focus on transition and interaction between different learning contexts (e.g. National Qualifications being offered in colleges as well as schools; articulation agreements between colleges and HEIs; a sharing of responsibility for apprenticeships between employers and learning providers).
61. These factors, along with a social and political context which values and expects collaboration between agencies and organisations to support the delivery of public services, combined to create an environment in which the SCQF was able to develop its defining features. This development is described below.

#### 4. Establishing the SCQF

62. The SCQF was created on the basis of reforms in education and training which began in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1990s, leading to a situation where the mainstream qualifications were outcomes-based, made up of credit-bearing units, and subject to criterion referenced assessment. The SCQF was intended to consolidate, rather than initiate, these reforms.
63. The SCQF was established by informal cooperation between the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals, QAA Scotland, the Scottish Executive (Departments of Education, and Enterprise and Lifelong Learning) and SQA. It is an integrating framework and was constructed by bringing together existing hierarchical frameworks of general, academic, technical, vocational and professional qualifications rather than creating new levels and new categories of qualification. This meant that, in developing the SCQF, the levels were based on mainstream and well-known qualifications and the known and tested links between them. Bringing together previously-developed frameworks provided scope for the addition of further qualifications used in Scotland.
64. The original frameworks included in the SCQF are for:
- National and Higher National Qualifications – the Units and Group Awards awarded by SQA under the overall direction of the Scottish Government
  - the qualifications of universities and other HEIs in Scotland (These are now set out in *The Framework For Qualifications Of Higher Education Institutions In Scotland*, published by QAA Scotland in 2014)
  - Scottish Vocational Qualifications – the work-based qualifications based on National Occupational Standards developed by government-sponsored Sector Skills Councils and accredited by SQA Accreditation.
65. The SCQF was always intended to be an enabling, rather than regulatory, Framework. The partner organisations worked together to create a Framework which could describe the relationship between the different types of pre-existing qualifications, and enable new provision to be added. The intention was to create a tool which could be used to describe the national learning landscape of approved quality-assured qualifications, whilst ensuring that each agency or organisation retained ownership over their own qualifications. The result was a 12-level Framework which was intended to cover all aspects of lifelong learning and achievement, including levels lower than

expected by mainstream National Qualifications. At these levels the emphasis is placed on the learning which takes place as a result of learners' participation in, and the experience of, situations as well as the carrying out of basic tasks. The inclusion of these lower levels allows the SCQF to be an inclusive National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for all learners including those who may not have been successful in mainstream education. An example of this type of qualification is provided below.

**Figure 9: Using the SCQF to promote inclusion**

**Adult Achievement Award at SCQF Level 2**

Developed by one of Scotland's Colleges in partnership with SCQF Partnership, Adult Achievement Awards are part of the CLD learning landscape. They are designed to provide formal recognition of an individual's ability to recognise, describe and analyse their own learning experiences, and to plan how to build on that learning. Importantly, any type of learning experience can be included. The first groups of Adult Achievement Awards at SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 6 were launched in 2015. In 2018, the Adult Achievement Award at SCQF Level 2 is being developed. Designed primarily for groups of learners with learning disabilities who may have little or no access to mainstream qualifications, this qualification supports assessment in line with the SCQF Level 2 requirements. Assessment focuses on the individual's ability to talk about their learning in response to prompt questions, and to repeat what they have learned to do.

66. Each of the original frameworks remains visible on the SCQF diagram (Figure 2). Each has its own types of qualification and its own quality assurance arrangements. However, all are now integrated into the SCQF, sharing the same levels, level descriptors and system of credit points. A more detailed explanation of the main types of qualification in each of these areas of the SCQF is given in Annex 3: *Qualifications on the SCQF*.
67. The SCQF was intended to allow for the addition of other qualifications beyond the three mainstream frameworks. From the outset, it was intended that any learning in Scotland at any level could be entered onto the Framework, provided that it is outcome-based, requires at least 10 notional hours of learning, and is subject to assessment which is externally quality assured. The intention of making the SCQF more inclusive has been steadily realised. At the time of writing, there are approximately 11,500 qualifications on the SCQF Database. Of these, almost 1,000 sit beyond mainstream provision, thus widening the relevance and usefulness of the Framework to different groups of stakeholders in Scotland.
68. The SCQF was formally launched in 2001, and in 2006 the SCQF Partnership was formed to create a strong governance structure for the Framework. The SCQF Partnership includes two of the original partner organisations involved in the development of the Framework (SQA and QAA Scotland) and two additional partner

organisations (College Development Network and Universities Scotland). The legal status, remit and role of each partner organisation and the SCQF Partnership as a whole is described in greater detail in Section B of this report, in the response to EQF Criterion 1.

69. Importantly, although the Scottish Government was one of the original partners in the development of the Framework, this is no longer the case. The SCQF Partnership can operate independent of Government, although the Scottish Government retains very close links with the Framework, is a founder of the SCQF Partnership and attends Board meetings in an Observer role. The relationship between the SCQF Partnership and Scottish Government is described in greater detail in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 1.

## **Section B: Addressing the EQF Referencing Criteria**

The following section details how the SCQF meets the 10 criteria for referencing contained in Annex 3 of the Council Recommendation of May 2017<sup>18</sup>.

Criterion 1:

**The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Co-ordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.**

1. The body with ultimate responsibility for the SCQF is the SCQF Partnership. As part of this remit, the SCQF Partnership is the EQF National Co-ordination Point for Scotland. It works closely with the other Co-ordination Points in the UK: The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation for England; the accreditation division of The Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment for Northern Ireland; and Colegau Cymru/Colleges for Wales.
2. Established in 2006, the SCQF Partnership is a company limited by guarantee<sup>19</sup>. This means that it has corporate status and can contract for services in relation to the development and maintenance of the SCQF. The SCQF Partnership is also a charity, which gives it certain legal rights and obligations. It is not a government agency or a public body of the Scottish Government.<sup>20</sup> Although it has no direct role in the

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<sup>18</sup> Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning;

<sup>19</sup> A Company Limited by Guarantee is a type of company that does not have a share capital or shareholders and is usually formed to manage a charity or not-for-profit organisation. These companies have guarantors (or trustees) with limited liability status in the event of winding up the company. All companies limited by guarantee must register with and meet the requirements of Companies House, the UK's official registrar of companies. For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/companies-house-guidance-for-limited-companies-partnerships-and-other-company-types-accountants>

<sup>20</sup> Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) of the Scottish Government are organisations that are funded by the Scottish Government. They may be executive or advisory in nature. These bodies are not considered to be part of the Government. NDPBs carry out administrative, commercial, executive or regulatory functions on behalf of Government. Although Ministers are responsible for the strategic direction of NDPBs, these organisations are not under direct Ministerial control and are not staffed by civil servants. For more information see <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/public-bodies-in-scotland-guide/>



functioning of the SCQF, the Scottish Government provides much of the funding for the SCQF Partnership's activities. A proportion of funding also comes from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the SCQF Partnership will regularly report on progress towards objectives to them.

3. The SCQF Partnership's status as a company places it under a number of legal obligations under the Companies Act (2006). The Partnership must, for example, practise clear and credible company decision-making processes; provide good quality and timely information about the Partnership's work and about the SCQF; ensure that appropriate lines of communication are maintained between the company and its stakeholders; and take due account of any strategies, policies or recommendations emerging from these communications.
4. As described in Section A of this report, the SCQF Partnership comprises four partner organisations: the College Development Network (CDN); the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education QAA); the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA); and Universities Scotland. The Partnership is managed by a Board composed of one senior representative of each partner organisation, with a Chair who is independent of the interests of these bodies. Each organisation has a single voting right. The Board can co-opt two other members to represent users of the SCQF, but these members do not have voting rights nor does the Chair. Currently, the two co-opted members are an individual representing employers and the Chair of the SCQF Quality Committee. In addition, Scottish Government has Observer status. The legal status and main areas of responsibility of the individual partner organisations are summarised below. Further details about the relationship between the SCQF Partnership and Scottish Government are given in paragraphs 8 and 9 below.

### Figure 10: The SCQF Partnership - Partner Organisations

- **The College Development Network (CDN)**

The College Development Network was established as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It was established to lead, create and share best practice across Scotland's college sector. It does this by providing advice, guidance and continuing professional development activities relating to curriculum & teaching, innovation & partnership working and leadership & governance. It supports the development and shared understanding of best practice in quality assurance through its Quality Development Network and associated workshops and events. With a similar legal status to the SCQF Partnership, CDN is required to meet the legal obligations established under the Companies Act (2006).

- **The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland (QAA Scotland)**

QAA Scotland is part of the UK-wide Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK higher

education. QAA is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. QAA Scotland has devolved responsibilities for the work of QAA in Scotland. Much of its work relates to the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) which has been developed since 2003 under the guidance of the Universities' Quality Working Group. QAA Scotland undertakes a broad range of review and enhancement activity aimed at supporting the quality assurance and enhancement of higher education in Scotland. QAA Scotland is a member of the European Quality Audit Network.

- **The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**

SQA is an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) of the Scottish Government. The organisation's responsibilities are laid out on the Education (Scotland) Act (1996), as amended by the Scottish Qualifications Authority Act (2002). The work of the SQA is subject to scrutiny by the Scottish Government's Education and Skills Committee.

- **Universities Scotland**

Universities Scotland is an unincorporated membership body and a registered charity. It is the representative body of Scotland's 19 HEIs. The organisation works with Principals and other senior staff in HEIs to develop funding and policy positions for the sector, and to campaign on issues relevant to higher education.

5. The SCQF Partnership model, which reflects Scotland's ethos and tradition of partnership and collaborative working across public sector areas, has a number of advantages. The SCQF Partnership has limited resources and relies on collaborative working to achieve its aims. The partners, all of whom share the common goal of wishing to see the Framework succeed, make many contributions in kind. They use their own resources to support the Framework and undertake activities which promote it<sup>21</sup>.

### **The SCQF Partnership: Remit and Committee Structures**

6. The SCQF Partnership is responsible for ensuring that the quality and integrity of the SCQF is maintained at all times and that the benefits of using the Framework are fully promoted to all stakeholders across Scotland and beyond. Its published aims within this mission are to:
  - ensure that, where appropriate, all assessed learning and qualifications in Scotland are included on the Framework;
  - extend the recognition of informal and non-formal learning;
  - develop and promote the Framework as a Lifelong Learning tool;

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<sup>21</sup> As an example of this, was involvement in the development of the Curriculum for Excellence. The SCQF Partnership was able to depend on the presence of members of the Partnership Board to represent the perspective of the SCQF on the Curriculum for Excellence Board.



- develop relationships with other frameworks internationally, including with the EQF.
7. The work of the SCQF Partnership and its Board is informed by two key groups.
- The **SCQF Quality Committee** was established by the SCQF Partnership Board to provide it with recommendations on all issues concerning the ongoing maintenance and quality assurance of the Framework and its relationship to other Frameworks. The Quality Committee comprises around 15 experts in the development and quality assurance of credit, qualifications and frameworks from a range of sectors, and awarding and quality assurance bodies associated with the SCQF. The Chair of the Quality Committee is nominated by the Board. The Committee meets four times a year. It reports to the SCQF Board on applications from organisations seeking approval to become SCQF CRBs, and manages the monitoring and review of CRBs already approved by the SCQF Partnership. This Committee also has a responsibility for any formal referencing of the SCQF to other Qualifications Frameworks.
  - The **SCQF Forum** is a national committee of key organisations with responsibility for providing or supporting education and training in Scotland. It was established to advise the SCQF Partnership on the continuing development and maintenance of the SCQF. Forum members are senior representatives from 24 organisations representing the main providers, users and funders of qualifications in Scotland. The Forum meets twice per year and is chaired by the Chief Executive officer of the SCQF Partnership. The Forum enables key organisations, and the sectors they represent, to work together to make full use of the SCQF in meeting needs for access and participation in lifelong learning. Forum members also engage in wider debate about the use of the SCQF as a tool to underpin, support and influence Scottish lifelong learning policies.

### **Relationship with the Scottish Government**

8. As highlighted in Section A, the Scottish Government (then the Scottish Executive) was a partner in the initial development of the SCQF. However, as noted above, the SCQF Partnership is an independent company and is not legally accountable to the Scottish Government for its activities. However, the Scottish Government has a strong interest in the success of the SCQF: it is a key reference point for a number of the performance measures included in the Government's National Performance Framework (NPF)<sup>22</sup>, and it provides support within a number of policy initiatives. The SCQF also serves as a main reference point within key Government strategies and reviews, including *Developing the Young Workforce*<sup>23</sup>, the 7-year strategy for preparing children and young people for the world of work, and *15-24 Learner Journey*<sup>24</sup>, a strategic review of

<sup>22</sup> The NPF is the Scottish Government's performance management tool. It lists the outcomes against which progress and improvement in public services are measured. Those with direct relevance to the SCQF include measures relating to educational attainment, skills utilisation, skills shortages, and access to learning in the workplace.

<sup>23</sup> *Developing the Young Workforce* information available at [https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20\(DYW\)](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20(DYW))

<sup>24</sup> *15-25 Learner Journey* information available at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/learner-journey-analysis-scottish-education-training-provision-15-24-year/>

education and training for young people aged 15 to 24. As a result, the Scottish Government provides funding for a range of initiatives and projects which are managed by or involve the SCQFP. An example of a current national project is described in Figure 11.

9. As a result of these close links, the Scottish Government is represented on the Steering Groups of those projects and initiatives in which it has an interest. The Scottish Government also retains Observer status on the Board of the SCQF Partnership.

**Figure 11: Example of a current national partnership project**

**Skills Recognition and Accreditation for the Common Good**

In 2018, the Scottish Government published *New Scots: Refugee Integration 2018-2022 Strategy*. This strategy includes the commitment to establishing a model for a recognition and accreditation process to identify the prior qualifications, skills and learning of refugees in Scotland, and to develop sector specific employment pathways for them. To achieve this aim, the Scottish Government is funding **Skills Recognition and Accreditation for the Common Good**, a project which will develop and pilot a recognition and accreditation model. A key requirement for the model is that it reflects the principles of the SCQF. The project involves a wide range of partners from the education and employment sectors, with a Steering Group chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the SCQF Partnership. The pilot project is being developed in partnership between Glasgow Caledonian University and Bridges Programmes, a CLD organisation. The Steering Group includes representatives from Scottish Government, SDS, SFC, SQA, the Local Government authority, Glasgow City College, and the Scottish Refugee Council.

**Criterion 2**

**There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.**

10. The SCQF level descriptors were revised in 2012 following a year-long consultation exercise with stakeholders<sup>25</sup>. The revisions were not intended to change the levels of the SCQF. Rather, they aimed to clarify some of the wording of the descriptors, in order to make the descriptors easier to understand and use. The revised SCQF Level Descriptors were tested by checking them against a sample of previously credit rated qualifications to ensure that the changes did not impact on the initial allocation of SCQF level. In addition, the referencing of SCQF levels to the EQF that was carried out in 2010 was revisited to ensure that there had been no impact on the original referencing decisions. The minor changes that resulted to the SCQF level descriptors did not

<sup>25</sup> The SCQF Level Descriptors are included in Annex 4.

impact on the original EQF/SCQF referencing decisions, and stakeholders declared themselves broadly satisfied with the revised SCQF level descriptors. This exercise was repeated during the 2018 referencing process using the revised descriptors (included in Annex 4).

11. As shown in Figure 2, the SCQF is a 12-level Framework. Each level is defined by a set of descriptors, with each descriptor defining the level in 5 domains, known as 'characteristics'. The 5 characteristics are:
  - knowledge and understanding
  - practice: applied knowledge, skills and understanding
  - generic cognitive skills
  - communication, numeracy and ICT skills
  - autonomy, accountability and working with others
12. The referencing of the SCQF levels to the EQF level descriptors is made complex by a number of important differences in the structures of the frameworks:
  - the difference in the number of levels (SCQF's 12 to EQF's 8)
  - the differences in the number of categories of characteristics (5 in the SCQF compared to 3 in the EQF)
  - the inclusion of more contextualised information in the SCQF descriptors
  - the inclusion on the SCQF of levels sitting below EQF Level 1.
13. The level to level referencing was reviewed using a 'best fit' approach in order to assess whether the original referencing outcomes as in 2010 were still applicable. This approach involved a number of activities:
  - SCQF Partnership commissioned a new linguistic analysis in 2015, comparing the text of the 2012 SCQF level descriptors to that of each of the components in the EQF level descriptors. The outputs of this analysis are included in Annex 5.
  - a comparison between the outputs of this referencing activity and the referencing between the SCQF and the Framework for the Qualifications of the Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)
  - further consideration of the recommendations from the activities above was provided by the stakeholders represented on the SCQF EQF Referencing Steering Group. The membership and terms of reference for this group are included in Annex 1.
14. The results of this approach were described using three categories to describe the level of the match between the SCQF levels and the EQF level descriptors:
  - High where there is direct evidence of a match between the levels identified. This may be due to the use of the same language, or language items that can be interpreted to have the same, or close, meaning.
  - Moderate: there is sufficient evidence to suggest a match.
  - No match: where there is little or no evidence to suggest a match.

15. The linguistic analysis resulted in the recommendation that the referencing of SCQF level to EQF levels remains the same as in the first referencing report of 2010. This level-to-level referencing, and the strength of the match at each level, is shown below.

**Figure 12: EQF:SCQF level to level referencing**

EQF Level	SCQF Level	Strength of match
8	12	Good match
7	11	Good match
6	10	Good match
6	9	Good match
5	8	Good match
5	7	Best fit
4	6	Good match
3	5	Good match
2	4	Best fit
1	3	Best fit
No match	2	No match
No match	1	No match

16. As the table shows, there are no EQF descriptors which match SCQF levels 1 and 2. It should be noted that these levels are very important to the SCQF and are the levels where learners tend to be the most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market. In the original referencing in 2010 the feeling in Scotland was so strong that it was highlighted to the European Commission that there was disappointment that the EQF started only at a level comparable with SCQF Level 3. That feeling still exists and Scotland is very proud of its ability to recognize learning at SCQF levels 1 and 2. There is a good match between the SCQF and EQF at SCQF levels 9-12. These SCQF levels also correspond to the first, second and third cycles of the QF-EHEA. All other levels are also a good match, with the exception of SCQF levels 3, 4 and 7 where there is a best fit.
17. The recommendations of the linguistic analysis were sense checked through comparison with indirect evidence from recent SCQF referencing activities with other countries such as Hong Kong (HKQF).
18. The SCQF provides the levels for the Framework for Qualifications of the Higher Education Institutes of Scotland (FQ-HEIS). This Framework is integrated into the SCQF and is referenced to the QF-EHEA<sup>26</sup>. The latter framework is aligned with the EQF. Comparing the referencing, we find the following:

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<sup>26</sup> Details contained in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards* p.17

**Figure 13: SCQF levels referenced to the QF-EHEA in 2010**

FQ-HEIS	QF-EHEA	EQF
SCQF 12	Third Cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	EQF 8
SCQF 11	Second Cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	EQF 7
SCQF 10	First Cycle (end of cycle) qualifications	EQF 6
SCQF 9		
SCQF 8	Short cycle qualifications (within or linked to the first cycle qualifications)	EQF 5
SCQF 7		

19. As Figure 13 demonstrates, SCQF levels 8, 10, 11 and 12 are referenced directly to the cycles of the QF-EHEA. SCQF levels 7 and 9 sit at the bottom end of the Short Cycle and First Cycle respectively. This aligns with the referencing of these levels to EQF 5 and EQF 6 respectively.
20. The recommended referencing of the SCQF to the EQF was scrutinised by the SCQF EQF Referencing Steering Group, the SCQF Quality Committee and the SCQF Board, all of whom confirmed that the level-to-level referencing outcomes shown in Figure 12 provided an accurate referencing of the SCQF levels to the EQF and reflected the original referencing outcomes in 2010.

### Criterion 3

**The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.**

#### **The SCQF and Learning Outcomes**

21. The SCQF has 12 levels defined by level descriptors which describe outcomes of learning in five areas known as “characteristics”. The current level descriptors are set out in Annex 4. Any qualification on the SCQF must be based on a clear set of learning outcomes and these outcomes must be referenced to the relevant characteristics of the SCQF level descriptors at the appropriate level.
22. Learning outcomes are the central feature of all qualifications on the SCQF, and provide a common approach across all learning sectors to express and measure learning achievements within qualifications. As described in Section A, learning outcomes were being used in the design of these qualifications long before the creation of the SCQF, with the change from input to output as the basis for the assessment and awarding qualifications starting in the 1980s. As a result, the concept of learning outcomes is strongly embedded in the Scottish learning landscape.

23. As was also described in Section A, the SCQF was created by bringing together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework. Since 2010, many of these qualifications have changed and other types of qualification have been added to the framework. These changes and additions have strengthened the commitment of the SCQF and its users to learning outcomes as a basis for the national system. Examples of the advice given by the SCQF Partnership on writing learning outcomes is given in Figure 14 below and details of the qualifications currently on the SCQF are described in Annex 3.

### Figure 14: Writing learning outcomes

#### **Using Learning Outcomes in Course Design and Development<sup>27</sup>**

*Using learning outcomes in course design and development leads to a learner-centred approach so that the focus is on the outcome of the learning rather than the input or teaching process.*

#### Learning outcomes can:

- Help to guide learners in their learning by:
  - explaining what is expected of them;
  - describing the level of learning anticipated; and
  - providing clear information to support learning progression and recognition of prior learning.
- Provide information to potential learners and employers about the knowledge and skills that they will have on successfully completing a particular qualification or learning programme.
- Help staff to:
  - design the content of a qualification
  - focus on exactly what they want students to achieve in terms of both knowledge and skills;
  - show the connection between the programme aims and the learner outcomes;
  - decide on appropriate assessment criteria and methods.

#### Typically, learning outcomes should:

- be written in the future tense;
- use active verbs to describe what the learner will be able to do and to enable the learner to show their knowledge and understanding;
- avoid using verbs whose meaning is ambiguous;
- describe the final output or achievement for the learner;
- use clear language that is easily understood by learners and non-experts;
- be informed by the SCQF Levels and level descriptors;
- be achievable as a result of the learning activity;
- be able to be assessed
- be specific.

<sup>27</sup> From *SCQF Credit Rating: Criteria Explained*. SCQF Partnership. 2017



### **The SCQF credit system**

24. All qualifications on the SCQF have a level and a credit value (with the exception of Research Degrees which do not have a credit value). SCQF credit points are used to quantify learning, based on the achievement of outcomes. They indicate the time it takes a typical learner to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification.
25. One SCQF credit point represents a notional 10 hours of learning and only whole credit points can be awarded. One is also the minimum number of credit points which can be allocated to qualification. Credit points are allocated at a level in the Framework – e.g. “120 SCQF credit points at level 7”. A full year of formal learning normally results in the award of 120 points. It is important to note that credit is allocated independent of level with the result that an SCQF qualification at a relatively low level can carry a considerable number of credit points, and one at a high level may have few credit points. For example, the SVQ in Estates Maintenance at SCQF Level 5 carries 120 credit points whilst the Professional Development Award in Strategic Leadership at SCQF Level 11 carries 24 credit points. Along with the level descriptors, credit points allow learners, learning providers and employers to compare different qualifications at the same or different levels.
26. Notional learning hours must reflect the time spent on all of the activities relating to the qualification. They are calculated by those with experience and knowledge of the discipline, field of study, profession, trade or area of skill who are familiar with the SCQF. These experts must make a professional judgement on how many hours it would take a typical learner to achieve the learning outcomes.
27. Notional learning hours include all the learning activities required to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification. This can include: formal activities that involve teaching and tutor contact time; self-directed activities that involve study, research, applied learning, developing practice, reflection and review; informal learning and assessment activities that involve planning and completing assessment tasks. The mix of learning activities will vary between qualifications according to the outcomes and level. Some outcomes require a lot of formal learning, some outcomes will require a lot of independent study, and for some outcomes most of the learning will be based on practice.
28. The SCQF Partnership fully supports and promotes the use of the two European credit systems – ECVET (as a mobility tool) and ECTS, but does not use either of them in the architecture of the SCQF. In principle, SCQF credit points can be converted to ECTS credits by halving the value of the SCQF credit points.

