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SQA and SCQF Qualifications explained



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What's our knowledge of
Qualifications?
Past, Present and Future

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National Qualifications

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45625.html>

Skills for Work

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/79148.9433.html>

National Progression Awards

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64815.html>

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



scottish credit and
qualifications framework

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National Qualifications explained

National Qualifications (NQs) – almost everyone leaving school or college has one or more NQs. These are secondary school and college qualifications (and some training centres).

These are at different levels to allow learners to progress through pathways.

[https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Guide to Scottish Qualifications.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Guide%20to%20Scottish%20Qualifications.pdf)

National 1 units	+
National 2	+
National 3	+
National 4	+
National 5	+
Higher	+
Advanced Higher	+
Baccalaureates	+
Skills for Work	+
SCQF levels and credit values	+

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National 3

National 3 courses are **made up of units which are assessed as pass or fail** by the teacher.

These Units require learners to develop:

- basic knowledge and understanding of the subject
- apply skills to a range of simple tasks in familiar contexts, with guidance from teachers.

Learners need to pass all units to achieve the qualification.

National 4

National 4 courses are **made up of units**, including an added value unit which assesses learners' performance across the course.

The units are **assessed as pass or fail** by the teacher and learners need to pass all units, including the added value unit, to achieve the qualification.

National 5

National 5 courses are generally taken in secondary schools (S4-S6) and in further education colleges.

National 5 courses are assessed through a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both - most of which will be marked by SQA. In some subjects, coursework is marked by a teacher.

The courses are graded A to D or 'no award'.

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Higher

Highers are generally taken in secondary schools (S5-S6) and in further education colleges.

The course assessment involves a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both - most of which are marked by SQA. In some subjects, coursework is marked by a teacher.

The courses are graded A to D or 'no award'.

Some learners leave secondary education with Highers and progress to further/higher education, training or employment.

Highers are the standard entry requirements for higher education in Scotland.

Advanced Higher

Advanced Highers are generally taken in secondary schools (S5-S6) and in further education colleges.

The course assessment involves a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both - most of which will be marked by SQA. In some subjects, coursework is marked by a teacher.

The courses are graded A to D or 'no award'.

They provide good preparation for learners **progressing to further and higher education.**

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Baccalaureates

The Baccalaureates in **Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences (all at level 7)** consists on a coherent group of current Higher and Advanced Higher Qualifications.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34638.html>

Unique to Scottish Baccalaureates is the Interdisciplinary Project that helps candidates to develop and show evidence of initiative, responsibility, and independent working — skills of real value in the world of higher education and work.

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Scottish_Baccalaureate_Course_Options_Table.pdf

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Skills for Work

Skills for Work courses introduce learners to the demands and expectations of the world of work.

The courses offer learners a chance to work on practical skills.

Learners may spend some of their time at a local college, training provider or employer.

[Skills for Work courses](#)

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels

The SCQF levels range from level 1 to level 12. This covers a range of learning from National 1 to a doctorate. All National Courses and Units are benchmarked against the SCQF. <https://scqf.org.uk/about-the-framework/>

We generally work within L5, L6 and at times L7. This will include any courses at West Lothian College too.

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THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

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 www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.



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

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National Certificates (NCs)

National Certificates prepare people for employment, career development or progression to more advanced study at HNC/HND level.

They also develop transferable knowledge including Core Skills.

These certificates are aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults in full-time education and are at SCQF Levels 2-6. Each one is specific to a subject or occupational area.

There are NCs in subjects as diverse as Sound Production, Technical Theatre and Child, Health and Social Care.

National Progression Awards

National Progression Awards (NPAs) are available in a variety of sectors, from Construction and Childcare to areas such as Digital Literacy and Social Software.

They're aimed at assessing a defined set of skills and knowledge in specialist areas. They also link to National Occupational Standards, which are the basis of SVQs.

NPAs are at SCQF Levels 2-6 and are delivered in partnership between schools, colleges and employers. Although many schools get involved, they're mainly used by colleges for short-study programmes.

This session we have launched NPA Furniture Making.

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Higher National Qualifications

HNC and HND courses provide the practical skills you need to do a job and the theoretical knowledge your employer will expect you to have.

All the courses are made up of Higher National Units.

- HNCs usually take one year to complete.
- HNDs usually take two years to complete.
- Some HNCs allow direct entry into the second year of a degree programme, and some HNDs allow direct entry to third year

This session in Music we are undertaking 3 HNC units in Sound Production.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/78573.html>

Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships are a **work-based learning opportunity** for senior-phase secondary school pupils.

Lasting one or two years, pupils begin their Foundation Apprenticeship in S5 or S6. Young people spend time out of school at college or with a local employer, and complete the Foundation Apprenticeship alongside their other subjects like National 5s and Highers. Completion leads to a qualification at the same level of learning as a Higher and can lead to progression on to a job, such as a Modern or Graduate Apprenticeship.

Foundation Apprenticeships are recognised as entry qualifications by all Scottish colleges and universities.

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The Future – watch this space...

The Hayward Review and National Discussion on Education

On 31 May the Scottish Government published **All Learners in Scotland Matter**, the final report of the National Discussion on Education, facilitated by Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris. This report outlines the Vision, Values and Call to Action for the future direction of Scottish education.

On 22 June the Scottish Government published It's **Our Future**, the final report of the **Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment** which was led by Professor Louise Hayward.

Recommendations in this report centre around the introduction of a **Scottish Diploma of Achievement (SDA) in the Senior Phase**, with three mandatory elements: **Personal Pathway, Programmes of Learning and Project Learning.**