



aspire  
aspire not to have more,  
but to be more ...Oscar Rom

# NAMING QUALIFICATIONS AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES FOR THE SCQF

A GUIDE FOR CREDIT RATING BODIES  
AND PROGRAMME OWNERS



scottish credit and  
qualifications framework









# INTRODUCING THE SCQF

**The SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) is Scotland's national qualifications framework and provides a way of recognising, describing and comparing the difficulty and time taken to achieve a whole range of qualifications and learning programmes. In addition to mainstream qualifications, the SCQF also contains vocational and skills-based qualifications, and learning programmes developed and delivered in the workplace and community.**

It is therefore important that the titles of programmes<sup>1</sup> on the SCQF are clear and do not confuse or mislead users of those programmes and most importantly learners. As the owners of the Framework, we expect SCQF Credit Rating Bodies, awarding bodies, programme owners and others to give due consideration to the naming of programmes that are placed on the SCQF and to ensure that any title:

- **is clear and not confusing or misleading**
- **accurately reflects the content of the programme**
- **does not use any protected title or terminology**
- **is used consistently in promotional activities**

Credit Rating Bodies have a specific additional responsibility during the credit rating process in ensuring that any third party is provided with information regarding clear titling, the use of protected titles and terminology, and for checking that any title is in accordance with the guidance within this document.



<sup>1</sup> The term 'programme' is used in this document and refers to encompass qualifications and learning programmes etc for ease of reading.

# PROTECTED TITLES

There are a significant number of programmes on the SCQF that have ‘protected titles’, either by law and/or trademark. This means that these titles cannot be used by others. For example:

- **The use of degree titles, including research degree titles, can only be used by those institutions with degree awarding powers. These titles include:**
  - Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education
  - Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
  - BA, BSc, MPhil and PhD
- **Similarly the following terminology should not be used unless the programme is awarded by an institution with degree awarding powers:**
  - Honours
  - Graduate
  - Masters
  - Higher Education
- **The use of the term Post Graduate is also restricted to institutions with degree awarding powers, Chartered Bodies, Professional Bodies and Institutes**
- **Many SQA titles are also protected<sup>2</sup> such as:**
  - Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma
  - National Progression Award (NPA)
  - Professional Development Award (PDA)
  - Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)<sup>3</sup>
  - The Scottish Baccalaureate
- **The titles within the Apprenticeship family should also not be used e.g. Foundation Apprenticeship, Modern Apprenticeship, Higher Apprenticeship, Technical Apprenticeship, Professional Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship.**



<sup>2</sup> SQA also uses the titles Advanced Certificate and Advanced Diploma but these are not protected. We are aware that other organisations and awarding bodies use these or similar titles and advise that care should be taken in their use to avoid confusion for learners when using these or similar titles.

<sup>3</sup> Although Approved Awarding Bodies (by SQA Accreditation) offer and deliver SVQs, other organisations are not permitted to use this title for their own provision.





# LINKS TO OTHER QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS ACROSS THE UK AND BEYOND

Care should be taken as far as possible to ensure that any title used does not also contravene any trademark or protection that might exist in the rest of the UK or that a programme title is misleading. You can refer to common titles used in the UK and Ireland by referring to the **Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries document**.

There are two parallel frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies, one that applies to Scotland and one that operates in the rest of the UK:

- **The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)**
- **The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS)**

These frameworks are the principal national reference points for academic standards in UK higher education. The SCQF encompasses the FQHEIS and the FQHEIS is described in terms of SCQF levels and SCQF credit. Find out more about the FHEQ and the FQHEIS and their qualifications descriptors.

## Reference to other Qualifications Frameworks levels in titles

The SCQF Handbook (principle 10) states that certificates must not include reference to any other National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level. The exception to this rule is the comparable European Qualifications Framework level which is currently permitted on certificates (but not in the title). As a result you should avoid using any reference to levels in programme titles other than the SCQF level. We are aware that other NQFs may insist on the inclusion of the level in titles however, if these programmes are also to be credit rated and placed on the SCQF, the other NQF level should be removed to avoid confusion.

Similarly the use of other programme owner specific levels should be avoided where possible i.e. where a programme owner refers to its own levels 1, 2, 3 etc. In this case a programme owner could consider using other terminology such as reference to 'stage' or terminology such as basic, advanced etc or consider removing the word level and simply using the number. The main aim of this is to avoid confusion for learners where this type of titling may result in for example a 'Level 2 Award Yoga' which actually sits at SCQF level 6 or similar.

Any information on the relationship of the SCQF to other Qualifications Framework levels for a programme should be provided by other means e.g. a transcript, Higher Education Diploma Supplement, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), websites and programme information materials etc.

You can check the broad comparisons of levels of qualifications and learning programmes in Scotland with other frameworks across the UK, Ireland and with the EQF by using the Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries leaflet.

## FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

You can contact us at [info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk) with any queries on naming qualifications and learning programmes.

Further information on qualifications of degree awarding bodies can be found at:

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (qaa.ac.uk):**

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

Further information on **SQA qualifications** can be found at: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70972.html>

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





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

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