### **Principles for credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**

29. The EQF and national qualifications frameworks or systems, by using the learning outcomes approach, should better support individuals when moving (i) between various levels of education and training; (ii) within and between sectors of education and training; (iii) between education and training and the labour market; and (iv) within and across borders. Without prejudice to national decisions to (i) make use of credit



systems; and (ii) relate them to national qualifications frameworks or systems, different credit systems, where appropriate, should work together with national qualifications frameworks or systems to support transitions and facilitate progression. All of the EQF principles on credit systems specified in Annex V of the EU Recommendation are clearly reflected in the 25 SCQF Principles and associated guidance contained in the SCQF Handbook. Figure 15 below demonstrates these links.

**Figure 15: EQF credit principles reflected in SCQF principles**

EQF Principles on credit systems	SCQF Principles and guidance
Credit systems should support flexible learning pathways, for the benefit of individual learners.	<p><b>Principle 21</b> - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is given for learning, not for experience alone.</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b> Learning is often derived from a person's experiences, which might be positive or negative. It is the content, currency and amount of learning that a learner has which is subject to recognition, not the experiences themselves (these are simply the medium through which learning is acquired).</p> <p>There is no restriction on the type of experience that can provide someone with knowledge and skills – even negative experiences might have led someone to learn something about themselves. RPL is about recognising that all experiences can provide a basis for learning</p>
When designing and developing qualifications, the learning outcomes approach should be systematically used to facilitate the transfer of (components of) qualifications and progression in learning.	<p><b>Principle 20</b> - The design and development of qualifications and learning programmes for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework should facilitate and promote credit recognition for prior informal and non-formal learning and credit transfer</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b> For learners to gain maximum benefit from the SCQF, it is important that educational institutions develop and implement Credit Transfer and RPL policies and procedures. This will help learners by allowing for the transfer of their credit points along with the ability to have their prior learning recognised so that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minimise any duplication of learning, and</li> <li>• develop their full personal, social and educational potential.</li> </ul>

	<p>The design of qualifications/learning programmes for the SCQF should make the Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer as straightforward as possible to implement. This means writing clear learning outcomes and assessment and having a clear and consistent structure for the qualification/learning programme.</p>
<p>Credit systems should facilitate the transfer of learning outcomes and progression of learners across institutional and national borders</p>	<p><b>Principle 24</b> - The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b> An organisation making judgements about RPL and Credit Transfer should use the same types of quality assurance systems as it does for any other type of formal assessment for example internal and external moderation/verification, appeals etc. The organisation should also consider a policy of any limits of credit awarded within a programme of learning, double counting of credit and implications for grading etc. and these should be consistently applied and available to learners</p> <p><b>Principle 22</b> - SCQF Credit Points awarded as a result of RPL for informal or non-formal learning are of the same value as credit gained through formal learning.</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b> Credit points are fundamental to the SCQF because they are the building blocks for Credit Transfer. They provide a way of quantifying the amount of learning achieved and they symbolise the amount of time taken to complete a unit/module or qualification/learning programme.</p> <p>The principle of transferability of SCQF Credit Points can help learners gain access to different forms of education, give them advanced standing/entry into a course (for example allowing them directly into the second or third year of a related degree programme instead of the first year) and supports both flexibility and progression.</p>

	<p>SCQF credit points are a means to quantify the learning that has been achieved, regardless of the context in which that learning was achieved. So, credit awarded through RPL should be regarded in the same way as credit awarded through other learning and assessment processes.</p>
<p>Credit systems should be underpinned by explicit and transparent quality assurance</p>	<p><b>Principle 23</b> - RPL for the award of SCQF Credit Points must involve a formal assessment or acceptance of evidence of learning which is quality assured.</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b> Whether someone is having prior learning assessed for Credit Transfer purposes or other purposes relating to RPL, there must be some form of judgement involved. In relation to Credit Transfer, a formal judgement (that is, it is recorded in some way) is made of how much specific credit for prior learning can be awarded in the context concerned. This may include a judgement made on acceptance of all or part of the SCQF credit points associated with previously formally assessed learning programmes or qualifications. Individual institutions should have their own regulations in place on this.</p> <p>For other forms of RPL, (such as recognition of experiential learning) a judgement is made of the content of materials provided by the learner as evidence of their prior learning. Regardless of how credit is awarded, a learner needs to provide evidence of his/her learning and the evidence needs to be assessed and quality assured by qualified practitioners.</p> <p><b>Principle 25</b> - The process of monitoring and reviewing the operation of RPL procedures, including those for Credit Transfer, should be clearly defined and integrated within the existing quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms of the organisation.</p>

	<p><b>Additional Guidance from Handbook</b></p> <p>Before setting up systems for RPL to operate in practice an organisation should set out the organisation's policy position on RPL. Some institutions have a policy statement which gives information about what the institution's position is on RPL/Credit Transfer. Some organisations create a policy and procedures document which can be given out to staff and to learners. Ultimately it is the organisation's decision regarding what goes into the policy and procedures document.</p> <p>It is recommended that any policies and procedures emerge from, or are integrated into, quality assurance systems which are already in place in the organisation. As good practice, the organisation should have in place policies which indicate how the processes of RPL and Credit Transfer are regularly monitored and reviewed. This monitoring and review should be a formal process which records the outcomes and rationale for any changes.</p>
The credit acquired by an individual should be documented, expressing the acquired learning outcomes, the name of the competent credit awarding institution and, where relevant, the related credit value.	<p><b>Principle 24</b> - The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.</p> <p><b>Additional Guidance – see above</b></p> <p><b>Principle 10</b> - Where assessment leads to the award of SCQF credit points then the certificates issued to learners must include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the title of the qualification/learning programme;</li> <li>• the total number of SCQF credit points awarded on completion;</li> <li>• the SCQF level of the qualification/learning programme achieved;</li> <li>• the SCQF logo;</li> <li>• the name of the CRB.</li> </ul>
Systems for credit transfer and accumulation should seek synergies with arrangements for validation of prior	<p><b>Principle 24</b> - The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the</p>

learning, working together to facilitate and promote transfer and progression.	normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.  <b>Additional Guidance – see above</b>
Credit systems should be developed and improved through cooperation between stakeholders at the appropriate national and Union levels.	<b>Principle 20</b> - The design and development of qualifications and learning programmes for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework should facilitate and promote credit recognition for prior informal and non-formal learning and credit transfer  <b>Additional Guidance – see above</b>

### **Credit accumulation**

30. When qualifications are credit rated, the credit that is allocated is known as 'general credit'. The number of credits allocated reflects the number of notional learning hours that will be required to meet the learning outcomes. All mainstream qualifications have been awarded general credit points. In some cases it may be possible to transfer general credit from one qualification into another. Depending on the requirements of the programme, it may be possible to transfer some or all of the general credit points. The credit that is imported to another programme is referred to as 'specific credit'.
31. Awarding bodies may develop a number of qualifications which share one or more units or modules. For example, a number of qualifications for healthcare staff may share a single unit or module on health and safety. If a candidate completes the unit or module successfully within one qualification then decides to complete a second qualification offered by the same awarding body and containing the same unit/module, then the general credit value of the unit or module will automatically count towards both qualifications through a system of credit accumulation.

### **Credit transfer**

32. In some cases, SCQF credit can be transferred from one qualification into another where two awarding bodies are involved. This will ensure that a learner can move from one qualification to another without having to repeat any assessed and certificated learning. In all cases of credit transfer, the receiving institution, or the awarding body for the second qualification, will decide how many credit points can be transferred from the first qualification. As a result, the transfer value of a qualification can vary. In some cases credits previously awarded can be used to gain exemptions from parts of the new qualification. Figure 16 provides an example of credit transfer in the Scottish system.

## Figure 16: Credit transfer in action

### Articulation

'Articulation' is one of the most commonly used routes of credit transfer. It enables learners who hold SQA's Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Diploma (HND) qualifications to transfer directly into the second or third year of a degree programme. This transfer of full credit is known as gaining 'advanced standing'. The acceptance of the full credit for transfer from HNCs and HNDs to degree programmes will depend on a number of considerations including the matches of subject matter between the HNC/D and the target degree programmes. Decisions on the amount of credit that can be accepted for transfer rests with the receiving HEI institution.

Articulation routes are well established. HNC and HND qualifications, which sit at SCQF Levels 7 and 8 respectively, are higher education short-cycle programmes intended to develop advanced level knowledge and skills for industry. They are considered to be stages within the First Cycle of tertiary level qualifications in the Bologna/European Higher Education Area Framework.

In 2013-14 (the last year for which statistics are available), 49% of all learners completing HNC/D qualifications articulated into the second or third year of degree programmes. However, as mentioned above, the number of credit points which can be transferred from one qualification to another is determined by the receiving institution, and many learners have discovered that they cannot transfer the full credit value of their HNC/HND to their corresponding degree programme.

The issue of full credit transfer is being addressed by the Scottish Funding Council in their strategy for widening access to higher education, through the mechanism of Outcome Agreements. By including requirements for articulation in the funding agreements with the individual institutions, the SFC aims to increase the number of learners articulating into degree programmes with advanced standing to 75% of HNC/D students by 2025.

### **Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) including the validation of non-formal and informal learning**

33. Although RPL was introduced into the Scottish system in the early 1990s, developments associated with the EQF and other frameworks around the world have given the SCQF Partnership and other influential agencies in Scotland reason to look again at RPL and validation of non-formal and informal learning processes to increase their use and effectiveness and to draw the attention of individual learners to the possibilities they offer.

34. The *SCQF Handbook* defines RPL as:

*'the process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.'*

This definition, encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning, reflects the aim of ensuring that the SCQF is an inclusive framework which promotes parity of esteem between all forms of learning.

35. The RPL principles set out in the *SCQF Handbook* provide:

- a set of core principles and key features that will enable users of the SCQF to have confidence that there is consistency in approaches to recognising prior informal learning
- guidance to learning providers across all post-16 education and training sectors in Scotland on managing the process of recognising the prior informal learning of learners within the context of the SCQF; and
- support for the practice of recognising prior learning as part of the lifelong learning agenda in Scotland.

36. The *SCQF Handbook* identifies three main types of RPL:

- RPL for personal/career development;
- RPL to gain entry to a programme leading to a qualification;
- RPL for the award of SCQF credit points to gain entry with credit or advanced standing in a qualification.

37. The first type of RPL is referred to as formative recognition, and involves an informal benchmarking of the individual's prior learning against the SCQF level descriptors, or the learning outcomes of a relevant qualification sitting at an identified SCQF Level. The other types of RPL are referred to as summative recognition. Only summative recognition can lead to the award of SCQF Credit.

38. An RPL claim for credit involves the comparison of the individual's learning to the aims and learning outcomes of the qualification for which credit is being sought. The RPL process for the award of SCQF credit points will determine the SCQF Level and the number of SCQF credit points that can be awarded. Having the standardised framework of the SCQF helps create confidence in the RPL judgements being made in what can be very complex and highly individualised requests.

39. As part of its aim to promote the concepts and use of RPL more widely, the SCQF Partnership established the SCQF RPL Network in 2009. This Network drew together key stakeholders in Scotland, including representatives from Further Education, Higher Education, CLD and private training sectors along with representatives from major employer organisations including the National Health Service (NHS Education for Scotland), Scottish Social Services Council and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce. One key aim of the Network was to help engage employers to recognise the potential value of RPL in workforce development.

40. As part of this work, the first *SCQF RPL Toolkit* was published in 2010 designed to help advisors and trainers in colleges, HEIs and private training institutions to conduct skills profiling for RPL claims. The paper-based toolkit was replaced in 2014 with the online *SCQF RPL Tool*<sup>28</sup>, with accompanying resources for educators, employers and individuals seeking to make a claim for RPL along with a number of case studies. For employers, the guidance shows how RPL can be used in the workplace to support all aspects of workforce development, including recruitment, induction, supervision and

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<sup>28</sup> For more information see <http://scqf.org.uk/guide-to-rpl/rpl-tool/>



appraisal, guiding those applying for promoted posts, and securing a better skilled and more qualified workforce. The SCQF Partnership also offers free workshops on RPL for organisations and RPL practitioners.

41. The SCQF Partnership works both nationally and internationally to promote and support RPL. As well as being a partner in the project to establish a system of recognition and accreditation of learning, skills and experience for refugees living in Scotland as described in Figure 11, the SCQF Partnership is leading a project to map the qualifications of veterans who have served in the armed forces to the SCQF.
42. Examples of other national RPL projects include:
  - **RPL Network for Higher Education Institutions:** The SCQF Partnership supported the development of this network, which was established in 2008 with a view to developing more flexible, efficient learner journeys. This network, managed by QAA Scotland, comprises policymakers and practitioners from Scottish HEIs along with representation from Universities Scotland, the SCQF Partnership, and major public sector employers. The network has successfully led a range of research and development activities to forward the RPL agenda in Scotland and to address barriers which have prevented its use as a widespread, mainstreamed practice in universities. One result of the Network's work was the National RPL Framework for Higher Education, covering good practice at sectoral, institutional and student levels, together with guidance for professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. The National RPL Framework was published in 2014.
  - **My Skills, My Future:** This project, undertaken initially with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Glasgow Caledonian University, produced a suite of resources aimed primarily at young people leaving school with few or no formal qualifications, adult returners or the long term unemployed. The resources are designed to be used by advisers from a wide range of organisations to work with individuals to identify their transferable skills through a series of practical activities. These skills are then benchmarked against the SCQF to help individuals understand the level of their informal learning. The resource also helps them to develop a set of competency-based statements that can be used to create a CV, to access further training or to support job applications. Individuals can then work with advisers to agree a future plan of action based on their strengths. The SCQF Partnership owns these resources and provides training in their use.
43. At international level, the SCQF Partnership was also a partner in The Recognition of Experiential & Accredited Learning Project (REAL project), which ran from 2012 to 2015, and brought core RPL principles to the fore in relation to adult educators in four EU countries. The REAL project produced a toolkit which adult educators can use to benchmark their experiential and organised non-formal learning against their national qualifications framework. They can use the results in negotiations with education institutions and awarding bodies to have their learning recognised for entry to further studies and/or validated and counted towards a qualification. The SCQF Partnership worked on this project with the University of Stirling, Tallinn University, the University of Limerick, the Romanian Institute for Adult Education, and Learning Link Scotland.

#### Criterion 4

### **The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent**

#### a) Populating the SCQF: Initial stages

44. As described in Section A, the development of the SCQF was based on the integration of three pre-existing frameworks. The concept of learner progression and transfer between learning contexts had been a key feature of the educational developments which began in the 1980s, when the concept of the creation of a 'progressive climbing frame' which allowed learners to progress from one type of qualification to another, and one level to the next, had first been introduced<sup>29</sup>. As a result, the work to identify how to ensure that progression was assured between lower and higher qualifications within a single group, and to demonstrate how the different groups of qualifications might be compared in terms of the level and volume of learning involved, had been in progress for almost 20 years before the development of the SCQF. The SCQF therefore emerged from a system in which progression and credit were already important features.

45. In its initial stages, the SCQF was populated by aligning the frameworks of existing qualifications. In 1996, a working group was formed comprising of the bodies responsible at that time for qualifications in the vocational, higher education and school sectors, along with representatives from the Scottish Office Department of Education and Industry. Its aim was to make proposals on ways in which the relationships between awards frameworks could be made clear; enable mutual recognition of achievement; and create links and routes between the different programmes and award. The group sought to create a mechanism which would:

- be based on principles of agreement and co-operation;
- be capable of including all qualifications and achievement including, e.g. work-based learning, employers' programmes and the awards of the professional and statutory bodies as well as those of higher education and the Scottish Qualifications Authority;
- build on the flexibility and opportunities inherent within each of existing frameworks;
- not distort or undermine the autonomy of existing qualification frameworks and awarding bodies;
- be readily understandable, sensible, coherent and comprehensive from the user perspective<sup>30</sup>

46. This integration of the existing frameworks is apparent in the columns of the SCQF Diagram (below). The relationships in terms of level between the frameworks of National Qualifications (in the first column), National/Higher National Certificates and

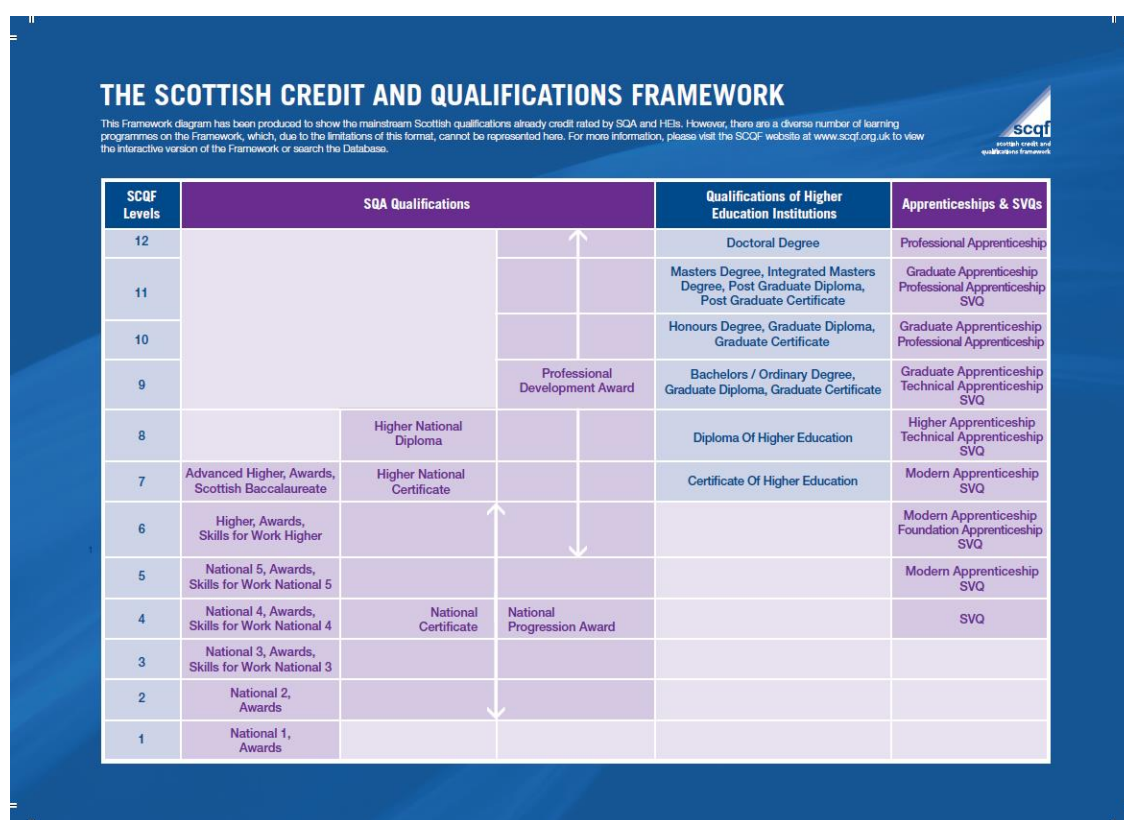
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<sup>29</sup> SQA Research Report 3: *National Qualifications: A Short History* (2008)

<sup>30</sup> *Making Sense of Credit and Qualifications Frameworks in the UK*: [https://www.nuc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/UKCF-Making-Sense-Flyer-2010\\_0.pdf](https://www.nuc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/UKCF-Making-Sense-Flyer-2010_0.pdf)

Diplomas (2nd column) and higher education qualifications at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (column 4) formed the core of the initial iteration of the SCQF.

**Figure 17: SCQF Diagram**



b) Populating the SCQF: Inclusion processes for new and revised qualifications

**The role and remit of credit-rating bodies (CRBs)**

47. The process of preparing a qualification for inclusion on the SCQF, by allocating it to an SCQF level and giving it a value in general credit points, is known as “credit-rating”. Credit rating is carried out only by approved CRBs, who are also responsible for ensuring that entries on the SCQF database are current and accurate.
48. When the SCQF was launched in 2001, approval to credit rate was given to those institutions that had been involved in the ongoing development towards a ‘framework of progression’, i.e. the SQA, and all Scottish universities and HEIs. All colleges were also given the status of credit-rating bodies in 2006. All of these groups had had experience of developing and assigning credit to qualifications based on learning outcomes, taking into account alignment with qualifications at the same level, and progression to qualifications at a higher level.
49. It was recognised that, if the SCQF were to achieve its aim of being the national framework for lifelong learning, other organisations with a remit for education and training should be approved as CRBs.
50. The SCQF Partnership established processes for the recruitment and approval of CRBs in 2009. In addition to the existing college, university/HEI and SQA CRBs, there

are now eight additional approved credit-rating bodies (listed below)<sup>31</sup>. Seven of these bodies credit rate qualifications in a single sector. The eighth (City & Guilds) is an awarding body which, like SQA, provides qualifications for a wide range of sectors. These additional CRBs are:

- The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
- City & Guilds [*approved to credit rate qualifications for a wide range of sectors*]
- Scottish Police College
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS)
- The Institute of Counselling
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Prison Service College
- OPITO (Skills for Oil and Gas)

51. It was also recognised that, in many areas of the economy, education and training is often delivered within the organisation rather than through a college or university, and mechanisms should exist for the credit rating of qualifications owned by organisations which could not – or did not wish to – become credit-rating bodies. In order to address this need, colleges, universities/HEIs and SQA were approved to offer credit-rating services to other organisations. This type of service is known as third-party credit rating. In third-party credit rating, the originator of the qualification remains the owner of the SCQF credit-rated qualification, and the CRB has responsibility for monitoring compliance with the SCQF quality assurance requirements. In addition to SQA, HEIs and colleges, The Scottish Police College has been approved to provide third-party credit rating for the justice sector.
52. The SCQF database was launched in 2011, and since then all CRBs have been required to list the qualifications they have credit rated on the database. Along with details of the qualification, the CRB must identify the owner of the qualification. At the time of writing (October 2018), the database lists 56 approved CRBs, and a total of 311 separate owners of qualifications. Third-party credit rating has provided a gateway for the inclusion of a wide range of qualifications on the SCQF.
53. International qualifications can also be included on the SCQF if they meet the criteria for credit rating. The credit rating process followed for international qualifications is the same as for all other qualifications.
54. The principles underpinning both credit rating and third-party credit rating, along with guidance for CRBs in complying with those principles, are laid out in the SCQF Handbook. In addition, the SCQF Partnership offers training workshops for CRBs and those seeking credit-rating status to support them to develop effective, quality-assured credit-rating processes in their institutions. Further resources, including guidance on how to use level descriptors and communicate the key concepts of credit rating to learners and others in their organisation, are available on the SCQF website.
55. The SCQF Partnership is responsible for the approval of new CRBs, for providing training and support for their role, and for the quality assurance monitoring of the credit

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<sup>31</sup> A full list of credit-rating bodies is included in Annex 2.

rating function of all bodies with the exception of HEIs and SQA. More information about the quality assurance of credit rating bodies is included in the response to EQF Criterion 5, below.

### **The credit-rating process**

56. There are two main routes to credit rating:

- An approved CRB may credit rate qualifications offered by its own organisation
- Other organisations may seek to have their qualifications credit rated by a body approved to offer third-party credit rating. Third-party credit rating is normally offered as a commercial service, and the organisation seeking credit rating for its qualification(s) will normally pay a fee for this service.

The SCQF Handbook contains flowcharts for both credit rating and third-party credit rating processes. These flowcharts are included in Annexes 7 and 8.

57. All qualifications, whether submitted from a department within the CRB's own organisation or through third-party credit rating, must go through a rigorous credit-rating process before being included on the SCQF to assure confidence in the integrity of the Framework.

58. Those responsible for the development of the qualification (the 'submitting bodies') must ensure that the submission contains enough evidence that the proposed qualification will be a valid and reliable assessment of the proposed learning outcomes. Each CRB is responsible for devising its own submission documents, allowing credit rating to align with the organisation's own systems. However, there are key areas of information which must be included.

59. Typically, submitting bodies should provide the following information:

- **the name of the qualification:** this provides a unique identifier
- **the purpose of the qualification:** there should be enough information for a credit-rating panel to understand why this qualification is needed, and who it is for
- **the learning outcomes of the qualification:** these are essential for setting the level of the qualification
- **the proposed SCQF level of the qualification:** although the allocation of level is the responsibility of the CRB, the submitting body is normally expected to identify the anticipated level, and to provide evidence of how the learning outcomes match the level descriptor for that level. The SCQF Partnership provides guidance on the mapping of learning outcomes to the SCQF level descriptors which is summarised in Figure 18 below.
- **how much learning is involved, and how this is broken down (e.g. classroom; self-study; practical etc.):** indications of volume are needed to assess a) if the learning outcomes are achievable in the time available and b) the number of SCQF credit points which can be allocated.
- **how the learning outcomes will be assessed, and how this assessment will be quality assured:** details of assessment are necessary to show how achievement of learning outcomes will be assessed at the proposed level of the



qualification, and how the validity and reliability of that assessment will be assured and maintained over time. In particular, the submitting body must describe the arrangements which will be in place for external quality assurance of the assessment.

60. When a qualification is submitted for credit rating, the CRB will normally conduct an initial review of the information and, if there is sufficient evidence that the submission is likely to meet the requirements for SCQF level and credit, arrange for expert scrutiny of the submission. The submission is then scrutinised by a person or people with expertise in the qualification subject area and in the referencing of learning outcomes to the SCQF level descriptors. Their role is to scrutinise the submission and to approve – or not – the allocation of SCQF level and credit to the qualification.

### **Figure 18: Allocating SCQF level to learning outcomes**

#### **A 'best-fit' approach**

The process of allocating SCQF level to learning outcomes is one of 'best fit'. The level descriptors are designed to be broad enough to encompass a very wide range of learning outcomes, and their application to individual learning outcomes requires judgement rather than a precise science.

The SCQF Partnership recommends a series of steps when identifying the SCQF level of a proposed qualification. These include:

- comparing each learning outcome with the level descriptor at the proposed level and the descriptors for the levels above and below to test which is the best fit.
- accepting that individual learning outcomes may not reference to all 5 characteristics in the descriptor
- using other external reference points for comparison, such as qualification descriptors, higher education subject benchmark information, SQA specifications and other appropriate sources of information and guidance.

The 2012 revision of the SCQF level descriptors aimed to make them more user-friendly by clarifying how terminology should be interpreted, and providing a glossary and guide to understanding and interpreting key terms in the level descriptors. The level descriptors are included in Annex 4.

61. In cases where approval is given, it is the role of the CRB to enter details of the qualification onto the SCQF database and to make arrangements with the submitting body for ongoing monitoring and review of the qualification. The credit rating should be reviewed in three to five years, but CRBs are encouraged to carry out earlier reviews where appropriate, such as in cases where the nature of the outcomes in the qualification are liable to rapid change.

62. If the experts decide that the SCQF Level and/or number of credit points is different from that proposed, the submitting body may accept the expert's decision or decide to make changes to the qualification and resubmit at a later date. Details of this, and all other aspects of the credit rating process, are included in the SCQF Handbook.

#### Criterion 5

**The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this Recommendation.**

63. The response to this criterion is divided into two parts: Part a) provides an overview of the structure of quality assurance in respect of the key bodies involved in national systems; and Part b) addresses each of the principles specified in Annex IV of the Recommendation.

#### Overview

64. The system of credit rating is a devolved one and it is essential that there is a quality assurance system in place to monitor this process. CRBs are responsible for the internal quality assurance of their own systems and also for the quality assurance of any third parties (submitting bodies) where the CRB has provided a Credit Rating service.
65. As mentioned in Section A, the 25 SCQF Principles set down in the SCQF Handbook sit at the heart of the SCQF. The Handbook identifies 4 principles which relate directly to quality assurance.
- **Principle 1**, which underpins all of the other principles, states that the SCQF Partnership and the Credit Rating Bodies have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the SCQF.
  - **Principle 9**, which states that CRBs must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decision on level and credit.
  - **Principle 15**, which states that the CRB must ensure that third parties (submitting bodies) provide details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality (external element to quality assurance).
  - **Principle 24**, which states that assessment procurers for Recognition of Prior Learning (validation of non-formal and informal learning) including credit transfer should be consistent with normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.
66. Each CRB must have a quality assurance system in place to safeguard standards, protect the integrity of the programme and to ensure consistent assessment. Quality assurance systems and processes for credit rating must align to SCQF principles. Both internal and external quality assurance processes must be explicit, reliable, valid and



available for scrutiny by appropriate external quality assurance. The SCQF Partnership has trademarked the use of the SCQF logo, the name and the levels so it does have some authority to allow it to take steps if there was found to be any activity which brought those “badges” into disrepute. In addition the SCQF Partnership reserves the right to remove credit rating authority from any CRB found to be consistently not meeting the requirements of the Quality Assurance Model and SCQF Principles.

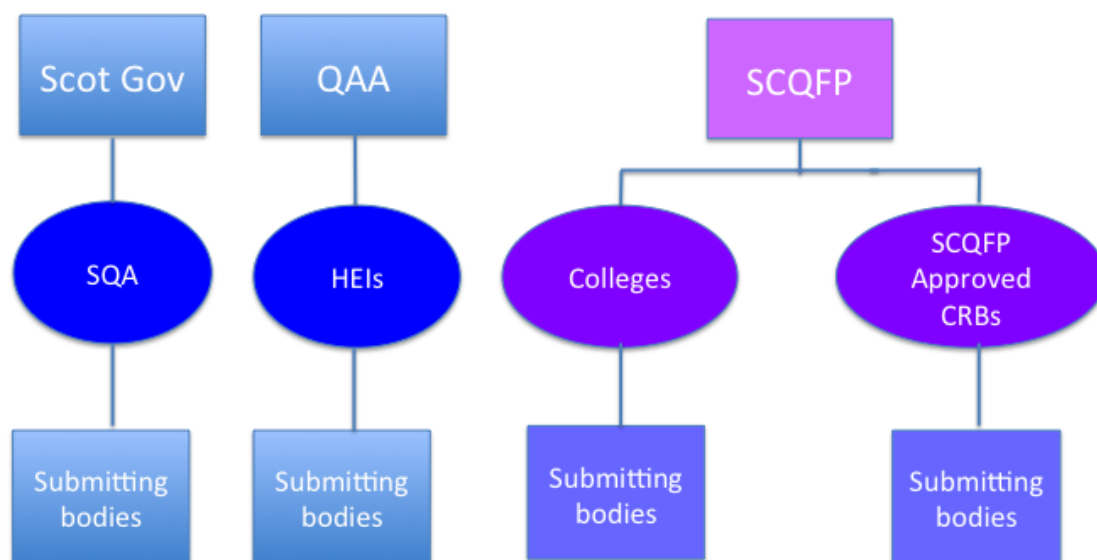
67. All CRBs are subject to external quality assurance. This external monitoring is carried out by a number of different agencies, depending on the individual CRB.

- SCQF Partnership for Colleges
- QAA Scotland for Higher Education Institutions and Universities
- Scottish Government and an independent auditor in the case of SQA
- SCQF Partnership for other SCQFP approved CRBs.

68. CRBs which have the authority to provide a credit rating service for third parties are responsible for ensuring that the third parties have the necessary quality assurance processes in place both internally and externally. They must also assure themselves of the good standing and credibility of the third party organisation. Not all CRBs have this authority. All colleges, universities and SQA were given this authority at the initial setting up of the Framework. Any other CRB wishing this authority must apply to the SCQF Partnership separately at least a year after being approved as a CRB and must meet the specific criteria in the Quality Assurance model.

69. Figure 19 below illustrates how the devolved model of quality assurance is structured.

**Figure 19: Quality Assurance of Credit Rating Bodies.**



### **Documents guiding quality assurance of CRBs**

70. All CRBs are required to have robust quality assurance systems both for their own credit rating function and for monitoring the quality assurance of the submitting bodies

with whom they work. As SCQF Principle 1 states, safeguarding the integrity and reputation of the Framework is paramount and quality assurance systems must be strong and rigorous enough so as not to compromise this integrity. The quality assurance systems of individual CRBs are supported by the following guidance documents.

- **The SCQF Handbook** is a technical guide designed for all credit rating bodies, as well as organisations developing qualifications for inclusion on the SCQF. It provides guidance on how to address the SCQF Principles, and provides links to resources which provide more support. All CRB quality assurance systems must adhere to the principles set out in the Handbook.
- **The SCQF Quality Assurance Model** sets out the quality assurance requirements for CRBs approved by the SCQF Partnership (i.e. the eight additional CRBs) and consists of a process of initial approval, annual monitoring and a 4 yearly periodic review. The quality assurance requirements which CRBs must address to gain and retain approval for credit rating are included in Annex 7.
- **The UK Quality Code** sets out the expectations for all providers of higher education in the UK and provides guidance on meeting those expectations. In Scotland, the process of monitoring and supporting quality is in the responsibility of QAA (Scotland) and is part of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) process which takes place on a 4-yearly cycle

71. The EQF principles on quality assurance specified in Annex IV of the EU Recommendation are clearly reflected in the 25 SCQF Principles and associated guidance contained in the documents above. The principles are also reflected in the associated quality assurance requirements of SQA, Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Figure 20 demonstrates these links.

**Figure 20: Relationship between quality assurance mechanisms in Scotland's education and training bodies and EQF QA principles**

	SCQF Partnership	SCQF Partnership	QAA Scotland	SQA Accreditation	SQA Awarding Body	Education Scotland & Scottish Funding Council	Credit Rating Bodies with third party credit rating authority
Area of coverage	All credit rating bodies	Credit-rating functions in SCQFP Approved credit rating bodies	Higher Education Institutions	Regulation of qualifications & approval of SQA regulated awarding bodies	Quality assurance of all SQA centres and qualifications	Colleges and Schools (apart from credit-rating function in colleges, which is in remit of SCQF Partnership)	All third party submitting organisations
Processes	SCQF Handbook	QA Model for SCQF Approved Credit Rating Bodies	UK Quality Code <sup>32</sup> and Enhancement-led Institutional Review in Scotland	SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles	Quality Development Toolkit for Centres Quality Assurance Criteria 2015-2018	How Good Is Our College? How Good is our School?	Processes for third party credit rating in line with SCQF Principles
<b>EQF Principles: QA requirements should cover</b>							
1. Design of qualifications	Principles 2-6	x	x	x	x	X	x

<sup>32</sup> QAA Scotland also provides a range of enhancement-facing, dynamic reference points as part of their quality assurance processes.

2. Valid & reliable assessment	Principles 2 & 10 Principle 14	x	x	x	x	X	x
3. Feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement	Principle 9 Principle 16	x	x	x	x	x	x
4. Inclusion of stakeholders at all stages in the process	Principle 9	X	x	X	x	X	x
5. Self-assessment & external review	Principle 1 Principle 9 Principle 15 Principle 16	x	x	X	x	x	x
6. Integration into management structures	Principle 12	x	x	x	x	x	x
7. Clear, measurable objectives, standards and guidelines	Principle 2 Principle 8	x	x	x	x	x	x
8. Appropriate resources	Principle 9	X	X	X	X	X	x
9. Regular review of bodies/agencies	Principle 1 Principle 9	x	x	x	x	x	x

responsible for carrying out QA							
10. Electronic accessibility of evaluation results	Principles 11 & 18	x	x	x	x	x	x

### **EQF Principles of Quality Assurance and the SCQF Principles**

71. All of the EQF principles on quality assurance specified in Annex IV of the EU Recommendation are clearly reflected in the 25 SCQF Principles and associated guidance contained in the SCQF Handbook. Figure 21 below demonstrates these links.

**Figure 21: EQF Principles reflected in SCQF Principles**

<b>EQF Principles</b> <i>Quality assurance of qualifications with an EQF level should...</i>	<b>SCQF Principles</b> <i>All Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) must adhere to the SCQF principles. The content below is drawn directly from the SCQF Handbook which must be used by all CRBs.</i>
	<p><b>Overarching Requirements</b></p> <p>Principles 1, 9, 15 and 24 and provide advice, direction and guidance for Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) to develop, strengthen and consolidate robust quality assurance systems. Existing or developing quality assurance systems should have operational procedures that cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Rating;</li> <li>• Third Party Credit Rating (where applicable); and</li> <li>• Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning.</li> </ul> <p>CRBs will have designed and developed a range of quality assurance systems to support SCQF principles to ensure the quality and integrity of the SCQF, thereby avoiding reputational risk. While the individual design of the quality assurance system and processes is entirely within the remit of the CRBs, there are a number of elements and key features of commonality, best practice and documented evidence which are required to safeguard the reputation of the framework outlined in this Handbook.</p> <p><b>Principles 1, 9, 15 and 24 are key to this:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Principle 1:</b> Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) and the SCQF Partnership have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.</li> <li>• <b>Principle 9:</b> Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on level and credit.</li> <li>• <b>Principle 15:</b> The Credit Rating Body must ensure that the Third Party provides details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality</li> <li>• <b>Principle 24:</b> The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.</li> </ul>
<p>1. address the design of qualifications as</p>	<p>A number of SCQF Principles address the design of qualifications directly:</p>

well as application of the learning outcomes approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Principle 2</b> states that 'All qualifications credit rated on to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework must meet the four criteria for credit rating<sup>33</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Principle 3</b> states that 'A qualification must be capable of being allocated an SCQF level and SCQF credit points in order that it can be included on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.'</li> <li>• <b>Principle 4</b> states that 'A qualification must have at least 10 notional learning hours (1 SCQF credit point) before it can be credit rated and considered for inclusion on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Only full SCQF credit points are awarded – fractions of SCQF credit points (e.g. 0.5) are not allowed.'</li> <li>• <b>Principle 5</b> states that 'Qualification designers must determine the notional learning hours required by a typical learner to complete all learning activities within the qualification.'</li> <li>• <b>Principle 6</b> states that 'The number of SCQF credit points allocated to a unit or module is determined independently of the perceived importance or centrality of that unit/module within a broader qualification.'</li> </ul>
2. ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and address the process of certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the four criteria which all qualifications must meet in order to be included in the SCQF (<b>Principle 2</b>) is the inclusion of assessment which is externally quality assured. The SCQF Handbook requires all credit-rated qualifications to have 'clearly defined methods of assessment and evidence that the assessment criteria and processes are appropriate to the defined learning outcomes'. It also stipulates that assessment needs to be appropriate to the SCQF level of the programme and that there must also be clear criteria for distinguishing pass/fail.</li> <li>• <b>Principle 10</b> states the following requirements for certification. 'Where assessment leads to the award of SCQF credit points then the certificates issued to learners must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the title of the qualification;</li> <li>- the total number of SCQF credit points awarded on completion;</li> <li>- the SCQF level of the qualification/achieved;</li> <li>- the SCQF logo;</li> <li>- the name of the CRB.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. consist of feedback mechanisms and procedures for	<b>Principles 9 and 16</b> cover this area

<sup>33</sup>For more information visit [https://scqf.org.uk/media/1125/scqf\\_handbook\\_web\\_final\\_2015.pdf](https://scqf.org.uk/media/1125/scqf_handbook_web_final_2015.pdf)



<p>continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on level and credit.</li> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that the Third Party organisation submits regular (e.g. annual) reports of progress in the delivery of any credit rated qualifications/learning programmes and is aware that they must inform the CRB if any significant changes to these are made which may affect the SCQF level or credit points</li> </ul> <p>The SCQF Handbook makes it clear that there is no specific quality assurance model required by the SCQF Partnership as the intention is that any additional processes required for credit rating should be developed and integrated into any existing quality assurance model that the CRB has in place. However, it is expected that any model would include the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear description of credit rating process with descriptions of any relevant panels involved, relevant documentation and appropriate personnel involvement;</li> <li>• Clear description of internal quality assurance processes with regard to assessment, who can deliver the programme and quality improvement; and a</li> <li>• Clear description of what external quality assurance is in place and how any recommendations from this externality are implemented.</li> </ul>
<p>4. involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process</p>	<p><b>Principle 9 applies here</b></p> <p>The CRB should ensure that appropriate credit rating systems involve a range of staff who cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the SCQF, the SCQF level Descriptors, and the principles laid out in this Handbook;</li> <li>• experience of credit rating;</li> <li>• experience of quality assurance, including programme approval or review; and</li> <li>• experience of programme delivery and learner assessment in the relevant subject area and at the relevant levels.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the credit rating system should ensure that there are clear checks and balances between those involved in programme design, credit rating and approval/decision making.</p> <p>Good practice suggests that the person or group which develops a qualification or programme can contribute to discussions on the level and credit rating but should not take part in the final decision making. It is suggested that the final decision making should be taken by a group, not an individual, and that the group should be able to draw on a range of expertise as described above.</p>

5. be composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As stated above, <b>Principle 1</b> states that 'The SCQF Partnership and the Credit Rating Bodies share responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the SCQF.' In order to address this principle. All CRBs must have their own quality assurance arrangements, ensuring that their quality assurance systems and their processes for credit rating align to SCQF principles. Internal and external systems must be explicit, reliable, valid and available for scrutiny by appropriate external quality assurance agencies.</li> </ul> <p>There are two different elements of external quality assurance that all CRBs are required to have in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The external quality assurance of the assessment which can be provided by someone employed by the organisation, but who is external to the assessment process. Such persons are often referred to as internal moderators or internal verifiers.</li> <li>The external quality assurance of the systems, including those for credit rating, which must be carried out by an independent body or someone who is not employed by or part of the organization</li> </ul> <p>In addition to <b>this Principles 15 and 16</b> go further in relation to responsibilities when third parties are involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Credit Rating Body must ensure that the Third Party provides details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality.</li> <li>Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that the Third Party organisation submits regular (e.g. annual) reports of progress in the delivery of any credit rated qualifications/learning programmes and is aware that they must inform the CRB if any significant changes to these are made which may affect the SCQF level or credit points</li> </ul>
6. be an integral part of the internal management, including sub-contracted activities, of bodies issuing qualifications with an EQF level	<p>CRBs are required to ensure that their own documented quality assurance systems and arrangements are aligned to SCQF principles for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme design;</li> <li>Programme Approval/Accreditation/Validation (depending on terminology used by CRB);</li> <li>Assessment and related activities; and</li> <li>Internal and external review processes.</li> </ul>

	<p>In addition where they subcontract (third party credit rating) they must comply with additional criteria outlined in <b>Principle 12</b></p> <p>CRBs have an obligation to protect the integrity of the SCQF therefore it is important that CRBs consider this when accepting applications from a Third Party organisation (also known as the submitting body). The processes therefore should consider the standing and credibility of the submitting body as well as the nature and type of learning programme being submitted for credit rating. It is important that the CRBs provide clear guidance for submitting bodies on the processes involved and the reasons for these. In each case, the CRB and the Third Party organisation should engage in discussions at an early stage to help clarify the expectations on both sides.</p> <p>CRBs will need to seek information from the submitting body such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented quality assurance systems;</li> <li>• capacity for independence in appeals and marking decisions;</li> <li>• quality reports or audits by appropriate Quality Assurance Bodies;</li> <li>• facilities and support for staff development;</li> <li>• evidence of stability of the organisation; and</li> <li>• facilities and support for centres and/or learners.</li> </ul> <p>It is a matter of professional judgement for each CRB as to the amount and type of information it requires to satisfy itself of the good standing of the Third Party organisation and its learning programme as this may vary dependent on the type and structure of each organisation.</p>
7. be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines	<p><b>This is covered in Principles 2 and 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All qualifications/learning programmes credit rated on to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework must meet the 4 criteria for credit rating.</li> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that within the process of credit rating, and in processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), they take due cognisance of the SCQF Level Descriptors and any other relevant reference points.</li> </ul>
8. be supported by appropriate resources	<p>This is <b>covered by Principle 9</b> which goes on to say: The CRB should ensure that appropriate credit rating systems involve a range of staff who cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the SCQF, the SCQF level Descriptors, and the principles laid out in this Handbook;</li> <li>• experience of credit rating;</li> <li>• experience of quality assurance, including programme approval or review; and</li> <li>• experience of programme delivery and learner assessment in the relevant subject area and at the relevant levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>And also by Principle 13</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating Third Party submissions</li> </ul>
9. include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance	<p><b>Principles 1 and 9</b> cover this area but more detail is provided in the Handbook: CRBs are required to ensure that their own documented quality assurance systems and arrangements are aligned to SCQF principles for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme design;</li> <li>• Programme Approval/Accreditation/Validation (depending on terminology used by CRB);</li> <li>• Assessment and related activities; and</li> <li>• Internal and external review processes.</li> </ul> <p>There are two different elements of external quality assurance that all CRBs are required to have in place.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The external quality assurance of the assessment which can be provided by someone employed by the organisation, but who is external to the assessment process. Such persons are often referred to as internal moderators or internal verifiers.</li> <li>2. The external quality assurance of the systems, including those for credit rating, which must be carried out by an independent body or someone who is not employed by or part of the organisation. An example of this is the external review of colleges by Education Scotland (formerly HMIE).</li> </ol> <p>Additionally, for external quality assurance required by CRBs in relation to Third Party credit rating CRBs require a strong, clear and precise element of externality that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate and proportionate documented evidence;</li> <li>• suitably qualified and experienced external persons;</li> <li>• clear roles, responsibilities and duties of external persons;</li> <li>• periodic reports from appropriate external persons;</li> <li>• contribution to programme design;</li> <li>• assessment arrangements and approaches;</li> <li>• achievement of learner outcomes; and</li> <li>• contribution to review processes for credit-rated programmes.</li> </ul>
10. include the electronic accessibility of evaluation results	<p>We assume that this refers to information on the outputs of credit rating. So we believe this covered by <b>Principles 11 and 18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading the details of all credit rated qualifications/learning programmes to the SCQF database.</li> <li>• Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading all third party credit rated programmes to the SCQF database</li> </ul>

## Criterion 6

**The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.**

72. As Figure 19 demonstrates, the three bodies with overall responsibility for the quality assurance of the credit rating processes to ensure the integrity of the SCQF are as follows and letters of confirmation have been added at Annex 12
- the SCQF Partnership, with overall responsibility for monitoring the quality assurance credit rating bodies other than HEIs and SQA.
  - QAA (Scotland), with overall responsibility for monitoring the quality assurance arrangements of HEIs
  - Scottish Government, with its oversight of the activities of SQA.
73. In addition, as SCQF Principle 1 highlights, all CRBs have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. CRBs have particular responsibility for monitoring the quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice relating to the qualifications presented by submitting bodies for credit rating.
74. As seen in Figure 20, Education Scotland also plays a key role in the quality assurance of colleges although the quality assurance of the credit rating process is carried out by SCQF Partnership.
75. All of these bodies were invited onto the Steering Group for this referencing updating activity. Steering Group members provided comments on drafts of the report throughout the process. The full membership of the Steering Group is at Annex 1 and shows the range of stakeholders, over and above the key quality assurance bodies, which were consulted with in this process and given the opportunity to provide comment and opinion.
76. SQA and QAA (Scotland) form part of the Board of the SCQF Partnership and have provided written statements of agreement with the consistency of this report with the relevant quality assurance arrangements. In addition, Scottish Government has also provided a written statement of support.

## Criterion 7

**The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.**

77. International experts have been involved in each step of the referencing process. As outlined in the Introduction, this report builds on referencing work undertaken in 2015/2016. This referencing work was a pilot exercise undertaken to produce an updated EQF referencing report for the SCQF in the light of the EQF Implementation Review Report and comments made by the UK on other referencing reports, as well as guidance from the EQF AG on refreshing/updating referencing. This activity, which formed a foundation for the current report, was overseen by an EQF-SCQF Referencing

Steering Group which included an international expert (Sean O'Reilly from the Republic of Ireland).

78. The SCQF EQF Referencing Steering Group overseeing the production of this current report included two international experts: Horacy Dębowski from the Central Examinations Commission, Poland and John O'Connor, from Quality and Qualifications Ireland. As members of the Steering Committee, both experts were required to review the referencing process and the draft and final versions of the report. Both experts attended a Steering Group meeting in Scotland as well as providing comments. These comments are included in Annex 10.
79. Experts were approached from these two countries as the SCQF Partnership has a close working relationship with both of them, having worked together on many projects. As a result both experts were familiar with the Scottish systems and framework. In addition, there is a great deal of learner and worker mobility between both countries and Scotland.

#### Criterion 8

**The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.**

80. As outlined in the Introduction, the first report referencing the SCQF to the EQF was published as part of a larger report, *Report Referencing the Qualifications Frameworks of the United Kingdom to the European Qualifications Framework*. This report included the synoptic findings of referencing between the frameworks of England and Northern Ireland (a single framework), Wales and Scotland, along with country reports for each of the three country-specific frameworks.
81. As the designated EQF National Co-ordination Point for Scotland, the SCQF Partnership has produced this report on the revised and updated referencing of the SCQF to the EQF which:
- certifies the referencing of the SCQF with the EQF;
  - sets out the evidence to support the referencing;
  - details the key stages of the exercise; and
  - addresses separately each of the ten referencing criteria.
82. It should be noted that this report, which updates the referencing reported in 2010, addresses only the referencing between the Scottish framework, the SCQF, and the EQF. It is designed to complement any other reports produced by the other countries within the United Kingdom.

#### Criterion 9

**Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.**

83. The SCQF Partnership consents to the information contained in this report being added to the EQF platform and portal at the appropriate time so that it can be accessed widely in accordance with the agreed position. In addition, the referencing report and the level to level mapping will be publicly available on the SCQF website.

#### Criterion 10

**Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.**

84. The SCQF Database<sup>34</sup> is the online national register of all qualifications carrying SCQF level and credit. The database, re-launched in 2011, now includes around 11,500 credit-rated qualifications. The details of each credit-rated qualification are added to the SCQF Database by the relevant CRB. The EQF level is automatically added to the qualification when it is entered on to the database, meaning that the EQF level of each qualification is shown. The following extract, for a qualification credit-rated by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - TED, illustrates the information shown on summary database entries. Full details can be found by following web links to the CRB.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/>



**Figure 22: Extract from SCQF Database for qualification credit rated by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

Breathing Apparatus Instructor	
SCQF Level ?	8
SCQF Credits	10
Programme Aims	This 10 day course prepares candidates to undertake Breathing Apparatus Instructor duties within SFRS. To enable instructors to provide an appropriate level of technical and practical BA training against specific criteria, utilising recognised procedures, suitable venues and equipment to enhance Firefighter safety.
Subject Area(s)	Public Services
Programme Owner	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Credit Rating Body	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - TED
Target Audience	Competent Breathing Apparatus Wearers
Skills Gained	At the end of this course students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver training &amp; instruction on BA set &amp; ancillary equipment</li> <li>2. Comply with BA Training / Instruction Safety Standards</li> <li>3. Recognise the signs of physiological &amp; psychological stress</li> <li>4. Facilitate appropriate BA Training</li> <li>5. Plan BA practical training</li> <li>6. Conduct post training event learning &amp; development</li> </ol>
Approval Date	16 March 2017
EQF Level ?	5

85. The work to relaunch and further develop the SCQF database was assisted by funding and support from the European Commission. The database fields were amended to provide the information required in Annex VI of the EU Recommendation. Work is ongoing to populate the additional fields with a view to being able to upload to the European portal once entries are complete with the additional data. The database is populated by CRBs themselves through an online portal which is password protected. A public version of the database is available from the home page of the SCQF website and is available to all without the need for a password. A search function allows users to search the database by subject, by level, by programme owner and by CRB. The database and its content are managed by the SCQF Partnership.
86. Awarding bodies are required to show SCQF level and credit points on the certificates or transcript for all qualifications on the SCQF. However, at the time of writing, there is no mandatory requirement for certificates to show the corresponding EQF level although Awarding Bodies may do so if they wish.
87. The decision not to make this a mandatory requirement results from extensive consultation with Awarding Bodies regarding the visibility of the EQF on certificates. In 2015, UK National Co-ordination Points for the EQF conducted a survey of Awarding Bodies in the UK regarding the visibility of the EQF on certificates. There appeared to

be a high level of awareness of the EQF and its potential benefits among Awarding Bodies, but few bodies were including references to the EQF on certificates or other key documents because of a lack of current demand for the EQF information from UK learners or employers. Only a minority were actively considering the inclusion of the EQF on certificates. The findings of the UK-wide survey echoes findings from consultations the SCQF Partnership had undertaken previously with approved CRBs. It is also worth noting that the use of diploma supplements is the norm within Scottish universities but the use of certificate supplements is very low.

88. In addition, the SCQF Partnership provides a wide range of information to promote understanding of the EQF and its relevance to Scotland<sup>35</sup>. Examples of the information provided include:

- **International and European Tools and Projects:** A section of the SCQF Website designed to help all SCQF stakeholders understand and access information about the SCQF's relationship with international developments, including the EQF.
- **Frequently-asked questions** focusing on the SCQF's relationship with the EQF, and the EQF's importance in supporting the transferability of qualifications.

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<sup>35</sup> For information relating to SCQF's raising the visibility of EQF see <http://scqf.org.uk/search-results-page/?page=1&query=EQF>

## **Section C: Development and plans in the implementation of the SCQF**

### **1. Developments since 2010**

1. Since the initial referencing report was published in 2010, the implementation and reach of the SCQF has extended considerably. In 2016, the SCQF Partnership commissioned the Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) of the University of Glasgow to undertake an extensive review of the impact of the SCQF and SCQF partnership on policies, strategies and stakeholder. This research included consultations with key partners and stakeholders, along with a national survey of user groups, to understand and assess the level of awareness, use and impact of the SCQF and the SCQF Partnership.
2. The consultations with key stakeholders identified significant developments in the use of the SCQF in the education and training landscape of Scotland. This demonstrates the increasing use of SCQF as a communication tool for learners and employers and that it is seen as a clear and trustworthy basis for those messages. Examples of these developments included:
  - The embedding of SCQF levels in the senior phase of the school curriculum.
  - The embedding of SCQF levels in Scotland's National Training Programmes.
  - The allocations of SCQF level and credit to Modern, Technical and Professional Apprenticeships
  - The introduction of the Foundation Apprenticeship
  - The replacement of SVQ levels with SCQF levels.
  - The inclusion of pupils' SCQF Profile with all SQA exam certificates.
  - The establishment of six new Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs).
  - The development of Adult Achievement Awards.
3. The research also identified impact measures linked to the visibility of the SCQF and the understanding of key user groups. The report identified that between 2011 and 2016:
  - The number of qualifications credit rated onto the SCQF Database had increased from 400 to 11,270.
  - The SCQF had increased in prominence in the college sector, including 4,008 students benefiting from articulation routes between Higher National Qualifications (HNQs) to degree level courses in 2015/16.
  - There was evidence of increasing use of the SCQF by employers in their job adverts, with 153 found to have quoted SCQF levels in relation to job requirements in 2015/16.
  - There was continued, year-on-year growth in the SCQF's social media reach and website use.
4. The survey of user groups identified that awareness of the SCQF is strong, but that there was scope to increase awareness further among key stakeholders in the development of young people's learner journeys (e.g. teachers, pupils and parents). It also identified that the SCQF was being used in different ways by a range of different user groups. Use of the SCQF was greatest among Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG)

advisers and CRBs, followed by government and national agency staff, college staff and professional/employer bodies. The findings from this research led to the establishment of an SCQF School Ambassador programme launched in 2016 which asked schools to sign up as Ambassadors to promote understanding of the SCQF to pupils, parents and staff. This has been very successful.<sup>36</sup>

5. The SCQF Partnership is also taking an active role in promoting the use of the SCQF for RPL, recognising the knowledge, learning and skills of people to support progress into employment and/or further learning. Current partnership projects include the project to support the recognition and accreditation of the learning and skills of refugees summarised in Figure 11. In a related development, the SCQF Partnership is also involved in a project looking at the inclusion of qualifications onto the SCQF to assist with the transition into civilian employment of Armed Forces veterans.
6. The SCQF has a good reputation internationally and information about the SCQF has been sought by many countries establishing or developing National Qualifications Frameworks. The SCQF Partnership has developed links with a wide range of these countries, in the EU and beyond. At the time of writing, the Partnership had hosted or been involved in study visits or undertaken work on behalf of 15 EU member states<sup>37</sup> and 20 other countries<sup>38</sup>.

## 2. Future plans

7. The SCQF Partnership publishes its annual operational plan on the SCQF website. The plan lays out key goals for the financial year along with key performance indicators for planned activity. The present Annual Plan<sup>39</sup>, covering the period April 2018 to March 2019, includes objectives to:
  - maintain the quality and integrity of the SCQF to promote and support coherence and mutual trust amongst institutions and stakeholders
  - provide capacity building for all CRBs in credit rating for the SCQF to ensure they are recognised as high performing institutions supporting a range of learner journeys
  - maintain and promote the SCQF Database as a central source for current information about SCQF credit rated programmes
  - increase employer engagement with the SCQF and its tools
  - work with Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council to support policies, processes and initiatives (including RPL) which would help take forward the work on the learner journey review, widening access agenda and other key government priorities
  - promote the SCQF as a tool to support lifelong learning
  - promote the reputation of the SCQF internationally

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<sup>36</sup> For more information about the School Ambassador programme see <http://scqf.org.uk/written-case-studies/school-ambassador-case-study-clydebank-high-school/>

<sup>37</sup> Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden.

<sup>38</sup> Armenia, Bahrain, Barbados, Chile, China, FYR Macedonia, Hong Kong, Japan, Kosovo, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

<sup>39</sup> See <http://scqf.org.uk/media/1415/operational-plan-2018-19-final-web.pdf>

- research, review and evaluate key data and information to promote a clearer evidence based approach for targeted engagement in the future
8. In developing its plans for the future, the SCQF Partnership will seek to add value to government initiatives and strategies which are closely linked to economic recovery, some of which have been mentioned in this report, and to provide a range of tools and solutions to support both learners and employers.
  9. It is acknowledged that continuous work is needed across all education sectors in Scotland to ensure that messages about the SCQF are clear and communicated consistently and that the parity of esteem of all qualifications on the SCQF is highlighted to all learners, employers and others. As a result, the SCQF Partnership will continue to work to produce enhanced guidance to colleges, universities, community organisations, learners, and parents and carers of learners to ensure that key messages are delivered and understood.
  10. The SCQF Partnership will continue to develop its credit rating and quality assurance principles and criteria to ensure the quality and integrity of the Framework. The Partnership will work with all Credit Rating Bodies within the devolved system to ensure that all programmes on the Framework meet the 4 key principles for credit rating and have been subject to a rigorous credit rating process and quality assurance.
  11. The Partnership will also continue to promote a fully collaborative approach in Scotland, as highlighted in this report, by bringing together employers, colleges, universities, learning providers and public agencies to maintain and promote a framework that helps to promote opportunity and reduce inequality by recognising all types of learning. It has been this collaborative approach which has, we believe, contributed most to Scotland having a successful fully implemented Framework.

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Education Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot>

The National Union of Students: <https://www.nus.org.uk>

QAA Scotland: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/about-us>

Scottish Funding Council: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk>

SCQF: <https://scqf.org.uk>

SQA: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70972.html>

SQA Accreditation: <http://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home>

Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (Sparqs): <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk>

Universities Scotland: <https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk>

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<sup>40</sup> All accessed during October 2018.

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## Annex 1: Membership and Terms of Reference of the SCQF EQF Referencing Steering Group

### a) Terms of reference

The remit of the *Steering Group: Referencing SCQF to EQF* is to make recommendations on all key activities relating to the updating of the SCQF-EQF referencing report.

Specifically the remit of the Steering group is to:

- agree and oversee the referencing (updating) process;
- oversee the drafting of the referencing report and provide comments on drafts;
- take account of the comments of international experts and others;
- provide expertise on Scottish qualifications and the associated quality assurance arrangements
- endorse and/or amend the final report to be submitted to the SCQF Quality Committee and Board and then to EQF Advisory Group in December 2018;

Through the above activities the Steering Group will make recommendations to the SCQF Partnership in support of the Partnership's commitment to implement as appropriate the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union's Recommendation that Member States:

- reference levels of qualifications within the national qualifications system to the EQF levels;
- promote and apply the European principles for quality assurance in education and training when relating the national qualifications system to the EQF;
- ensure all methodology used to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF is transparent and that the resulting decisions are published;
- provide guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the national qualifications system;
- ensure the participation of all relevant national stakeholders including, according to national legislation and practice, higher education and vocational education and training institutions, social partners, sectors and experts on the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level.

In carrying out its functions, the Steering Group will be mindful of the need to avoid duplication of other relevant initiatives, such as those related to the Bologna Process in higher education.

The Steering Group will have representation from higher and vocational education, key education bodies, learners, social partners and employers across Scotland, international experts and includes members with a wide range of experience and knowledge.

b) Membership of the Steering Group: Referencing SCQF to EQF

Organisation	Representation
South Lanarkshire College	Stewart McKillop (Chair)
College Development Network	Sandra Jane Grier
Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland)	Clare Parks
International framework experts	Horacy Dębowski, Central Examinations Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna), Poland  John O'Connor, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Republic of Ireland
UK NARIC	Lisa Collett
NUS	Gemma Jones
Sparqs	Morven Stewart
SCQF Partnership	Aileen Ponton
SCQF Partnership	Sheila Dunn
SCQF Quality Committee Representative	Jane Cantrell
SQA Awarding	John Lewis
SQA Accreditation	George Brown
Scottish Union Learning/STUC	John Slaven
Employer Representative	Charles Welsh Colin Morrison
ECVET Expert	Frances Thom
Education Scotland	Margaret Rose Livingstone
ECORYS	Sonia Shakir
Welsh representatives – Qualifications Wales	Jack Watkins
Consultant	Karen Adams
Skills Development Scotland	Jane Duffy
SCQF Partnership	Lydia George (secretariat)

## Annex 2: SCQF Credit-Rating Bodies

The following bodies are approved as SCQF Credit-Rating Bodies (CRBs). This status permits them to make formal allocations of SCQF level and SCQF credit points to qualifications and to enter the details of these qualifications into the SCQF Database. At the time of writing (November 2018), the following 56 institutions are approved as SCQF Credit-Rating Bodies.

Argyll College	Abertay University	SQA Accreditation
Ayrshire College	Edinburgh Napier University	SQA Awarding Body
Borders College	Glasgow Caledonian University	SQA Credit Rating Service
City of Glasgow College	Heriot-Watt University	City and Guilds
Dumfries and Galloway	Queen Margaret University	The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
Dundee and Angus	Robert Gordon University	Institute of Counselling
Edinburgh College	The Open University in Scotland	Scottish Police College
Fife College	University of Aberdeen	The Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland
Forth Valley College	University of Dundee	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Glasgow Clyde College	University of Edinburgh	Scottish Prison Service College
Glasgow Kelvin College	University of Glasgow	OPITO
Inverness College (UHI)	University of St Andrews	
Lewis Castle College (UHI)	University of Stirling	
Moray College (UHI)	University of Strathclyde	
New battle Abbey College	University of the Highlands and Islands	
New College Lanarkshire	University of the West of Scotland	
North East Scotland College	Glasgow School of Art	
North Highland College (UHI)	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	
Orkney College (UHI)	Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	
Perth College (UHI)		
Sabhal Mor College (UHI)		
Shetland College (UHI)		
South Lanarkshire College		
West College Scotland		
West Highland College (UHI)		

### Annex 3: Qualifications on the SCQF

All qualifications/programmes in the SCQF must be: written in learning outcomes; worth at least 1 SCQF credit point; formally assessed; and quality assured, including external quality assurance. The maximum duration of credit rating before review is normally 3 - 5 years, but CRBs are encouraged to carry out earlier reviews where appropriate – e.g. if the nature of the outcomes in the qualification or programme is liable to rapid change.

An overview of the mainstream qualifications on the SCQF is included in Section A. This annex provides more detailed information about these qualifications.

**TABLE X: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK				
<small>This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at <a href="http://www.scqf.org.uk">www.scqf.org.uk</a> to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.</small>				
SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAAs
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			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		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			

#### a) Qualifications of SQA (Awarding Body)

SQA (the awarding body) is responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees. It is the national examining body for school qualifications and most college qualifications.

#### Units

A unit is the smallest possible set of outcomes which can be assessed and certificated. Most units form part of a course or group award, but all units can be offered on a free-



standing basis as qualifications in their own right. A unit can count towards more than one course or group award. To be awarded a unit an individual must provide evidence that he/she has achieved all the outcomes in the unit to the standards set in the unit specification. In qualifications awarded by the SQA, there are three kinds of unit corresponding to the different kinds of course and group award: National Units, Higher National Units, and SVQ Units. Every SQA unit achieved will be recorded on the individual's lifelong record – the Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Every unit is allocated to a level in the SCQF and most are credit-rated. Units range in size from 1 credit to 24 credits, with some, by exception, larger. Each credit represents 10 hours of teaching and learning, most National Units at SCQF levels 2-6 are worth 6 credits and National Units at SCQF level 7 and Higher National Units at levels 7-12 are worth 8 credits (or multiples thereof for each unit type). The credit values of SVQ Units vary and not all SVQ units are credit-rated yet, although this is being achieved as SVQs come up for re-accreditation.

### **National Units**

National Units are mainly used in schools and colleges. They are the building blocks of the National Courses and group awards described below. They are also qualifications in their own right. National Units cover the skills and knowledge associated with both study and work. Most National Units have a value of 6 or 12 SCQF credit points. They sit at SCQF levels 1-7.

### **National Courses**

National Courses are awarded by SQA and are the main qualifications offered in schools. National Courses are also offered in colleges.

- National Courses at SCQF levels 2 and 3 (National 2 and National 3) are made up of units totalling 18 SCQF credit points
- National Courses at SCQF level 4 (National 4) are made up of units totalling 24 SCQF credit points. One of the Units is designed to provide Added Value and will require the learner to demonstrate depth of understanding and/or application of skills
- National Courses at SCQF levels 5 and 6 (National 5 and Higher) are syllabus not unit-based and are worth 24 SCQF credit points, which includes credit for remediation, consolidation of learning and preparation for external assessment
- National Courses at SCQF level 7 (Advanced Highers) are, at the time of writing, made up of units totalling 24 SCQF credit points, with an additional 8 credit points (32 credit points in total) to allow for remediation, consolidation of learning and preparation for external assessment. However, from June-August 2019, they will be syllabus-based and no longer be unit-based. See Section A, point 17 for further information.

National Courses usually contain mandatory topics, with many also providing options allowing learners to choose between topics. They are mainly based on general educational or pre-vocational subjects (e.g. National 5 Art and Design, Higher Mathematics, Advanced Higher Mandarin (Traditional)).

To be awarded a National Course at SCQF level 1-4, the learner must provide evidence of achievement of the units that make up the course. Units can be assessed individually or in an integrated way. National 2, 3 and 4 courses only require the completion of the component units and are ungraded. The award of a National Course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher requires success in a combination of external assessment based on coursework and examinations, which are graded A to D. The external assessment will sample and integrate skills, knowledge and understanding from across the National Course. It might take the form of an examination, performance, project, practical activity, assignment, and usually a combination of two of these.

### **Awards**

SQA have also developed a range of very flexible Awards which reward wider achievement. They are often shorter than National Courses and recognise success across different levels of difficulty, meaning they are suitable for learners of all abilities. Some are endorsed by other professional bodies or government agencies. They include Personal Achievement Awards (SCQF Levels 1 and 2), Employability Awards (SCQF Levels 3 and 4), Leadership Awards (SCQF Levels 5 and 6), Volunteering Skills Awards (SCQF Levels 3, 4 and 5), Modern Languages for Life and Work Awards (SCQF Levels 3 and 4), and Internet Safety (SCQF Level 4).

### **National Certificates (NCs)**

NCs are SQA “group awards” available at SCQF levels 2-6. They are primarily aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults following full-time courses and are mainly offered in colleges of further education, though are also available in secondary schools, including through school-college partnerships. They are designed to prepare people for employment, career development or progression to a more advanced study at HNC/HND level. They also aim to develop a range of transferable knowledge and skills. NCs may relate to a subject (e.g. Celtic Studies) or an occupational area (e.g. Electrical Engineering). There are also NCs in subjects as diverse as Sound Production, Technical Theatre and Child, Health and Social Care.

NCs at SCQF levels 2 and 3 must be made up of units to the value of a minimum of 54 SCQF credit points: a majority of the units must be at the level of the NC. NCs at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 must be made up of units to the value of a minimum of 72 SCQF credit points: a majority of the units must be at the level of the NC.

### **National Progression Awards (NPAs)**

NPAs are SQA “group awards” available at SCQF levels 2-6. They are designed to assess a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist vocational areas and they link to National Occupational Standards, which are also the basis of SVQs, and are used in more traditional areas such as Construction and Childcare, and in new areas such as Digital Literacy and Social Software. They are mainly used by colleges for short study programmes, such as return-to-work courses or part-time learning for those already in work (e.g. the NPA Enterprise and Employability), though are also available in secondary schools, including through school-college partnerships.

NPAs must contain at least two units. They have a minimum credit value of 12 SCQF credit points of which at least half must be at the level of the NPA.

At least half of the credit points must be at the level of the Group Award. Where half of the unit credits in an NPA are at one level and half are at another level, there should be a strong rationale provided which determines the overall SCQF level.

### **Higher National Units**

Higher National units are mainly taken at college. They are the building blocks of Higher National Certificates (HNCs), Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and are also used in most Professional Development Awards (PDAs). They are also qualifications in their own right. Higher National units cover the skills and knowledge that people need in jobs at middle management and technician levels. These skills and knowledge are often also used for progression to courses at degree level. Most Higher National units have a value of 8 or 16 SCQF credit points. They can sit at various SCQF levels, most are at SCQF levels 7 and 8, but extend up to SCQF level 12.

### **Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Diplomas (HNDs)**

These are SQA Group Awards which are short-cycle HE qualifications under the Bologna Framework interpretations and as such they are aligned to EQF level 5. HNCs are awarded at SCQF level 7 and HNDs at SCQF level 8. HNCs have a credit value of 96 SCQF credit points of which at least 48 must be at SCQF level 7; HNDs have a credit value of 240 SCQF credit points of which at least 64 must be at SCQF level 8. Both qualifications can include options, but at least 48 SCQF credit points in an HNC and 96 SCQF credit points in an HND must be mandatory. HNCs include one “Graded Unit” worth 8 SCQF credit points at level 7; HNDs include one “Graded Unit” of 8 SCQF credit points at level 7, plus one or more “Graded Units” worth 16 credit points at SCQF level 8. These form the basis of grading which is recorded on the Scottish Qualification Certificate issued.

Many HNCs form the first year of an HND. These qualifications are developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in partnership with Scottish colleges, universities, industry and commerce. They focus on different occupational areas and prepare people with the knowledge and skills to work in these areas. Most of them combine formal and non-formal learning. They cover subject areas from the more traditional (accounting, business administration, childcare, computing, engineering, hospitality) to the newer (creative industries, paralegal, sports and leisure). They are aligned to National Occupational Standards, or other professional body standards. Many HNCs and HNDs provide opportunities for advanced entry to degree courses with credit transfer or exemptions of one or two years.

### **Professional Development Awards (PDAs)**

PDAs are SQA “group awards” available at SCQF levels 6-11. In principle they could also be available at SCQF level 12. They are aligned to National Occupational Standards or

other professional body standards and are designed to assess and certificate progression in a defined set of specialist occupational skills and are intended for individuals already in a career or vocation who wish to extend or broaden their knowledge and skills. .

At SCQF level 6, PDAs are made up of SQA units with a minimum credit value of 12 SCQF credit points and at SCQF levels 7–12, PDAs are made up of a minimum credit value of 16 SCQF credit points. They must have at least two component units and may contain mandatory and optional units. At least half the SCQF credit points for the PDA will be at the level of the PDA.

## **b) Qualifications in the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS)**

The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions is an outcomes-based structure based on a consistent qualification nomenclature, qualification descriptors, and credits. Undergraduate qualifications offered in Scottish Universities are mainly modular, with each module being allocated to a level in the SCQF and credit-rated.

### **The Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)**

CertHEs and DipHEs may be awarded for achievement over a breadth of subject areas or for studies focused on one subject, in some cases with a strong vocational focus. They are awarded at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. The CertHE requires at least 120 credits of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF level 7 or above while the DipHE at least 240 credits of which a minimum of 90 are at SCQF level 8 or above.

### **Ordinary degrees**

Some Scottish bachelor's (non-honours) degrees will be highly focused while others will develop greater breadth of outcomes. Many degrees that have a specific vocational focus carry recognition by the appropriate professional or statutory body. It is awarded as either a Bachelor of Science (BSc), or a Bachelor of Arts (BA)<sup>41</sup>. The Scottish bachelor's (non-honours) degree is a recognised 'normal' entry requirement to a number of professions across the UK. The bachelor's degree is awarded at SCQF level 9. It requires at least 360 credits of which a minimum of 60 are at SCQF level 9.

### **Honours degrees**

The Scottish honours degree (bachelor's degree with honours) will exhibit a balance of breadth and depth as will be clear from particular definitive records. It is awarded mainly as either a Bachelor of Science (BSc Hons), or a Bachelor of Arts (BA Hons)<sup>42</sup>. Many honours degrees will have a specific vocational focus, and in some cases will carry recognition by the appropriate professional or statutory body. The bachelor's degree with honours is awarded at SCQF level 10. It requires at least 480 credits of which a minimum of 90 are at

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<sup>41</sup> In a small number of universities, in some faculties, this qualification is titled 'Master of Arts (MA)'.

<sup>42</sup> As noted above.

SCQF level 9 and a minimum of 90 are at SCQF level 10.

### **Master's degrees**

In the majority of cases, the master's degree reflects a specialised knowledge and understanding of particular areas, applications or levels of expertise in particular subject or professional areas. In some professional areas, master's degrees are linked to structures of continuing professional development. It is available through different routes – e.g. full-time or part-time postgraduate study or as a programme that integrates a period of undergraduate study with the master's degree. The first of these routes typically leads to the award of Master of Science or Master of Arts depending on the subject taken, but other titles may also be used. Integrated programmes typically lead to a subject-specific qualification title (e.g. MEng) and are often linked to professional/statutory body recognition. The master's degree is awarded at SCQF level 11. It requires at least 180 credits of which a minimum of 150 are at SCQF level 11. Integrated masters require at least 600 credits of which a minimum of 120 are at SCQF level 11.

### **Doctoral degrees**

Doctoral degrees reflect specialised, advanced knowledge, understanding and practice at the frontiers of the subject or professional area. The PhD is normally awarded following successful completion of a thesis which requires the equivalent of a minimum of three years' full-time research and study to complete. Professional doctorates also require the equivalent of three years' full-time research and study to complete and will frequently involve work-based, as well as institution-based, research and study. Doctoral degrees are awarded at SCQF level 12. They require at least 540 credits of which a minimum of 420 are at SCQF Level 12. (Credit definitions do not apply to research-based doctorates.)

### **c) Qualifications Accredited By SQA Accreditation**

SQA Accreditation has a remit from Scottish Government to accredit any type of qualification, other than a degree, from approved awarding bodies. It is also an SCQF credit-rating body for those qualifications which it accredits.

### **SVQ Units**

SVQ Units have a one to one relationship with National Occupational Standards (statements of competence drawn up by government-sponsored Standard Setting Organisations, employer-led organisations that cover specific industries in the UK. There are Standard Setting Organisations for most industries.

Each SVQ unit defines competence in an aspect of a job or a work-role. To achieve a unit, an individual has to gather evidence – usually from their work – to show they are competent. There are no formal written examinations for SVQs or SVQ units. Performance Criteria describe the level of competence that has to be achieved, and Knowledge & Understanding describe the knowledge that is needed. SVQ Units are usually combined into a qualification structure to create Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs). The calculation of SCQF credit

points and the allocation of a SCQF level of an SVQ Unit is undertaken by specialists in the area of the qualification: the size and level of a unit will depend on the work it deals with.

### **Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)**

Scottish Vocational Qualifications are available at SCQF levels 4-11. The size and level of SVQs varies according to the number of units which have to be achieved in each qualification. They are primarily designed as outcomes of non-formal (workplace) learning although in some cases elements of the SVQ can be achieved in simulated environments. SVQs are the basis of Scottish Modern Apprenticeships. There are SVQs in most areas of the economy/labour market. SVQs are approved for use by SQA Accreditation and then awarding bodies seek accreditation to award the units and or the full qualifications. This includes SQA Awarding Body. All SVQs must be SCQF credit rated and levelled by SQA Accreditation.

### **Qualifications required for Regulation**

SQA Accreditation has been asked by the Security Industry Authority to accredit qualifications in the security sector where the individual is required to achieve this qualification before being given a licence to enable to undertake employment in this sector e.g. CCTV Surveillance. The Scottish Government has also asked SQA Accreditation to accredit qualifications in the Licenced Trade sector. In both cases, this is to ensure that the qualifications awarded are of an appropriate standard and meet relevant legislative requirements.

### **Other accredited qualifications**

SQA Accreditation can accredit any other type of qualification (other than a degree) submitted to it by an approved awarding body. Some of these qualifications are alternative competency based qualifications (CBQs) which can be used in Scottish Apprenticeship frameworks in place of SVQs, where the sector does not value the SVQs.

Awarding bodies elect to voluntarily seek accreditation so that they can demonstrate to customers and potential customers that their qualifications meet the requirements of Scotland's national accreditation body. Most awarding bodies seek to have their qualifications credit rated by SQA Accreditation when they submit the qualifications for accreditation.

#### **d) Other credit rated qualifications on the SCQF**

As noted in the response to EQF Criterion 3, more than 900 qualifications have been added to the SCQF database by CRBs alongside mainstream qualifications. These qualifications may belong to the CRB's own organisation or may have been accepted on to the SCQF as a result of third-party credit rating.

The submitting bodies who own these qualifications include government agencies, professional organisations, individual employers and training companies, trade unions,



youth organisations, community organisations, adult education organisations and charities. The qualifications range from SCQF level 2 to SCQF level 11 and from 1 SCQF credit to over 100 SCQF credits.

**Qualifications on the SCQF belonging to and credit rated by partner organisations:**

The following are examples of qualifications credit rated onto the SCQF by different Colleges

*Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills* (SCQF Level 2, 4 credit points)

*Access to painting and decorating* (SCQF Level 3, 8 credit points) (EQF level 1)

*Certificate in Youth Work Practice* (SCQF Level 5, 10 to 14 credit points) (EQF level 3)

*Advanced Level Dental Nursing* (SCQF Level 6, 60 credit points) (EQF level 4)

**Qualifications credit rated by CRBs for their own sector:**

Seven out of the eight additional CRBs are approved by SCQF Partnership to credit rate qualifications for their own sector.

Examples of Scottish Police College qualifications include:

- *Probationer Training* (SCQF Level 7, 170 credit points) (EQF level 5)
- *Police Driving Instructors* (SCQF Level 10, 40 credit points) (EQF level 6)

Examples of Chartered Institute of Bankers qualifications include:

- *Professional Banker Certificate* (SCQF Level 7, 13 credit points) (EQF level 5)
- *Professional Banker Diploma* (SCQF Level 8, 30 credit points) (EQF level 5)
- *Diploma in Financial Services Leadership* (SCQF Level 10, 25 credit points) (EQF level 6)

Examples of Institute of Counselling qualifications include:

- *Certificate in Addiction Counselling* (SCQF Level 8, 20 credit points) (EQF level 5)
- *Certificate in Mentoring* (SCQF Level 8, 20 credit points) (EQF level 5)
- *Certificate in Youth Counselling* (SCQF Level 8, 20 credit points) (EQF level 5)

**Third-party credit-rated qualifications:**

As highlighted in Section B, in response to EQF Criterion 4, a number of CRBs have been approved to offer third-party credit rating. CRBs who offer this service work with a very wide range of organisations who submit qualifications for entry onto the SCQF. Some examples of third-party credit rated qualifications include:

Qualification title	SCQF Level	SCQF Credit Points	EQF Level	Credit Rating Body	Submitting Body
<i>First Steps to Youth Work</i>	3	1	1	Edinburgh Napier University	North Lanarkshire -



					CLD Department
<i>National Navigation Award</i>	4	2	2	West Highland College - UHI	National Navigation Award Scheme
<i>Across the Minch Traditional Boatbuilding in the North West of Scotland</i>	6	28	4	SQA Credit Rating Service	Grimsay Boatshed Trust
<i>Fire Safety Officers (Foundation)</i>	7	15	5	Scottish Police College - Tulliallan	CS Todd & Associates
<i>General Practice Nursing Programme</i>	10	60	6	Queen Margaret University	NHS Education for Scotland (NES)
<i>Advanced Professional Diploma in Technical Building Conservation</i>	11	127	7	SQA Credit Rating Service	Historic Environment Scotland

## Annex 4: SCQF Level Descriptors

SCQF Level descriptors can also be accessed at this link: <http://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SCQF-Level-Descriptors-WEB-Aug-2015.pdf>

### Characteristic 1: Knowledge and understanding

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge.</li> <li>• Simple facts and ideas.</li> </ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge.</li> <li>• Simple facts and ideas in, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.</li> </ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge.</li> <li>• Some simple facts and ideas in, about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology.</li> </ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge.</li> <li>• A range of simple facts, ideas and theories in, about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology.</li> </ul>
Level 6	Level 7		Level 8	
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appreciation of the body of knowledge that constitutes a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• A range of knowledge, facts, theories, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices and techniques about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Relating the subject/discipline to a range of practical and/or commonplace applications.</li> </ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overall appreciation of the body of knowledge that constitutes a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles of the subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• An awareness of the dynamic nature of knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>• An understanding of the difference between explanations based on evidence and/or</li> </ul>		Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of the subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Specialist knowledge in some areas.</li> <li>• A discerning understanding of a defined range of core theories, concepts, principles and terminology.</li> <li>• Awareness and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms.</li> </ul>	

	research and other sources, and of the importance of this difference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Awareness and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes.</li></ul>
<b>Level 9</b>	<b>Level 10</b>	
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An understanding of the scope and defining features of a subject/discipline/sector, and an integrated knowledge of its main areas and boundaries.</li><li>A critical understanding of a range of the principles, principal theories, concepts and terminology of the subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>Knowledge of one or more specialisms that is informed by forefront developments.</li></ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>A critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles.</li><li>Detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, some of which is informed by, or at the forefront of, a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline/sector is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies.</li></ul>	
<b>Level 11</b>	<b>Level 12</b>	
Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of the subject/discipline/sector – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions.</li><li>A critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles.</li><li>A critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, concepts and principles.</li><li>Extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at, or informed by, developments at the forefront.</li><li>A critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline/sector and one or more specialisms</li></ul>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A critical overview of a subject/discipline/sector, including critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles.</li><li>A critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms.</li><li>Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline/sector.</li></ul>	

## SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

## Characteristic 2: Practice: applied knowledge, skills and understanding

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate knowledge to a few simple everyday contexts with prompting.</li> <li>Use a few very simple skills.</li> <li>Carry out, with guidance, a few familiar tasks.</li> <li>Use, under supervision, basic tools and materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate knowledge to personal and/or everyday contexts with some prompting.</li> <li>Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks.</li> <li>Complete pre-planned tasks.</li> <li>Use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts.</li> <li>Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements.</li> <li>Prepare for familiar and routine tasks.</li> <li>Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate knowledge and ideas to personal and/or practical contexts.</li> <li>Use a range of skills associated with the subject/discipline/sector to complete some routine and non-routine tasks.</li> <li>Plan and organise both familiar and unfamiliar tasks.</li> <li>Select appropriate tools and materials and use them safely and effectively.</li> <li>Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices.</li> </ul>
Level 6	Level 7		Level 8	
Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In known, practical contexts.</li> <li>In using some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>In exercising these in routine contexts that may have non-routine elements.</li> <li>In planning how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary.</li> </ul>	Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In practical contexts.</li> <li>In using some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>To practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.</li> </ul>		Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In using a range of professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector, a few of which are advanced and/or complex.</li> <li>In carrying out routine lines of enquiry, development or investigation into professional level problems and issues.</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To adapt routine practices within accepted standards.</li></ul>
<b>Level 9</b>	<b>Level 10</b>	
Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In using a range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>In using a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised and/or advanced.</li><li>In practising routine methods of enquiry and/or research.</li><li>To practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability.</li></ul>	Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In using a wide range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or material associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>In using a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised, advanced and/or at the forefront of a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>In executing a defined project of research, development or investigation and in identifying and implementing relevant outcomes.</li><li>To practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.</li></ul>	
<b>Level 11</b>	<b>Level 12</b>	
Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In using a significant range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>In using a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of, or informed by forefront developments.</li><li>In applying a range of standard and specialised research and/or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</li><li>In planning and executing a significant project of research, investigation or development.</li><li>In demonstrating originality and/or creativity, including in practices.</li><li>To practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.</li></ul>	Apply knowledge, skills and understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In using a significant range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>In using and enhancing a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of one or more specialisms.</li><li>In applying a range of standard and specialised research and/or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</li><li>In designing and executing research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues.</li><li>In demonstrating originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices.</li><li>To practise in the context of new problems and circumstances.</li></ul>	

## SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

### Characteristic 3: Generic cognitive skills

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use rehearsed stages for solving problems.</li><li>• Operate in personal and/or everyday contexts.</li><li>• Take some account, with prompting, of identified consequences of action.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify with some prompting a process to deal with a situation or issue.</li><li>• Operate in familiar contexts using given criteria.</li><li>• Take account of some identified consequences of action.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use, with guidance, given stages of a process to deal with a problem, situation or issue.</li><li>• Operate in straightforward contexts.</li><li>• Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a process to deal with a problem, situation or issue that is straightforward.</li><li>• Operate in a familiar context, but where there is a need to take account of or use additional information of different kinds, some of which will be theoretical or hypothetical.</li></ul>
Level 6	Level 7		Level 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain, organise and use factual, theoretical and/or hypothetical information in problem solving.</li><li>• Make generalisations and predictions.</li><li>• Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are routine to a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>• Use a range of approaches to address defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues that are within the common understandings in a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>• Use a range of approaches to formulate and critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems and issues.</li></ul>	

Level 9	Level 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues in a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues.</li> <li>• Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically identify, define, conceptualise and analyse complex/professional problems and issues.</li> <li>• Offer professional insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues.</li> <li>• Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional issues.</li> <li>• Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources.</li> </ul>
Level 11	Level 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to forefront issues, or issues that are informed by forefront developments in the subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues.</li> <li>• Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.</li> <li>• Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in a subject/discipline/sector.</li> <li>• Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues.</li> <li>• Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues.</li> <li>• Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.</li> <li>• Deal with complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete</li> </ul>



## SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

### Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and numeracy skills

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.	Use simple skills with assistance, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.</li><li>Carry out a limited range of simple tasks to process and access information.</li><li>Use a limited range of simple numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts.</li></ul>	Use simple skills, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.</li><li>Carry out simple tasks to process and access information.</li><li>Use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts.</li></ul>	Use some routine skills, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.</li><li>Use the basic features of familiar ICT applications to process and obtain information.</li><li>Use basic numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts.</li></ul>	Use a range of routine skills, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.</li><li>Use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.</li><li>Use a range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts that may have some non-routine elements.</li></ul>
Level 6	Level 7	Level 8		
Use a wide range of skills, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.</li><li>Select and use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.</li><li>Use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements.</li></ul>	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form.</li><li>Use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.</li><li>Select and use standard ICT applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data.</li></ul>	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes.</li><li>Use a range of standard ICT applications to process and obtain data.</li><li>Use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.</li></ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination.</li><li>• Use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.</li></ul>	
<b>Level 9</b>	<b>Level 10</b>	
Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present or convey, formally and informally, information on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline/sector to a range of audiences.</li><li>• Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work.</li><li>• Interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets.</li></ul>	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present or convey, formally and informally, information about specialised topics to informed audiences.</li><li>• Communicate with peers, senior colleagues and specialists on a professional level.</li><li>• Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.</li><li>• Interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets.</li></ul>	
<b>Level 11</b>	<b>Level 12</b>	
Use a wide range of routine skills and a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise.</li><li>• Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists.</li><li>• Use a wide range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.</li><li>• Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data.</li></ul>	Use a wide range of routine skills and a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline/sector, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose.</li><li>• Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms/sectors.</li><li>• Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work.</li><li>• Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data.</li></ul>	

## SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

## Characteristic 5: Autonomy, accountability and working with others

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent directive supervision.</li><li>• Identify, given simple criteria, some strengths and/or weaknesses of the work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent directive supervision.</li><li>• Participate in the setting of goals, timelines, etc.</li><li>• Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes.</li><li>• Identify, given simple criteria, own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work alone or with others on tasks with regular, directive supervision.</li><li>• Contribute to the setting of goals, timelines, etc.</li><li>• Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes.</li><li>• Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum directive supervision.</li><li>• Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team.</li><li>• Take lead responsibility for some tasks.</li><li>• Show an awareness of own and/or others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and contribute to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.</li></ul>
Level 6		Level 7	Level 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take responsibility for carrying out a range of activities where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision.</li><li>• Exercise some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work within a defined and supervised structure.</li><li>• Manage limited resources within defined and supervised areas of work.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>• Accept supervision in less familiar areas of work.</li><li>• Exercise some managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>• Exercise managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined structure.</li><li>• Manage resources within defined areas of work.</li><li>• Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.</li></ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take account of roles and responsibilities related to the tasks being carried out and take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage limited resources within defined areas of work.</li><li>• Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defied contexts.</li><li>• Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities when carrying out and evaluating tasks.</li><li>• Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practise in ways that show awareness of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions when carrying out and evaluating tasks.</li><li>• Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice.</li><li>• Manage, under guidance, ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</li></ul>
<b>Level 9</b>	<b>Level 10</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector.</li><li>• Exercise managerial responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</li><li>• Practise in ways that show awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</li><li>• Work, under guidance, with specialist practitioners.</li><li>• Seeking guidance where appropriate, manage ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices,</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/equivalent activities.</li><li>• Exercise significant managerial responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</li><li>• Practise in ways that show awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</li><li>• Work, under guidance, in a peer relationship with specialist practitioners.</li><li>• Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking.</li><li>• Manage complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</li><li>• Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.</li></ul>	

Level 11	Level 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</li> <li>• Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</li> <li>• Take significant responsibility for a range of resources.</li> <li>• Work in a peer relationship with specialist practitioners.</li> <li>• Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development and/or new thinking.</li> <li>• Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Manage complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate substantial authority and exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</li> <li>• Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</li> <li>• Take significant responsibility for a range of resources.</li> <li>• Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and resolving problems and issues.</li> <li>• Practise in ways which are reflective, self-critical and based on research/evidence.</li> <li>• Manage complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</li> </ul>

## Annex 5: Detailed comparison of EQF and SCQF level descriptors

### a) Overall approach

The comparison of EQF and SCQF levels for the 2010 Referencing Report was carried out in three phases. First, a number of common factors in the level descriptors were identified used for an initial comparison. Second, a detailed level-by-level comparison of the frameworks was carried out. Third, the frameworks were compared using information additional to the descriptors but drawn from SCQF and EQF documents about the levels, their intentions and contents. Finally the three sets of conclusions were drawn together and summarised.

Unlike 2010, a single approach was used for the linguistic analysis in the current referencing activity:

- a) Start with the EQF level descriptors and look for evidence of a similar level of demand in the SCQF descriptors.
- b) Deal separately with the Knowledge, Skills and Competence descriptors of the EQF, drawing on evidence from any of the SCQF characteristics which offer matches.
- c) Set out an understanding/interpretation of the key concepts embedded in the EQF level descriptors and the level-to-level progression.
- d) Look for strong matches to EQF levels, where the SCQF uses the same or closely related concepts and level-to-level progression.
- e) Where evidence of this kind is missing or weak, relate SCQF levels to EQF by finding an indirect match where the SCQF uses related concepts.
- f) Where no conceptual match, or only a very weak comparison, can be found between a given EQF level and an SCQF levels, look for evidence that the SCQF level makes greater demands than the EQF level below and lesser demands than the EQF level above the given level (e.g. if EQF level 3 is the level in question, and SCQF level might be shown to make a greater demand than EQF level 2 but a lesser demand than EQF level 4).
- g) Bring together the available evidence for Knowledge, Skills and Competence at each EQF level into a “best fit” conclusion.

As in 2010, the term “best fit” was taken to mean that each level in the framework should only be matched to one level on the EQF, and that indirect evidence of a match was acceptable. This meant, for example, if the demands of the SCQF level were greater than EQF level 3 and less than EQF level 5, this could be taken as evidence of a match to EQF level 4 even if there was little or no direct evidence.

Following the linguistic analysis, recommendations regarding the level-to-level matching were sense checked against two examples of external references where the links known to exist between the EQF, the SCQF and two other Frameworks: the QF-EHEA and the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework.

The tables in the following pages contain the results of the linguistic analysis undertaken to compare the SCQF level descriptors with those of the EQF.

- The results are presented in 3 tables. Each table includes the results of analysis against a single component of the EQF descriptors.

- The findings are organised in terms of EQF level, progressing from EQF Level 1 to EQF Level 8.
- The characteristics of the SCQF are referred to by abbreviations:
  - K&U = Knowledge and understanding
  - AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding
  - GCS = Generic cognitive skills
  - CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills
  - AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others

Findings from the referencing activity completed in 2010 identified that there was no match between SCQF Level 1 and the EQF. SCQF Level 1 recognises learning development and achievement that ranges from participation in experiential situations to the achievement of basic tasks, with varying degrees of support. This does not relate to any EQF level. The findings from 2010 relating to SCQF Level 1 were checked and confirmed during this referencing activity. Therefore, SCQF Level 1 is not included in this analysis report.

In 2010, it was also found that SCQF Level 2 could be referenced to EQF Level 1 only in some domains. The partial matching was not typical of other levels and it was agreed that SCQF Level 2 should not be referenced to the EQF. This again was checked and confirmed during this reference activity.



**Table 1: Referencing to the EQF 'Knowledge' components**

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
<b>EQF Level</b>	<b>EQF descriptor statement</b>	<b>Key linguistic features</b>	<b>Findings from comparison with SCQF descriptors</b>	<b>SCQF Level</b>
<b>1</b>	Basic general knowledge.	Key features: - basic knowledge which is “general” (i.e. not associated with a field of work or study, which doesn’t feature until EQF Level 2)	<p>Knowledge in the SCQF is dealt with mainly in K&amp;U, but also in AKSU and GCS. “Basic knowledge is mentioned in K&amp;U at S2, S3, S4 and S5. There is no reference in the SCQF to “general knowledge”, but at SCQF Level 2 and SCQF Level 3, knowledge means “simple facts and ideas”. At SCQF Level 3 these are “associated with a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level3: K&amp;U). This equates to the “field of work or study” in the EQF In AKSU at SCQF Level 2 and SSCQF Level 3, knowledge is related to “personal and/or everyday contexts” which may equate to “general knowledge”. At SCQF Level 2, this is done “with prompting” and at SSCQF Level 3 “with some prompting” – there is no reference to prompting in the EQF.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 3 to EQF 1</b>  <b>Rationale:</b> SCQF Level 3 provides a moderate level of match, although there is some matching at SCQF Level 2. Although the knowledge appears to demand more than the general knowledge of EQF Level 1, it is used with prompting which may be seen as a lesser demand than EQF Level 1.</p>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study.	Key features: - basic knowledge which is factual	<p>At SCQF Level 4, knowledge comprises “some simple facts and ideas in, about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector”, but also “knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology”. (SCQF Level 4: K&amp;U). This is more detailed and possibly more demanding than EQF Level 2, but does not reach to the “general concepts” of EQF Level 3.</p>	<b>4</b>

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
		- knowledge of (about? pertaining to?) a field of work or study	<b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 4 to EQF 2</b>	
<b>3</b>	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study.	Key features: - knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts (not yet theoretical knowledge- E4) - knowledge in a field of work or study (i.e. practical or applicable knowledge?)	At SCQF Level 5, some knowledge is about theories, “a range of simple facts, ideas and theories in, about and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 5: K&U). SCQF Level 5 also requires “knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology” (SCQF Level 5: K&U) which can be related to “practical contexts” (SCQF Level 5: AKSU). <b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 5 TO EQF 3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study.	Key features: - knowledge which is both factual and theoretical - knowledge pertaining to “broad contexts” within a field of work or study (indicating a degree of specialisation?)	The requirements at SCQF Level 6 appear to be broader than the requirements of EQF Level 3 and EQF Level 4, but there is no wording which relates directly to the “broad contexts”, of the EQF at SCQF Level 6. The following may be an indirect match: “an appreciation of the body of knowledge that constitutes a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 6: K&U) “a range of knowledge, facts, theories, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices and techniques about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector”. (SCQF Level 6: K&U) <b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 6 to EQF 4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5</b>	Comprehensive, specialised, factual	Key features:	In the SCQF, the adjective “specialised” is mainly used in relation to skills, and is not used until SCQF Level 8. In relation to knowledge, “specialised theories,	<b>7</b>

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics:      K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding      GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
	and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comprehensive specialised knowledge</li> <li>- knowledge which is both factual and theoretical</li> <li>- knowledge within a field of work or study</li> <li>- awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge (i.e. conscious of limitations, but not necessarily understanding them)</li> </ul>	<p>concepts and principles” are referred to only at SCQF Level 11. The adjective “comprehensive” is not used at all. Nonetheless, the knowledge outcomes associated with SCQF Level 7 do seem comparable to EQF Level 5:</p> <p>“knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles of a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 7: K&amp;U)</p> <p>“an overall appreciation of the body of knowledge which constitutes a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 7: K&amp;U)</p> <p>SCQF Level 7 also adds demands which may be interpreted as “specialised” or even to point towards EQF Level 6:</p> <p>“an awareness of the dynamic nature of knowledge and understanding” (SCQF Level 7: K&amp;U)</p> <p>“an understanding of the difference between explanations based on evidence and/or research and other forms of explanation and of the importance of this difference”. (SCQF Level 7: K&amp;U)</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 7 to EQF 5</b></p>	
			<p>At SCQF Level 8, the learner should have “knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/discipline/sector” together with “specialist knowledge in some areas” and “a discerning understanding of a defined range of core theories, concepts, principles and terminology” seem to combine dimensions which match the comprehensiveness and specialisation of EQF Level 5. (SCQF Level 8: K&amp;U)</p>	<b>8</b>

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
			<p>The “awareness and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms” and the “awareness and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes” seem to point towards or even beyond, the awareness in EQF Level 5 of the boundaries of the knowledge held.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 8 to EQF 5</b></p>	
<b>6</b>	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Key features: - advanced knowledge of (about? pertaining to?) a field of work or study - knowledge and critical understanding of theories and principles (i.e. an understanding based on reflection, analysis and evaluation?)	<p>SCQF Level 9 builds on SCQF Level 8 and requires “an understanding of the scope and defining features of a subject/discipline/sector and an integrated knowledge of its main areas and boundaries” (SCQF Level 9: K&amp;U). The SCQF Level 9 outcomes also refer to “knowledge of one or more specialisms that is informed by forefront developments” (SCQF Level 9: K&amp;U). This seems like the “advanced knowledge” of EQF Level 6.</p> <p>Like EQF Level 6, SCQF Level 9 requires the learner to have “a critical understanding of a range of the principal theories, concepts and terminology of the subject/discipline/sector”.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 9 to EQF 6</b></p>	<b>9</b>
			<p>SCQF Level 10 more than meets the EQF Level 6 descriptor, but doesn’t require the “highly specialised knowledge”, the original thinking or inter-field understanding of EQF Level 7.</p> <p>The relevant K&amp;U outcomes at SCQF Level 10 are:</p>	<b>10</b>

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
			<p>“knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of a subject discipline/sector”</p> <p>“a critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles”</p> <p>“detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline/sector” .</p> <p>“knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline/sector is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies”</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 10 to EQF 6</b></p>	
<b>7</b>	<p>Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research.</p> <p>Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.</p>	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge which is highly specialised</li> <li>- Some knowledge at the forefront in a field of work or study</li> <li>- Knowledge which can be used as the basis for original thinking and/or research</li> <li>- critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field of work or study</li> <li>- critical awareness of</li> </ul>	<p>The key features of EQF Level 7 can be matched as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At SCQF Level 11, the learner should have “knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline/sector – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions” and “a critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline/sector and one or more specialisms” (SCWF Level 12: K&amp;U)</li> <li>- The learner should be able to use this knowledge: “in demonstrating originality and/or creativity including in practices” (SCQF Level 12: AKSU)</li> <li>- The learner should have “extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at, or informed by, developments at the forefront” (SCQF Level 11: K&amp;U)</li> </ul> <p>Although there is not direct reference to the interface between fields (EQF Level 8), learners should be able to, “apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to</p>	<b>11</b>

<b>KNOWLEDGE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
		knowledge issues at the interface between fields of work or study (i.e. the ability to gather data to further one's understanding of issues)	<p>forefront issues that are informed by forefront developments in the subject/discipline/sector" and "Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline/sector". (SCQF Level 11: GCS)</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 11 to EQF 7</b></p>	
<b>8</b>	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields.	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques</li> <li>- synthesis and evaluation</li> <li>- solve critical problems in research and/or innovation</li> <li>- extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</li> </ul>	<p>The key features of EQF Level 8 can be matched as follows:</p> <p>At SCQF Level 12, the learner should have "a critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms" and "knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline/sector" (SCQF Level 12: K&amp;U)</p> <p>The learner should be able to use this knowledge "in designing and executing research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues" (SCQF Level 12: AKSU)</p> <p>The learner should be able to "identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues" and "develop creative and original responses to problems and issues". (SCQF Level 12: GCS)</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 12 to EQF 8</b></p>	<b>12</b>

**Table 2: Referencing EQF 'Skills' Component**

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
EQF Level	EQF descriptor statement	Key linguistic features	Findings from comparison with SCQF descriptors	SCQF Level
1	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Key features: - basic skills - simple tasks	Skills are a feature of AKSU and GCS. - At SCQF Level 2, skills are “very simple” and tasks are “familiar” (SCQF Level 2: AKSU). - At SCQF Level 3, skills are “basic, routine” and tasks are “familiar and routine” and “pre-planned” (SCQF Level 3: AKSU) - At SCQF Level 4, skills are used to carry out “straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements” (SCQF Level 4: AKSU). <b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 3 to EQF 1</b>	3
2	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Key features: - basic skills (cognitive and practical) - use relevant information - carry out tasks (not necessarily simple tasks) - solve routine problems (first appearance of problem solving) - use simple rules and tools	- Skills are “basic” at SCQF Level 3: at SCQF Level 4, the reference is to “a few skills” applied to complete “straightforward tasks” (SCQF Level 4: AKSU). - The nearest outcome to “relevant information is relating knowledge to practical contexts – practical contexts appear for the first time at SCQF Level 4 (SCQF Level 4: AKSU). - Problem solving is a feature of GCS. It first appears at in the SCQF at SCQF Level 4. - “Use, with guidance, given stages of a problem-solving approach to deal with a problem, situation or issue.” (SCQF Level 4: GCS). The related statement at SCQF Level 3 is more conditional and less consonant with EQF Level 2: “Identify with some prompting a process to deal with a situation or issue.” (SCQF Level 3: GCS) - Use of tools is a feature of AKSU: “Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.” (SCQF Level 4: AKSU) The related statement at SCQF	4



<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics:      K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding      GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
			<p>Level 3 is more conditional: "Use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively..." (SCQF Level 3: AKSU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCQF Level 5 introduces ideas like planning and organising tasks which may be unfamiliar and taking account of additional theoretical or hypothetical information. These factors go beyond EQF Level 2.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 4 to EQF 2.</b></p>	
<b>3</b>	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a range of skills (cognitive and practical)</li> <li>- select and apply (use?) basic information</li> <li>- accomplish tasks</li> <li>- solve problems (routine?)</li> <li>- select and apply basic methods, tools, materials</li> </ul>	<p>Although there are few direct matches in the wording, the AKSU and GCS outcomes for SCQF Level 5 suggest that it makes a level of demand which is at least at EQF Level 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Use a range of skills associated with the subject/discipline/sector to complete some routine and non-routine tasks." (SCQF Level 5: AKSU)</li> <li>- "Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively." (SCQF Level 5: AKSU)</li> <li>- "Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices." (SCQF Level 5: AKSU)</li> <li>- "Use a process to deal with a problem, situation or issue that is straightforward". (SCQF Level 5: GCS)</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 5 to EQF 3</b></p>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a range of skills (cognitive and practical)</li> <li>- generate solutions to specific problems</li> <li>- in a field of work or study</li> </ul>	<p>The scope of the SCQF Level 6 descriptors goes well beyond the outcomes of EQF Level 4. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding "in using some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector" (SCQF Level 6: AKSU).</li> </ul>	<b>6</b>

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics:      K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding      GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding “in planning how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary” (SCQF Level 6: AKSU).</li> <li>- “Make generalisations and predictions” and “Draw conclusions and suggest solutions” (SCQF Level 6: GCS).</li> </ul> <p>On the other hand, SCQF Level 6 does not go so far as to require the key features of EQF Level 5 – “comprehensive range of skills; “creative solutions”; “abstract problems”.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 6 to EQF 4</b></p>	
<b>5</b>	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Key features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a comprehensive range of skills (cognitive and practical)</li> <li>- develop creative solutions to abstract problems</li> </ul>	<p>There are some challenges to referencing the SCQF to the EQF skills descriptors at EQF Level 5. There is no reference at any SCQF level to “a comprehensive range of skills” and the terms “creative” and “abstract” do not appear until SCQF Level 11.</p> <p>However, the term “professional is introduced at SCQF Level 7 and is very important. It means more than “vocational”. In the Scottish system the expression “professional” can be used in a similar way to “technical” in other national systems. In this context “professional” in the SCQF means “specialised”. This occurs in “Apply knowledge skills and understanding in using some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 7: AKSU).</p> <p>There is a problem-solving outcome at S7: “Use a range of approaches to address defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts” (S7: GCS).</p> <p>Although there is no straightforward match with the problem solving outcomes of E5, this</p>	<b>7</b>

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b>				
SCQF Characteristics:     K&U= Knowledge & understanding   AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding   GCS = Generic cognitive skills CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills   AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others				
			<p>may be seen as evidence of a higher level of demand than E4 (“generate solutions to specific problems”) and a lower level than E6 (“solve complex and unpredictable problems”).</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 7 to EQF 5</b></p>	
			<p>There are also some challenges matching SCQF Level 8 to the EQF skills descriptors.</p> <p>SCQF Level 8 (AKSU) refers to “using a range of professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector, a few of which are advanced and/or complex”: this may be seen as evidence at a higher level than EQF Level 4 (“a range of skills”) but a lower level than EQF Level 6 (“advanced skills”).</p> <p>SCQF Level 8 (GCS) says “use a range of approaches to formulate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues”: this may be seen as evidence at a higher level than EQF Level 4 (“generate solutions to specific problems”) but a lower level than EQF Level 6 (“solve complex and unpredictable problems”).</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 8 and EQF 5</b></p>	<b>8</b>
<b>6</b>	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and	Key features: - advanced skills (cognitive and practical) - mastery and innovation	<p>The terms of the EQF descriptors for skill at EQF Level 6 do not match directly with those used in the SCQF. In addition to the issues identified at earlier levels, the terms “mastery” and “innovation” are not used in the SCQF level descriptors.</p>	<b>9</b>

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics:      K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding      GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
	unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- solve complex and unpredictable problems</li> <li>- in a specialised field of work or study</li> </ul>	<p>“A few” skills at SCQF Level 9 are “specialised and/or advanced” and are used “in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability” (SCQF Level 9: AKSU)</p> <p>Learners may also be expected to “identify and analyse” problems and issues which are “routine professional” (SCQF Level 9: GCS) in the SCQF sense of “professional”.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 9 to EQF 6</b></p>	
			<p>Similar evidence can be identified in SCQF Level 10 as in SCQF Level 9. However, the level of demand is clearly higher at SCQF Level 10 with the result that there is a closer match to some features of EQF Level 6.</p> <p>“A few” skills at SCQF Level 10 are “specialised, advanced and/or at the forefront of a subject/discipline/sector” and are used “in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism” (SCQF Level 10: AKSU)</p> <p>Learners may also be expected to “critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse” problems and issues which are “complex/professional level” (SCQF Level 10: GCS).</p> <p>Also, in dealing with these problems and issues, individuals should “demonstrate some originality and creativity” (SCQF Level 10: GCS).</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF10 to EQF6</b></p>	<b>10</b>

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
<b>7</b>	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Key features: - specialised problem-solving skills - research and/or innovation - develop new knowledge and procedures - integrate knowledge from different fields	<p>The emphasis in SCQF Level 11 is more on the extent of critical thinking and originality than EQF Level 7. There is no explicit reference to integrating knowledge from different fields”.</p> <p>However the key features for EQF Level 7 are matched by AKSU, GCS, and K&amp;U at SCQF Level 11, as is shown by the following selected aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Apply knowledge and understanding in using a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of, or informed by, forefront developments” (SCQF Level 11: PAK)</li> <li>- “Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to forefront issues that are informed by forefront developments in the subject/discipline/sector.” (SCQF Level 11: GCS)</li> <li>- “Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues” (SCQF Level 11 GCS).</li> <li>- Use “knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline/sector – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions” (SCQF Level 11: K&amp;U).</li> <li>- “Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 11: GCS).</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF11 to EQF 7</b></p>	<b>11</b>
<b>8</b>	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis	Key features: - the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques	<p>The key features for EQF Level 8 are fully matched by the following selected aspects of AKSU, GCS, and K&amp;U at SCQF Level 12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use and enhance “a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and materials that at the forefront of one or more specialisms” (SCQF Level 12: AKSU)</li> </ul>	<b>12</b>

<b>SKILLS COMPONENT</b>				
SCQF Characteristics: <i>K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding   AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding   GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills   AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
	and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- synthesis and evaluation</li> <li>- solve critical problems in research and/or innovation</li> <li>- extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues” (SCQF Level 12 GCS).</li> <li>- “Apply knowledge and understanding in designing and executing research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues” (SCQF Level 12: AKSU)</li> <li>- Generate knowledge and understanding “through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline/sector” (SCQF Level 12: K&amp;U).</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF12 to EQF 8</b></p>	

**Table 3: Referencing the EQF Competence Component**

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
<b>EQF Level</b>	<b>EQF descriptor statement</b>	<b>Key linguistic features</b>	<b>Findings from comparison with SCQF descriptors</b>	<b>SCQF Level</b>
<b>1</b>	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- supervision is only “direct” at this level. Autonomy is introduced at level E2. So “direct supervision” appears to be linked to lack of autonomy.</li> <li>- a structured context (this idea is not developed until E4)</li> </ul>	<p>Supervision is a feature of AAW. In the SCQF level descriptors, all supervision up to SCQF Level 5 is “directive”, but not “direct”. At SCQF Level 2 and SCQF Level 3 it is “frequent”, at SCQF Level 4 it is “regular” and at SCQF Level 5 it is “minimum”.</p> <p>The term “autonomy” is not used in the SCQF until SCQF Level 8, but from level SCQF Level 2, individuals take some responsibility for planning and/or evaluating work.</p> <p>“Context” appears in the AKSU, GCS and CNI. At SCQF Level 2, contexts are “familiar”, “routine”, “simple” and “everyday”. At SCQF Level 3 the context will require the use of “given criteria”.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF3 to EQF 1</b></p>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy	<p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- supervision is no longer “direct”</li> <li>- the individual exercises some autonomy.</li> </ul>	<p>From SCQF Level 4 onwards, the individual is expected to contribute to planning (“setting of goals, timelines, etc”) and to quality improvement (“the review of completed work and ... improving practices and processes”)</p> <p>At SCQF Level 4, the individual is also expected to “Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work” which looks like the adaptive behaviour required at E3.</p>	<b>4</b>



<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics:      K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding      GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
			<b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 4 to EQF2</b>	
<b>3</b>	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems	Key features: - responsibility for completion of “tasks” (nature of tasks unspecified) - adaptive behaviour - introduction of problem solving	<p>In AKSU, individuals can “complete pre-planned tasks” at SCQF Level 2 and “complete straightforward tasks with non-routine elements” at SCQF Level 4. At SCQF Level 5 they can “use a range of skills to complete some routine and non-routine tasks”, which implies a need to adapt behaviour to circumstances.</p> <p>Three features of AAW at SCQF Level 5 also give a good match for the responsibility and adaptive behaviour of EQF Level 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team” (SCQF Level 5: AAW).</li> <li>- “take lead responsibility for some tasks” (SCQF Level 5: AAW).</li> <li>- “show an awareness of others’ roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and contribute to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes” (SCQF Level 5: AAW).</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 5 to EQF3</b></p>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable,	Key features: - self-management - predictable contexts - changeable contexts - supervise others in routine work	<p>The idea of predictability is not used in the SCQF until SCQF Level 9. Contexts may be “familiar”/“new” or “routine”/“non-routine”.</p> <p>However, there is evidence to relate EQF Level 4 to SCQF Level 6 in AAW and PAK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Take responsibility for carrying out of a range of activities where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision” (SCQF Level 6: AAW)</li> </ul>	<b>6</b>

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b> <i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
	but are subject to change Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	- responsibility for evaluating and improving activities (of others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "...routine contexts which may have non-routine elements" (SCQF Level 6: AKSU).</li> <li>- "Exercise some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work within a defined and supervised structure" (SCQF Level 6: AAW).</li> <li>- "...take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes" (SCQF Level 6: AAW).</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF6 to SCQF4</b></p>	
<b>5</b>	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change Review and develop performance of self and others	Key features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- management and supervision</li> <li>- activities subject to unpredictable change</li> <li>- review &amp; develop own performance</li> <li>- review &amp; develop others' performance</li> </ul>	Evidence relating SCQF Level 7 to EQF Level 5 comes from AAW and AKSU. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Exercise some managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others ..." (SCQF Level 7: AAW)</li> <li>- "... both routine and non-routine contexts" (SCQF Level 7: AKSU)</li> <li>- "Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks". (SCQF Level 7: AAW)</li> <li>- "Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice" (SCQF Level 7: AAW)</li> </ul> <p>It needs to be noted, however, that this builds on (i.e. includes) the following from SCQF Level 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Exercise some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work within a defined and supervised structure." (SCQF Level 6: AAW)</li> </ul>	<b>7</b>

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b>				
SCQF Characteristics:     K&U= Knowledge & understanding   AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding     GCS = Generic cognitive skills CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills     AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others				
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "...take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes" (SCQF Level 6: AAW)</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Best fit match: SCQF 7 to EQF 5</b></p>	
			<p>There is also good evidence to relate SCQF Level 8 to EQF Level 5, but not to EQF Level 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level ..." (SCQF Level 8: AAW)</li> <li>- "Exercise managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined structure". (SCQF Level 8: AAW)</li> <li>- "Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts". (SCQF Level 8: AAW)</li> <li>- "Practice in ways that show and awareness of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions when carrying out and evaluating tasks". (SCQF Level 8: AAW)</li> <li>- "Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice". (SCQF Level 8: AAW)</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 8 to EQF 5</b></p>	<b>8</b>
6	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making	Key features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complex technical/professional activities or projects</li> <li>- responsibility for decision-making</li> </ul>	<p>Most key features for EQF Level 6 are matched by aspects of AAW and AKSU at SCQF Level 9. In particular, the outcomes for SCQF Level 9 imply a degree of complexity which is consonant with EQF Level 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Seeking guidance where appropriate, manage ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices". (AAW)</li> </ul>	<b>9</b>

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b>				
SCQF Characteristics:     K&U= Knowledge & understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding     GCS = Generic cognitive skills CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others				
	in unpredictable work or study contexts Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- contexts which are unpredictable</li> <li>- responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector”. (AAW)</li> <li>- “practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability” (AKSU)</li> <li>- “...exercise managerial responsibility for the work of others”. (AAW)</li> </ul> <p>SCQF Level 9 gives a broader account than EQF Level 6 (e.g. “seek guidance where appropriate, manage ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.” (SCQF Level 9: AAW), but there is no indication that SCQF Level 9 requires a level of competence which is significantly beyond EQF Level 6.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 9 to EQF 6</b></p>	
			<p>The key features for EQF Level 6 are well matched by aspects of AAW, AKSU and GCS at SCQF Level 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues”. (GCS)</li> <li>- “Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional issues.” (GCS)</li> <li>- “practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism”. (AKSU)</li> <li>- “Exercise significant managerial responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources”. (AAW)</li> </ul> <p>SCQF Level 10 gives a broader account than EQF Level 6 (e.g. “manage complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or</p>	<b>10</b>

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b>				
SCQF Characteristics:    K&U= Knowledge & understanding    AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding    GCS = Generic cognitive skills CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills    AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others				
			ethical codes or practices" (SCQF Level 10: AAW), but there is no indication that SCQF Level 10 requires a level of competence which is significantly beyond E6.  <b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 10 to EQF 6</b>	
<b>7</b>	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams	Key features: - manage and transform - complex and unpredictable contexts - (develop/implement) new strategic approaches	The key features for EQF Level 7 are matched by aspects of AAW and AKSU at SCQF Level 11.  - "...make an identifiable contribution to change and development and/or new thinking" (SCQF Level 11: AAW). - "...practice in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts" [SCQF Level 11: AKSU) - "Practice in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities" (SCQF Level 11: AAW). - "...make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices" (SCQF Level 11: AAW).  SCQF Level 11 gives a broader account than EQF Level 8 (e.g. "manage complex ethical and professional issues" (SCQF Level 11: AAW), but there is no indication that SCQF Level 11 requires a level of competence which is significantly beyond EQF Level 7.  <b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 11 to EQF 7</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8</b>	Demonstrate substantial authority,	Key features: - substantial authority	The key features for EQF Level 7 are matched by the following aspects of AAW and GCS at SCQF Level 12:	<b>12</b>

<b>COMPETENCE COMPONENT</b>				
<i>SCQF Characteristics: K&amp;U= Knowledge &amp; understanding AKSU = Applied knowledge, skills and understanding GCS = Generic cognitive skills</i> <i>CNI = Communication, numeracy and ICT skills AAW = Autonomy, accountability and working with others</i>				
	innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- scholarly/professional integrity</li> <li>- sustained commitment to the development of new ideas/processes</li> <li>- forefront activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Demonstrate substantial authority and exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities” (SCAF Level 12: AAW).</li> <li>- “Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues” (SCQF Level 12: GCS).</li> <li>- “...make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices” (SCQF Level 12: AAW).</li> <li>- “Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues” (SCQF Level 12: GCS).</li> </ul> <p>SCQF Level 12 gives a broader account than EQF Level 8 (e.g. “manage complex ethical and professional issues” (SCQF Level 12: AAW), but there is no indication that SCQF Level 12 requires a level of competence which is significantly beyond EQF Level 8.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Good match: SCQF 12 to EQF 8</b></p>	

**Table 4: Summary of referencing recommendations from linguistic analysis**

G = Good match                      K = Knowledge component    S = Skills component    C = Competences component

B = Best fit match

SCQF Level	EQF Level & Component																								Rec. EQF Level
	EQF1			EQF2			EQF3			EQF4			EQF5			EQF6			EQF7			EQF8			
	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	K	S	C	
1	NO MATCH AT THIS LEVEL																								NO MATCH
2	NO MATCH AT THIS LEVEL																								NO MATCH
3	B	B	B																						Best = 1
4				B	B	B																			Best = 2
5							B	G	G																Good = 3
6										B	G	G													Good = 4
7													B	G	B										Best = 5
8													B	G	G										Good = 5
9																G	B	G							Good = 6
10																G	G	G							Good = 6
11																			G	G	G				Good = 7
12																						G	G	G	Good = 8



## Annex 6: SCQF Principles

SCQF principles	Details
1	Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs) and the SCQF Partnership have equal responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

### Principles related to Learning Arrangements and Credit Rating

SCQF principles	Details
2	All qualifications credit rated on to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework must meet the 4 criteria for credit rating.
3	A qualification must be capable of being allocated an SCQF level and SCQF credit points in order that it can be included on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
4	A qualification must have at least 10 notional learning hours (1 SCQF credit point) before it can be credit rated and considered for inclusion on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Only full SCQF credit points are awarded – fractions of SCQF credit points (e.g. 0.5) are not allowed.
5	Qualification designers must determine the Notional Learning Hours required by a typical learner to complete all learning activities within the qualification/programme.
6	The number of SCQF credit points allocated to a unit is determined independently of the perceived importance or centrality of that unit/module within a broader qualification.
7	The number of SCQF credit points allocated to a unit is independent of the standard at which the outcomes are achieved (e.g. grading).
8	Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that within the process of credit rating, and in processes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), they take due cognisance of the SCQF Level Descriptors and any other relevant reference points.
9	Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating, including systems of internal and external quality assurance and arrangements for the retention of evidence confirming decisions on level and credit.
10	Where assessment leads to the award of SCQF credit points then the certificates issued to learners must include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the title of the qualification;</li> <li>the total number of SCQF credit points awarded on completion;</li> <li>the SCQF level of the qualification;</li> <li>the SCQF logo;</li> <li>the name of the CRB.</li> </ul>

11	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading the details of all credit rated qualifications to the SCQF database.
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### **Additional Principles when working with a Third Party submission**

<b>SCQF principles</b>	<b>Details</b>
12	Credit Rating Bodies must assure themselves, as far as is practically possible, of the good standing and credibility of the Third Party organisation prior to any submission for credit rating.
13	Credit Rating Bodies must establish rigorous and appropriate systems for credit rating Third Party submissions.
14	Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that Third Party organisations submit information, and documented evidence of, their assessment processes, including arrangements relating to the internal and external quality assurance of assessment decisions.
15	The Credit Rating Body must ensure that the Third Party provides details of auditing/quality assurance of their systems including appropriate externality.
16	Credit Rating Bodies must ensure that the Third Party organisation submits regular (e.g. annual) reports of progress in the delivery of any credit rated qualifications and is aware that they must inform the CRB if any significant changes to these are made which may affect the SCQF level or credit points.
17	Credit Rating Bodies must agree an appropriate review date for the credit rated qualification with the Third Party organisation.
18	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for uploading the details of all Third Party qualifications which they have credit rated to the SCQF Database.
19	Credit Rating Bodies are responsible for issuing the SCQF logo to the Third Party organisation and ensuring that they are aware of the requirements for certification as outlined in Principle 10.

### **Principles relating to Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

<b>SCQF principles</b>	<b>Details</b>
20	The design and development of qualifications for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework should facilitate and promote credit recognition for prior informal and non-formal learning and credit transfer.
21	Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is given for learning, not for experience alone.
22	SCQF Credit Points awarded as a result of RPL for informal or non-formal learning are of the same value as credit gained through formal learning.

23	RPL for the award of SCQF Credit Points must involve a formal assessment or acceptance of evidence of learning which is quality assured.
24	The assessment procedures for RPL including Credit Transfer should be consistent with the normal assessment and general quality assurance of the organisation.
25	The process of monitoring and reviewing the operation of RPL procedures, including those for Credit Transfer, should be clearly defined and integrated within the existing quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms of the organisation.

## Annex 7: Quality Assurance Requirements for the Approval of CRBs

The following tables detail the quality assurance criteria for the approval of CRBs by the SCQF Partnerships. These requirements are extracted from the *SCQF Quality Assurance Model for SCQF Partnership Approved Credit Rating Bodies* pages 4 - 6.

### Criterion 1: A Body of Good Standing

**The organisation is a body of good standing, demonstrating a commitment to and a successful track record in the design and delivery of learning provision for Scotland.**

**The organisation must:**

- 1.1 Provide a formal constitution which describes its identity, functions, aims and structures.
- 1.2 Demonstrate that it is a secure, stable and viable organisation.
- 1.3 Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of education and training.
- 1.4 Provide evidence of a successful track record of and a commitment by senior personnel to operating in Scotland or for the Scottish market.
- 1.5 Provide evidence of a successful track record in devising quality assured learning provision in Scotland or for the Scottish market in relation to specific subjects/industries/sectors and levels.
- 1.6 Provide evidence confirming that its diversity and equality strategy meets the requirements of current legislation.
- 1.7 Provide an effective staff development policy and be able to demonstrate this policy in action.

Examples of Evidence:

- Strategic plans; formal constitutions; business plans; audited accounts;
- Organisational chart showing the key functions carried out by the organisation;
- Documentation showing the organisation's history; information about partners and stakeholders in Scotland.
- Customer service statement setting out standards of service users can expect, performance measures against which provision will be judged, focusing particularly on manageability, responsiveness and value for money.
- Details of partner education and training providers.
- Testimonies from these partners as well as others such as employers and stakeholders in Scotland.
- Documentation showing how the organisation has implemented its diversity and equality strategy and ensures course accessibility in terms of content and delivery.
- Documentation showing: the staff development policy and IIP registration.

## **Criterion 2: Robust Quality Assurance System**

**The organisation already has in place a documented quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities and has evidence, through internal and external review, that this quality assurance system is valid and reliable. The organisation must:**

2.1 Operate a robust quality assurance system for programme design, approval, validation, accreditation or other related activities and demonstrate that the separate processes which make up the quality assurance system:

- are operated by individuals who are experienced in the relevant process and have subject expertise where this is required;
- are supported by appropriate management structures and have externality in decision making;
- are benchmarked against other equivalent processes; and
- are subject to regular review to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of users.

2.2 Demonstrate that it regularly reviews and strives to improve and enhance its quality assurance system by carrying out internal reviews on all aspects of the quality assurance system and taking action on the outcome of such internal reviews.

2.3 Ensure that its quality assurance system is subject to regular external review and provide evidence of the outcome of these external reviews and actions taken as a result of these external reviews.

Examples of Evidence:

- Procedures and policies for the quality assurance of programme design, approval, validation, accreditation, assessment or other related activities;
- roles and responsibilities of staff and/or committees involved in managing and operating both the quality assurance system and the individual processes within it;
- evidence of system review and action taken as a result;
- evidence of benchmarking activities and consideration of issues arising from these;
- evidence of process reviews and actions taken as a result;
- Internal review reports; details of actions taken on the findings of these reports; details of action taken in relation to any quality assurance activity;
- External review reports from quality assurance bodies such as QAA, SQA, HMLe; external review reports of other external quality assurance schemes; details of actions taken on the findings of these reports.

### **Criterion 3: Capacity and Commitment**

**The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQF credit rating body and ensures that its credit rating processes and procedures link to and function within its existing quality assurance system as already defined under Criterion 2. The organisation must:**

3.1 Document a robust procedure for credit rating which sits within the existing quality assurance system and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook, Section 1 – SCQF Credit Rating Guidelines.

3.2 Define the scope of credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors and types of programmes or qualifications.

3.3 Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed credit rating process showing how it sits within the existing quality assurance system.

Examples of Evidence:

- Proposed credit rating procedure along with commentary showing how the procedure meets the criteria, links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook Business plan on proposed credit rating activity.

Covering the following areas:

- Aims and objectives;
- The qualifications, occupational sectors and levels of expertise in which it proposes to credit rate;
- Organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications;
- Examples of record keeping;
- Communication strategy for the credit rating process; and identification of key dates to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the business plan;
- Internal review procedure and explanation of how this links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation;
- Arrangements for identifying and actioning any corrective and preventative measures arising out of internal review.

3.4 Demonstrate the ability to make valid and reliable decisions on credit rating, drawing on appropriate sector/subject/industry and level expertise and relating activities to the existing quality assurance system.

3.5 Document a robust procedure to:

- record the outcomes of the credit rating process;

- communicate these outcomes to users and other stakeholders;
- keep the SCQF database up to date by way of the SCQF portal; and
- describe the way in which the SCQF logo will be used.

3.6 Document a procedure for developing an annual self-assessment report on credit rating activity for the SCQF Partnership.

3.7 Show how the credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and/or professional development planning.

Examples of Evidence:

- Organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications.
- Details of staff experience in credit rating activity undertaken in another capacity – e.g. submitting programmes for credit rating by a third party.
- Arrangement for implementing the credit rating procedure. Explanation of how this procedure links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.
- Arrangements for confirming the effectiveness of induction and training for individuals in the credit rating process.
- Examples of the organisation's certificates demonstrating how SCQF level and credit and logo will be shown on certificates.
- Examples of record keeping.
- Documentation showing how the organisation will inform its stakeholders about the SCQF.
- Documentation showing how the organisation will update the SCQF database.
- Description of the way in which the organisation will use the SCQF logo.
- Arrangements for the provision of an annual self-assessment report.
- Description of how this process links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.
- For individuals undertaking the credit rating process, examples of the organisation's training programme for credit rating; training needs analysis; continuous professional development and/or personal development programme; and induction training.



#### **Criterion 4: Providing a Credit Rating Service for Third Parties**

The organisation has the capacity and commitment to operate as an SCQF third party Credit Rating Body and has the structures and systems in place to carry out this function. It ensures that its systems link to and operate within its existing credit rating processes and procedures link to and function within its existing quality assurance system as already defined under Criterion 2, and that they comply with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook. The organisation must:

4.1 Define the scope of third party credit rating authority being applied for in terms of levels, sectors, subjects and types of programme or qualification and provide information on how this extension of its credit rating authority will broaden, deepen and extend the Framework.

Types of evidence:

- Business plan on proposed third party credit rating activity covering: aims and objectives; the qualifications, occupational sectors, and levels of expertise it proposes to credit rate; organisational chart illustrating the key functions of staff and level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications; examples of record keeping; marketing strategy for the credit rating process; and identification of target dates to evaluate and review effectiveness of the business plan.

4.2 Provide robust, direct evidence of its ability to make valid and reliable decisions on credit rating in its own right, drawing on appropriate sector/subject/industry and level expertise and relating activities to the existing quality assurance system.

Types of evidence:

- Reports from the body's annual monitoring of its own credit rating process; details of the experience of existing staff in credit rating own programmes; organisational chart illustrating key functions of the credit rating service; details of how individuals with the required level of expertise in occupational sectors relating to design, delivery and assessment of qualifications will be accessed and deployed; arrangements for implementing the credit rating procedures; explanation of how this procedure links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.

4.3 Document a robust system for providing a quality-assured third party credit rating service, which sits within the existing quality assurance system, and covers procedures for ensuring that the SCQF Guidelines for third party credit rating are complied with fully.

Types of evidence:

- Proposed procedure for third party credit rating along with commentary showing how the procedure: meets the criteria; builds on the body's existing credit rating experience; links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation; and complies with the requirements of the SCQF Handbook.
- This includes the proposed procedures for: the decision making function in relation to third party credit rating, the administration of the credit rating service and the

support function; ensuring that the submitting body's assessments are subject to external review and monitoring; the submitting body to report to the Credit Rating Body.

- The proposed guidance for submitting bodies on certificates and the way in which these should show SCQF level and credit and logo; examples of record keeping.
- Documentation showing how the organisation will inform its learners and other stakeholders about the SCQF, arrangements for the provision of an annual self-assessment report; description of how this process links to other quality assurance processes operated by the organisation.

4.4 Document a robust procedure for the internal review of the proposed third party credit rating service showing how this procedure sits within the existing quality assurance system.

Types of evidence:

- Documentation showing internal review procedures and an explanation of how this links to the existing quality assurance processes operated by the organisation. Arrangements for identifying and actioning any corrective and preventative measures arising out of internal reviews.

4.5 Document a procedure for making an annual self-assessment of its third party credit rating activity.

Types of evidence:

- Proposed procedure and documentation of the annual self-assessment of third party credit rating activity.

4.6 Show how the third party credit rating function and its associated quality assurance are supported by staff development, continuing professional development and/or professional development planning.

Types of evidence:

- For individuals undertaking credit rating processes for third party provision, examples of the organisations: training programme for credit rating; continuous professional development and/or personal development programme; and induction training.

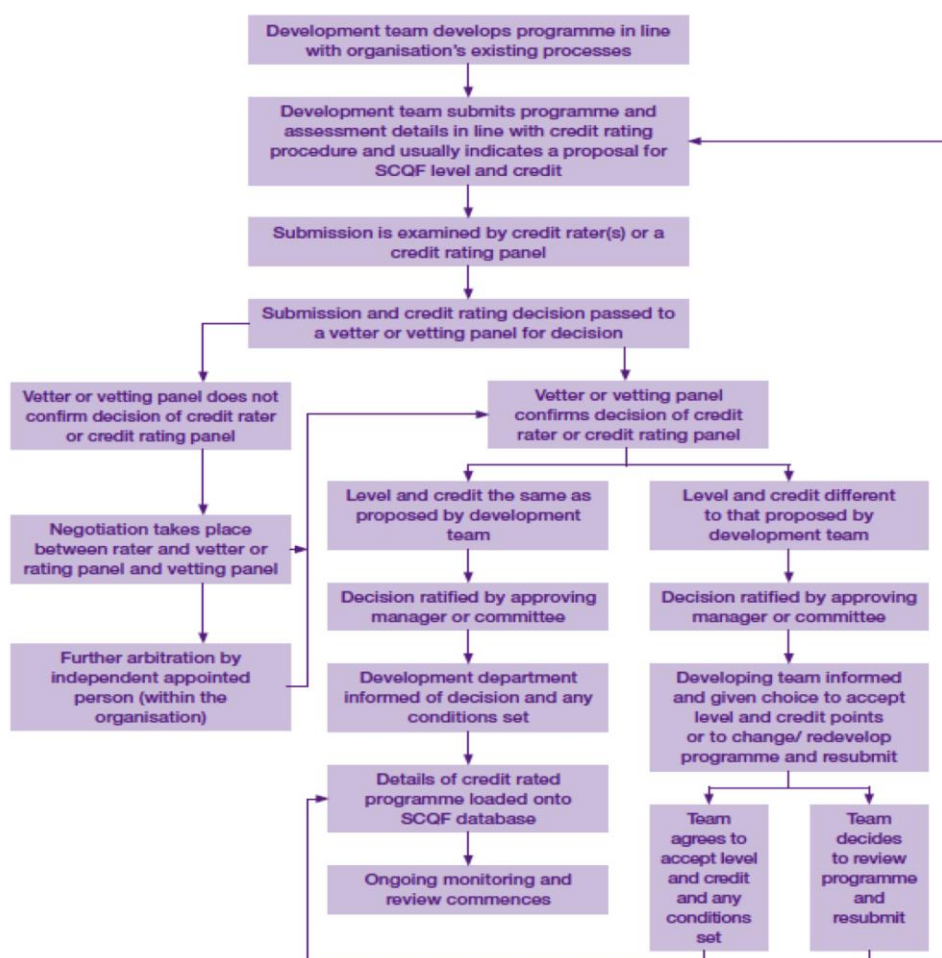
## Annex 8: Credit Rating Qualifications - The Credit Rating Process

This flowchart forms Annex 2 of the SCQF Handbook. It illustrates the steps involved in credit rating qualifications developed and submitted for credit rating by submitting bodies sited within the CRB.

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### ANNEX 2

#### FLOWCHART - CREDIT RATING PROCESS

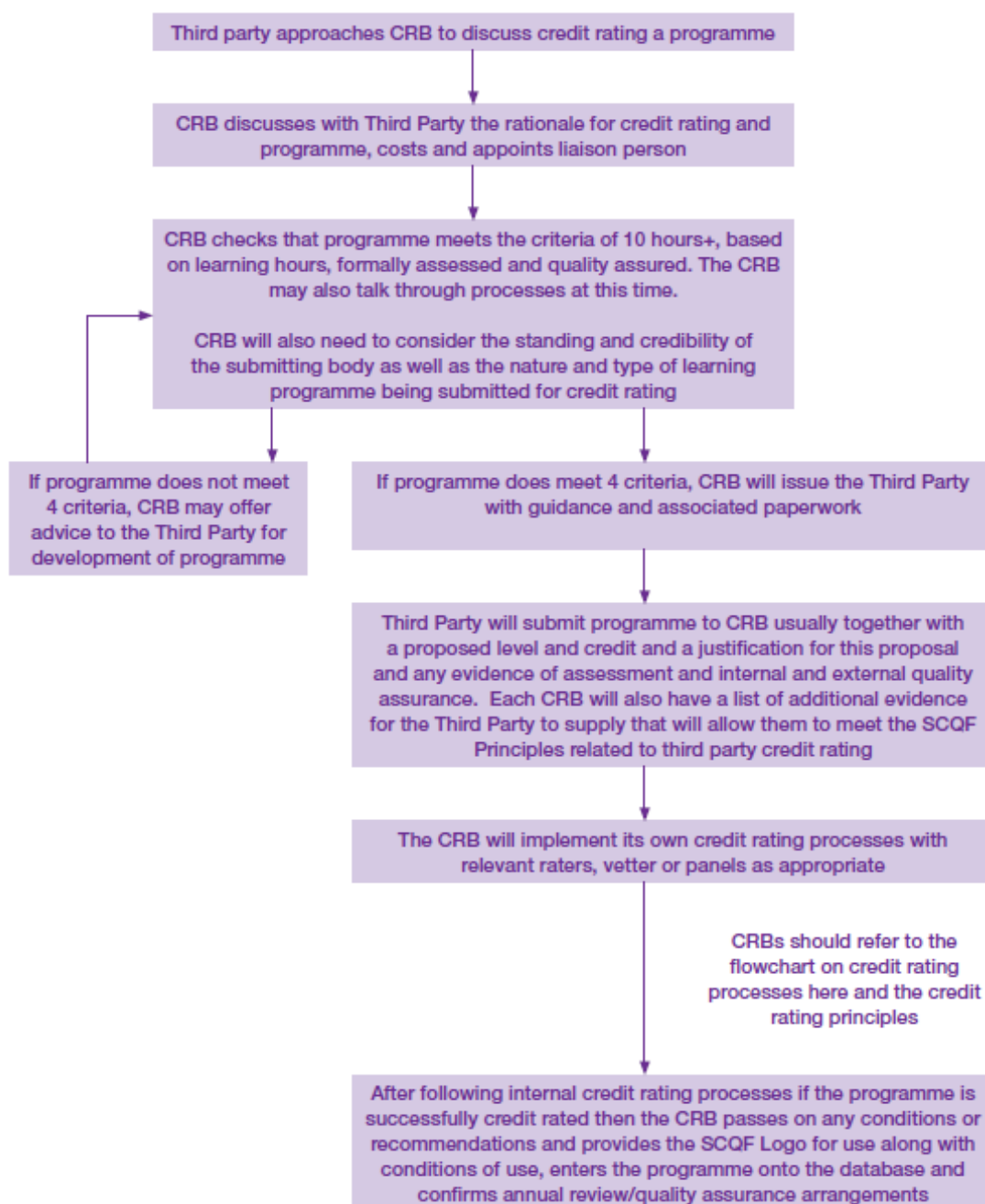


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## Annex 9: Third-Party Credit Rating - The Process

This flowchart forms Annex 3 of the SCQF Handbook. It illustrates the steps involved in credit rating qualifications developed and submitted for credit rating by external submitting bodies, i.e. those requesting third-party credit rating services from a CRB.

### FLOWCHART – THIRD PARTY CREDIT RATING



## **Re-Referencing the SCQF to the EQF – draft one of 2015 Referencing Activity**

### **Comments and observations from Sean O'Reilly as international expert**

#### **General comment**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the first draft of the report to update the referencing of the SCQF to the EQF. Experience of referencing national qualification frameworks to the EQF has developed significantly since the original UK reports were written and it is appropriate to update the report to take account of this and to reflect continued development of the SCQF.

The report is well written and is accessible to a general audience of informed readers. It is clear that the SCQF is at a mature stage of implementation and that the impact extends into many aspects of education and training. The maturity of the framework presents certain challenges when drafting a comprehensive description for international readers as there is some risk that some important aspects may be taken for granted rather than explicitly explained. My initial comments largely reflect this perspective, particularly without sight of the various annexes referred to.

#### **Specific observations**

In the preface, it may be helpful to include reference to the greater understanding developed at European level from discussion of referencing reports from many member states and to identify some of the key areas where greater clarity is being expected.

The executive summary makes reference (p.3) to a recognition that “processes and quality assurance processes will vary from sector to sector” and comments on considerable cross-sector collaboration. It may be helpful to include any measurable indicators of impact or of practice to support this assertion. Similarly, when outlining the background to the SCQF, there is mention of multiple legacy frameworks having their own types of qualification and quality assurance arrangements but sharing levels, level descriptors and systems of credit. It would assist the reader if there was explicit reference to the common or core aspects at an appropriate point in the text or reference to the greater detail provided in response to criterion 5.

On page 7, uses and benefits of the SCQF, it would be beneficial to reference specific quantifiable results from the evaluation report rather than, for example, the more general statement that learners are becoming more aware of the SCQF levels...

#### **Criterion 1**

The Steering Group may wish to include web links to each of the SCQF partners for clarity. This model of governance is unusual in a European context where specific legislation is more common and, therefore, may be examined closely by an international audience. It may be advantageous to promote this as a strength.

#### **Criterion 2**

In the current draft, certain level to level relationships are asserted without supporting evidence. This is likely to be problematic for international readers and was commented upon as a potential criticism of the original (combined UK) referencing report.

#### **Criterion 3**

It is highly likely that the use of learning outcomes is an area of significant strength in the SCQF relative to other NQFs. I am not certain that this strength is sufficiently visible in the current draft. One possible approach would be to provide examples of a number of qualification specifications from different “sectors” of the framework. Similarly, examples of validation of non-formal and informal learning (even those that may be regarded as somewhat stereotypical) would help to convey the core principles and processes for readers unfamiliar with the national systems.

#### **Criterion 4**

The response to this criterion may be strengthened by clarifying the process for inclusion of qualifications from different types of provider or from formal, non-formal and informal learning. A process diagram or flowchart may provide an accessible method of illustrating the various processes. Q: are there notable qualification-types that are more difficult to include in the framework? Are there examples that could demonstrate the process is rigorous and robust?

### **Criterion 5**

As reflected in initial comments on the original report, the current draft text provides detail of how quality assurance complies with European principles and guidelines but does not clearly demonstrate that “national quality assurance systems for education and training refer to the national qualifications framework or system”. This criterion can be regarded as important to demonstrate that NQF implementation links with mainstream provision and should be considered carefully.

### **Criterion 10**

Given the national context, the number of levels in the SCQF and the (unmentioned) consultation with stakeholders about inclusion of the EQF level, it may be appropriate to provide a more detailed response to this criterion. Such a response could demonstrate a considered position which does not contradict the intention of this criterion. It is arguable that this approach (in response) would be preferable to any potential perception that the inclusion of reference to EQF levels remains an unachieved target.

## **Comments on First draft report on a review and update of the referencing of levels of the SCQF to the levels of the EQF.**

International Expert Dr John O'Connor, Head of Qualifications and Skills Policy, Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

8 November 2018

### **General Comments**

The structure of the draft report reflects current practice among EQF participating countries in presenting their initial EQF referencing reports. Section A of the report situates the SCQF within its historical, social and political context, relevant features of the Scottish education and training system are outlined which adds to the readers understanding of the domestic setting. Section B documents and presents evidence addressing each of the ten criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications frameworks to the EQF. Section C updates the international community on the major reforms and developments that have shaped the SCQF over the past decade and also sets out challenges and opportunities for future development of the SCQF.

The methodology for preparing the first draft report is transparent and the NCP has tried to ensure that all key stakeholders have an opportunity to engage with and take ownership of the report, in what has been a tight timeframe. Particularly helpful in this regard is the pilot re-referencing exercise conducted in 2015-2016, which provided a critical preliminary and comprehensive gap-analysis of the SCQF-EQF referencing and its findings have enabled an accelerated and concentrated process to underpin the preparation of the first draft report.

As international expert I have been a member of the steering group since its inception and have had full access to relevant papers. I attended the second meeting of the Steering Group, held in Glasgow on 7 November 2018. I would be quite familiar with developments in the Scottish Qualifications system and the SCQF, there are various fora where qualifications authorities across the UK and Ireland can exchange knowledge on their respective qualifications and quality assurance systems.

### **Comments and observations on Section A of the first draft report**

p.7- In light of the pervasive use of the term 'qualification' in the report and indeed as a key element within the SCQF concept, it is surprising that the term is not interpreted in the text or an explanation is offered as to why the term qualification may be problematic in the Scottish context.

p.12- Figure 4, check consistency of levels offered in Colleges here with detail on qualifications offer in Colleges described on p.15

p.17- The relationship between FQHEIS and the FHEQ will need to be set out for the international reader. In light of the decision not to re-certify the FHEQ to the QF-EHEA, what implications if any are there for



the relationship between the FQHEIS and QFEHEA as a consequence of an updated SCQF-EQF referencing?

p.19- General point re size/readability of images.

Paragraph 54 on pg 22 is a key distinguishing feature of the SCQF. The comprehensive and open nature of the SCQF is in line with European ambitions and more importantly reflects Scottish priorities and helps to explain, in part, the design and operation of the SCQF. This point should be prominent in setting out the orientation of the SCQF.

p.30-31- The principle of best fit in determining the level to level correspondence between two qualifications frameworks, is now well established. A best fit determination may be amplified by reference to the degree of confidence in the fit – high or moderate for example. Perhaps something along these lines could address the discussion of best and good fit in the steering group.

p.31- reference to FQ-HEIS referenced to QF-EHEA, if this is the case then, again, the implications of an updated referencing report on SCQF-EQF, on the Bologna process in Scotland will need to be made explicit.

p.32- Figure 12 mentions short cycle qualifications (within or linked to the first cycle qualifications) this language has been changed in the [Paris Communiqué](#)

### **Comments on the evidence presented to address each of the Criteria and procedures for referencing the SCQF to the EQF.**

Most of the criterion seem to be very adequately addressed by the evidence presented.

I have some concern with the approach taken to addressing criterion 6. The core elements of the quality assurance systems that relate to qualifications in Scotland are set out on pg. 43. This seems like a very sensible schema to describe in detail the relevant policy and practice that apply to qualifications and learning programmes that constitute the SCQF. Attempting to address how QA in Scotland is consistent with each of the 10 principles of QA included in the 2017 EQF Recommendation, tends to have the effect of fragmenting or deconstructing the QA 'story'. This approach may need to be reconsidered by the QA authorities. External QA for the regulators/QA bodies in VET and general qualifications will be problematic to demonstrate in many European countries, the QAA will have ENQA. But it seems to me that in the case of SQA, there is an externality to the awarding function also carried out by SQA. External QA of VET and general qualifications awarding bodies will be of interest to other countries and the Commission, not least because it so rarely happens. I would endorse the view that graphics and case studies do much to articulate QA in practice. Annex 7 for example would be helpful to have included in this section of the report, rather than as an annex.

Criterion 10 – It would be useful to know more about the practice of issuing European Certificate and Diploma supplements in Scotland. I understand that these supplements are not widely used in Scotland, the reasons why would be of interest to others and always better to answer questions yourselves that others might otherwise ask.

## **Comments on Second draft report on a review and update of the referencing of levels of the SCQF to the levels of the EQF.**

International Commentator: Dr John O'Connor, Head of Qualifications and Skills Policy, Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

15 November 2018

The second draft report on a review and update of the referencing of levels of the SCQF to the levels of EQF, was prepared following the second meeting of the Steering Group. Having attended the meeting of the Steering Group, it is evident that the drafters of the report have given due consideration to the expert advice offered by the main actors in the Scottish qualifications system and the comments and observations offered by international experts. While the preparation of the report is hampered somewhat by time constraints, outside of the control of the Scottish EQF-NCP, the engagement with stakeholders, in my opinion, has been open and meaningful.

The second draft report includes additional background information tracing the evolution of the current referencing exercise from 2010-2018. The text suggests that EQF referencing, for Scotland, was not a one-off initiative, rather it has been used to stimulate an ongoing process of reflection and international engagement by the qualifications authorities in Scotland.

The various sub-systems within the national education and training system are presented in terms of their associated qualifications and quality assurance arrangements, this focus is welcome given the subject matter of referencing exercises.

The use of informative figures and tables throughout the report enhance the accessibility and readability of the report.

The adoption of an interpretation of qualification that comprehends the notion of 'learning programme', is helpful as it respects national practice and understanding while also making the Scottish qualifications system more familiar for an international audience.

## **Comment on the extent to which the draft report addresses the criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the European Qualifications Framework, as set out in Annex III of the 2017 Recommendation.**

### Criterion 1

**The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Co-ordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.**

This criterion is addressed.

The governance, institutional and legislative arrangements that underpin the SCQF are clearly articulated. The unique ethos of the SCQF as a voluntary and co-operative initiative, will be of interest to international audience given the trend towards statutory and regulated qualifications frameworks.

### Criterion 2

**There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.**

This criterion is addressed.

The five domains of learning elaborated in descriptors across twelve levels, constitute a conceptual basis that allows for establishing a meaningful alignment with the EQF levels and descriptors. The application of the best fit principle to guild the formal SCQF-EQF alignment reflects international practice, so too does the commentary on the strength of evidence available to support each claim for level to level alignment. The reliability of framework alignments is addressed too since the SCQF has been referenced to qualifications frameworks beyond the EQF territory, some of which also have completed a technical alignment with EQF. The alignment of the SCQF to the qualifications framework in Hong Kong for example, adds confidence to both the EQF-Hong Kong work previously undertaken by the EQF-AG and also to the re-confirmed SCQF-EQF alignment presented in the current draft.

### Criterion 3

**The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.**

This criterion is addressed.

### Criterion 4

**The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent**

This criterion is addressed.

The processes for assigning an SCQF level to qualifications is set out. Learning outcomes are promoted as an essential feature in making a determination as to the most appropriate level of a qualification. Associated institutional and governance arrangements are also set out and seem to operate effectively.

The devolved responsibility for credit rating (essentially levelling) is a particular feature that attracts international interest, so too the efforts by the Scottish authority to include all qualifications and learning programmes that meet the personal, economic and social needs of learners in Scotland, regardless of the institutional setting in which the qualification was gained.

#### Criterion 5

**The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this Recommendation.**

This criterion is addressed.

In my view, the second draft report addresses this criterion in a way that does justice to the prevailing quality assurance norms and practice that support the design, development, review, delivery, assessment and certification of qualifications in Scotland. At the same time the evidence presented, for the most part, demonstrates that the quality assurance principles in Annex IV of the Recommendation, are reflected in the principles that underpin the quality assurance of the SCQF. In my opinion, the first draft report demonstrated the difficulty with attempting to deconstruct domestic QA arrangements in an effort to demonstrate compliance with each of the ten EQF QA principles. The quality assurance principles in annex IV of the Recommendation are not intended to be used as criteria.

The EQF QA principles essentially signal the importance attached to internal and external quality assurance systems that support the development, review, delivery and assessment of qualifications; a commitment to appropriate stakeholder involvement; making procedures and findings from relevant QA activities transparent; and encouraging national systems for QA to be open to international norms and practice including the use of peer review. The report shows how national arrangements for QA of qualifications in Scotland respects these priorities. Principle 9 in annex IV advocates external review of QA bodies, in the Scottish context the SQA are subject to external scrutiny by Scottish Government, the QAA is externally reviewed by ENQA but external review of the quality assurance functions performed by the SCQF partnership is not apparent in the report. This is not unusual; many countries will not have developed external scrutiny of their respective quality assurance bodies operating outside of higher education.

#### Criterion 6

**The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.**

This criterion is addressed.

#### Criterion 7

**The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.**

This criterion is addressed.

As one of the international experts associated with this report, I have been afforded every opportunity to comment on the process of conducting the re-referencing exercise and to offer comment and observations on iterations of the current report. I have participated in one Steering Group meeting to date which provided an opportunity to interact with stakeholders and get a sense of the shared ownership of the exercise and the commitment to using EQF to promote the transparency and current understanding of the Scottish qualifications system to an international audience. I am of the opinion that comments that I and others have provided on earlier drafts of the report have been duly considered and where appropriate are reflected in the current draft report.

#### Criterion 8

**The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.**

This criterion is addressed.

#### Criterion 9

**Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.**

This criterion is addressed.

#### Criterion 10

**Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.**

This criterion is addressed.

I recall that I suggested in comments on an earlier draft that an international audience will be interested in the state of play regarding the availability, or otherwise, of European Certificate and Diploma supplements in Scotland. To the extent to which they are available they are an opportunity to promote the SCQF/EQF levels associated with qualifications gained in Scotland.

END



## **Comments on Referencing the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) to the European Qualifications Framework. Report 2018**

International Commentator: Horacy Dębowski, Vice director of the Central Examination Board in Poland (CKE)

1. Scotland along with the UK countries was one of the first to submit referencing reports showing the linkages of their national qualifications frameworks with the European Qualification Framework. Scottish solutions presented in this report inspired many other European and non-European countries in developing their national qualifications systems based on the NQF.

2. Updating the referencing report of Scotland is motivated mostly by the developments in the education and training system in Scotland as well as changes in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Since the publication of the referencing report in 2010:

- the SCQF level descriptors were revised and amended (although not too a large extent),
- significant number of qualifications awarded outside the formal education system were included causing that the SCQF has much greater impact on the qualifications system and its major stakeholders than in 2010,
- recognition of prior learning mechanisms were strengthened in the Scottish qualifications system.

The context of Brexit is not mentioned in the report.

3. The report updates only the referencing of the SCQF with the EQF and is designed to complement other reports which are meant to be produced by other countries within the United Kingdom in 2019.

4. Updating the referencing report in Scotland was thoroughly prepared and was preceded by a number of activities which started already in 2015. In the 2016 a new referencing report was produced although that report has not been submitted for formal referencing. The 2016 report provided basis for this version of report submitted to the EQF AG. Along with the work on 2016 report consultations have been made among others with the national stakeholders, the leaders of the UK EQF National Coordination Points, the UK Coordination Group for Vocational Education and the leaders of the three other EU EQF NCPs (Ireland, Malta, Poland). Analytical reports were prepared by Mike Coles in 2015 and 2018 to support all the UK countries in their re-referencing work. In updating the referencing report Scotland used the experience of participation in the comparability study between Honk Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) with the EQF within the project undertaken by the European Commission and in referencing SCQF and HKQF.

5. The process of work on the report, although intensive in the fall of 2018, was very transparent from the perspective of an international expert. We were equipped with the large set of document and notes (we received the same set of documents as the national stakeholders) explaining the aims of the re-referencing process in Scotland, its organisational solutions as well as detailed information about the adopted approaches. We were also in direct contact with the SCQF Partnership team who were updating information on continuous basis.

6. International experts provided written comments in two rounds of work on the referencing report and participated in the Scottish EQF Re-referencing Steering Group meeting held in Glasgow in November 2018. All the questions posed by the international experts were answered and the given comments were duly analysed and to large extent incorporated in the text of the report. The following issues, among others, were raised by the international experts:

- clarifying relation between learning programmes and qualifications in the Scottish context and adding definition of mainstream qualifications;

- providing more detailed information regarding the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership and especially procedures of the Board of the SCQFP described in Criterion 1 of the report;
- concepts and terms regarding strengths of the linkages between SCQF and the EQF provided in Criterion 2;
- complementing information regarding quality assurance mechanisms for qualifications awarded outside formal education system in Scotland described in Criterion 6 in order better address to 10 principles of the quality assurance formulated in Annex IV of the EQF Recommendation;
- presenting more detailed information on the SCQF Handbook and its role in assuring the coherency of approaches by different stakeholders,
- giving more detailed information about qualifications presented in Annexes.

7. Scottish report is divided into three main sections. First section presents the background of the SCQF implementation. It helps foreign reader to understand the context of the functioning and developing of the SCQF across the years and to understand logic of the development of the qualifications system. Second section responds to the referencing criteria. The report documents well the fulfilment of the 10 criteria as indicated in the Council Recommendation of May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework. The report addresses the 10 criteria clearly and adequately. Third section provides information regarding plans for further developments of the SCQF. A number of annexes complement information provided in the main body of the report.

8. The report is well balanced regarding the scope and level of detail of information. The level of detail is consistent through the report. Additional information is provided in a number of annexes. This report is written in a short-paragraph style which makes it easy to read and follow for the foreign reader. Very informative are figures and boxes used through the report which present concrete examples of solutions, practices or qualifications.

### **Compliance with the referencing criteria**

Below are presented comments on the extent to which the report addresses the criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the European Qualifications Framework, as set out in Annex III of the 2017 EQF Recommendation

*Criterion 1: The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The report clearly presents the responsibilities and competences of institutions and bodies governing the SCQF and each of the sub sectors of the national qualifications system. The report explains specificity of the Scottish organisational and legal solutions as the Scottish framework is not regulated by legislation and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) – a body with the responsibility for the NQF in Scotland – is not a governmental agency. The report explains advantages of this approach in the Scottish context and tradition of collaborative working across public sector areas. It also describes the relationships of the SCQFP with the Scottish government.

*Criterion 2: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF 3.*

The criterion is fulfilled.

Scottish report documents well linkages of the 12 level Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework by applying thorough linguistic procedure comparing level descriptors of both frameworks. The report shows linkages of the 5 descriptors domains of the SCQF (knowledge and understanding; practice: applied knowledge, skills and understanding; generic cognitive skills; communication, numeracy and IT skills; autonomy, accountability and working with others) with the 3 descriptors domains of the EQF. In the analysis the strength of the match between EQF and

SCQF levels was indicated (high, moderate, no match) which adds to transparency of the links between SCQF and EQF as the number of levels is different between these two frameworks.

Annex 5 provides detailed comparison of the SCQF and the EQF level descriptors.

*Criterion 3: The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The qualifications system based on the NQF in Scotland uses learning outcomes as the main point of reference in designing qualifications, assessment, validation and quality assurance. The report explains the logic of the credit system in Scotland and the scope of usage of the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

*Criterion 4: The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The report presents clearly the procedures of inclusion different types of qualifications in the SCQF – the so called “crediting rated process”. It is important to indicate that the report explains how the mainstream and non-mainstream qualifications are being included in the framework and how the SCQF levels are allocated to different types of qualifications. The procedure of allocating levels is quality assured.

The report also provides historical background of the process of populating the framework. In this area there has been significant developments in the Scottish system since the publication of the first referencing report. At the beginning of 2010, only a few qualifications awarded outside the traditional school, college and university sectors were included in the framework and since then more than 900 “non-mainstream” qualifications have been included.

The owners of qualifications included in the SCQF are government agencies, professional organisations, individual employers and training companies, trade unions, youth organisations, community organisations, adult education organisations and charities. The qualifications range from SCQF level 2 to SCQF level 11. Report provides description of examples of different types of qualifications that have been included in the framework allowing foreign reader to understand better the character of the framework and its role in the qualifications system.

*Criterion 5: The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this Recommendation*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The report addresses this criterion by providing general overview of the quality mechanisms adopted in different sectors of the qualifications system and by addressing each principle on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV of the EQF Recommendation.

All institutions and bodies responsible for inclusion qualifications (credit rating bodies) in the Scottish system need to follow the same set of 25 principles defined in the SCQF Handbook. These principles refer to internal and external quality assurance as well as to the transparency of this process. The Scottish report provides detailed information on how the 10 EQF principles specified in Annex IV are reflected in 25 SCQF principles.

All crediting rating bodies must have robust internal quality assurance mechanisms and are subject to external quality assurance carried out by one of the three institutions: QAA Scotland (for higher education institutions and universities), Scottish Government (for Scottish Qualifications Authority qualifications) and SCQFP (for Colleges and other SCQFP approved credit rating bodies). In this context it should be mentioned that SQA, a national body and one of the largest institutions in the qualifications system in Scotland fulfils the two distinct functions: an awarding body and accreditation body function.

*Criterion 6: The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The report states that the bodies responsible for the quality assurance of the SCQF and the Scottish Government provided written statements. Additionally QA bodies were represented on the Scottish EQF Re-referencing Steering Group and were involved in preparation of the report.

*Criterion 7: The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.*

The criterion is fulfilled.

The process involved two international experts. As indicated above, wide range of information was made available to experts and their comments, proposals and recommendations have been duly taken into account. Experts provided written comments in two rounds of work on the referencing report and participated in the Scottish EQF Re-referencing Steering Group meeting held in Glasgow in November 2018.

*Criterion 8: The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.*

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership designated EQF National Co-ordination Point in Scotland produced the report. The report addresses links of the SCQF and the EQF, it does not refer to qualifications framework functioning in other countries in the United Kingdom. The report separately addresses each of the EQF referencing criteria. It is not used for updating the self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

*Criterion 9: Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.*

Publication of the report will be done by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership once the report is approved.

*Criterion 10: Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level*

All qualifications included in the qualifications framework in Scotland must indicate SCQF level. Awarding bodies might indicate EQF level on their certificates but there is no formal requirement to do so. This decision have been made after consultation with the national stakeholders in 2015. The referencing report states that there are plans of the all UK National Coordination Points, including Scottish, to further work on increasing demand for information about the EQF among stakeholders. EQF level is an obligatory field in the online SCQF register (on-line database). Therefore, any stakeholder seeking for information about qualifications in Scotland is also informed about the EQF level of each qualification which is included in the SCQF and the qualifications register.

END

# Higher Biology

<b>Course code:</b>	C807 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X807 76
<b>SCQF:</b>	level 6 (24 SCQF credit)
<b>Valid from:</b>	session 2018–19

This document provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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This edition: May 2018 (version 2.0)

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## **Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course**

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ☐ demonstrating knowledge and understanding of biology by making accurate statements, describing information, providing explanations and integrating knowledge
- ☐ applying biology knowledge to new situations, analysing information and solving problems
- ☐ planning and designing experiments/practical investigations to test given hypotheses or to illustrate particular effects
- ☐ carrying out experiments/practical investigations safely, recording detailed observations and collecting data
- ☐ selecting information from a variety of sources
- ☐ presenting information appropriately in a variety of forms
- ☐ processing information (using calculations and units, where appropriate)
- ☐ making predictions and generalisations from evidence/information
- ☐ drawing valid conclusions and giving explanations supported by evidence/justification
- ☐ evaluating experiments/practical investigations and suggesting improvements
- ☐ communicating findings/information effectively



# Advanced Higher Biology Course Specification (C707 77)

**Course title:** Advanced Higher Biology **SCQF:** level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)

**Valid from August 2015**

This edition: April 2015, version 1.1

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section.

This includes:

- ☐ extending and applying knowledge of biology to new situations, interpreting and analysing information to solve complex problems
- ☐ planning and designing biological experiments/investigations, using reference materials and including risk assessments, to test a hypothesis or to illustrate particular effects
- ☐ carrying out complex experiments in biology safely, recording systematic detailed observations and collecting data
- ☐ selecting information from a variety of sources and presenting detailed information, appropriately, in a variety of forms
- ☐ processing and analysing biological information/data (using calculations, significant figures and units, where appropriate)
- ☐ making reasoned predictions and generalisations from a range of evidence/information
- ☐ drawing valid conclusions and giving explanations supported by evidence/justification
- ☐ critically evaluating experimental procedures by identifying sources of error, suggesting and implementing improvements
- ☐ drawing on knowledge and understanding of biology to make accurate statements, describe complex information, provide detailed explanations and integrate knowledge
- ☐ communicating biological findings/information fully and effectively
- ☐ analysing and evaluating scientific publications and media reports

## Annex 12: Letters of Endorsement

26 February 2019

Ms S Dunn  
Head of Quality & International  
Development  
Scottish Credit and Qualifications  
Framework Partnership  
201 West George Street  
Glasgow  
G2 2LW

18 Bothwell Street  
Glasgow  
G2 6NU

0141 5723420  
Direct line: 0141 572 3442  
r.pelik@qaa.ac.uk

QAA Scotland can confirm that it has been involved in the updating of the Referencing of the SCQF to the EQF process in 2018. Claire Parks has been represented on the Steering Group established to oversee this process and has had opportunity to input to and comment on the various drafts and the final version of the updated referencing report.

I can confirm on behalf of QAA Scotland that the report reflects the current quality assurance arrangements in Scotland in respect of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and of the key quality assurance role of QA Scotland A in those arrangements and that QAA Scotland is happy to endorse this final updated referencing report.

Yours sincerely



Rowena Pelik MA (RCA)  
**Director Nations and International**  
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

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Aileen Ponton  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework  
Partnership  
201 West George Street  
G2 2LW

Your ref: EQF referencing report

27 March 2019

To whom it may concern,

**REFERENCING OF THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK  
(SCQF) TO THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (EQF)**

The Scottish Government is the body responsible for establishing the SCQF Partnership as the National Co-ordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework. The Scottish Government asked the Partnership to update the referencing of the SCQF to the EQF.

Scottish Government officials had access to the Steering Group meetings and received drafts during the process as well as the final version for submission to the Board of the SCQF Partnership and the European commission. I can confirm that the report fully reflects the education and training landscape in Scotland and that Scottish Government officials are happy to endorse the final report.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Linda Pooley





Scottish Qualifications Authority  
Ùghdarras Theisteanas Na H-Alba

Our ref: GS  
11 March 2019

Sheila Dunn  
Head of Quality and International Development  
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership  
201 West George Street  
GLASGOW  
G2 2LW

Contact: Gill Stewart  
Direct line: 0345 213 5381  
Email : [gill.stewart@sqa.org.uk](mailto:gill.stewart@sqa.org.uk)

Dear Ms Dunn

### **SCQF-EQF Referencing Report**

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) can confirm that it has been involved in the updating of the Referencing of the SCQF to the EQF process in 2018. SQA has been represented on the Steering Group established to oversee this process and has had opportunity to input to and comment on the various drafts and the final version of the updated referencing report. I can confirm on behalf of SQA that the report reflects the current quality assurance arrangements in Scotland in respect of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and of the key quality assurance role of SQA in those arrangements and that SQA is happy to endorse this final updated referencing report.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gill Stewart  
Director of Qualifications Development