



scottish credit and  
qualifications framework

# SCQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS



# INTRODUCTION

The SCQF is Scotland's Lifelong Learning Framework. It was developed in 2001 to meet the needs of Scotland's learners and provides a shared context for learning in Scotland. It was created by bringing together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified Framework.

Within the overall context of lifelong learning, the aims of the SCQF are to:

- help people of all ages and circumstances to access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential; and
- enable employers, learners and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how the qualifications relate to each other, and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

## THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12				DOCTORAL DEGREE	
11				INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREE / MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10				HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	BACHELORS / ORDINARY DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA		DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
7	ADVANCED HIGHER SCOTTISH BACCALAUREATE	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE		CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SVQ3
6	HIGHER				
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT STANDARD GRADE				SVQ2
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL STANDARD GRADE	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD		SVQ1
3	ACCESS 3 FOUNDATION STANDARD GRADE				
2	ACCESS 2				
1	ACCESS 1				



## USING THE SCQF

The SCQF provides a vocabulary for describing learning and helps to:

- make the relationships between qualifications and learning programmes clear;
- clarify entry and exit points, and routes for progression;
- maximise the opportunities for credit transfer;
- assist learners to plan their progress and learning; and
- minimise the duplication of learning.

The SCQF is used by learning providers in a number of ways:

- to allocate a level and a number of credits to learning programmes and qualifications;
- as a guide for mapping progression routes within and across the education and training sectors; and
- by programme designers when designing qualifications and learning programmes and deciding on the entry requirements;

The SCQF can be used by employers in a variety of ways:

- to develop clear and concise job descriptions;
- in recruitment advertising;
- to ensure effective skills acquisition, development and utilisation;
- to undertake skills audits and for developing skills and learning strategies; and
- for planning personal and staff development.

The SCQF can also be used in other contexts, for example:

- by staff providing advice and guidance, for example, in supporting the recognition of prior learning; and
- for informally benchmarking learning programmes such as those delivered in the workplace and in the community.

For guidance and further information on how to use the Framework in different contexts, including the Guide for Employers, call the SCQF Executive Team on **0845 270 7371** or go to [www.scqf.org.uk/resources](http://www.scqf.org.uk/resources)

## KEY FEATURES OF THE SCQF

The SCQF uses two measures, SCQF Level and Credit Points, to help in understanding and comparing qualifications and learning programmes.

### SCQF Levels

There are 12 SCQF Levels which provide an indication of the complexity of qualifications and learning programmes. SCQF Level 1 is the least demanding and SCQF Level 12 is the most demanding. SCQF Levels are based on a single set of Level Descriptors that are the common reference points and definitions which provide a way of recognising learning that is outcome-based and quality-assured.

SCQF Levels provide a basis for broad comparisons between learning programmes and qualifications achieved in different contexts, such as the workplace and formal classroom study, and by a variety of modes.

Over a lifetime, individuals can move between and across SCQF Levels as they undertake new learning and acquire new skills for particular contexts and circumstances. This might be from higher to lower SCQF Levels, from lower to higher SCQF Levels or across the same SCQF Level. It should not be assumed that all learners undertaking new studies would start at SCQF Level 1.

### SCQF Level Descriptors

The SCQF Level Descriptors have five characteristics which provide a reference point for determining the level of a qualification, learning programme, module or unit of learning or for the recognition of prior learning. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning for individual qualifications.

Each level is described in terms of its characteristic general outcomes under five broad headings. These are:

- knowledge and understanding – mainly subject-based;
- practice (applied knowledge and understanding);
- generic cognitive skills - e.g. evaluation, critical analysis;
- communication, numeracy and IT skills; and
- autonomy, accountability and working with others.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the characteristics of the SCQF Level Descriptors should refer to the *SCQF Handbook: User Guide, Section 2.4*.



## SCQF Credit Points

SCQF Credit Points are awarded to learners when they achieve the learning outcomes of the learning programme or qualification. The number of Credit Points is based on the notional learning hours that an average learner at a specific level would take to achieve the learning outcomes. There is no limit to the number of Credit Points that can be achieved.

Credit Points provide a way for learners, employers and learning providers to describe and compare the amount of learning that has been achieved or is required to achieve a learning programme or qualification at a given level of the SCQF. SCQF Credit Points quantify learning outcomes that are subject to valid, reliable methods of assessment.

## SCQF Credit Rating

The SCQF Level Descriptors are used by SCQF Credit Rating Bodies to credit rate learning programmes and qualifications.

Credit Rating is the allocation of SCQF Level and Credit Points on learning programmes and qualifications to include them on the Framework provided that the following criteria are met:

- the learning must be based on learning outcomes;
- the learning outcomes must take a minimum of a notional 10 hours to achieve;
- learning outcomes must be subject to reliable and valid methods of assessment that are recorded; and
- the learning is included within an appropriate quality assurance system.

## Further Information

More detailed information on using the SCQF can be found in the SCQF Handbook: User Guide available in hard copy from the SCQF Partnership or downloadable from [www.scqf.org.uk/resources](http://www.scqf.org.uk/resources)

SCQF Credit Rating Bodies allocating SCQF Level and Credit Points to Learning Programmes and Qualifications should refer to the *SCQF Handbook: User Guide, Section 4 Credit Rating*.

Employers should refer to the SCQF Guide for Employers which provides a contextualised version of the Framework available in hard copy from the SCQF Partnership or downloadable from [www.scqf.org.uk/resources](http://www.scqf.org.uk/resources)

# LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

## SCQF Level 1

(Access 1 is an example of a qualification at this level)

### Level Descriptor for SCQF Level 1

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.

## SCQF Level 2

(Access 2 is an example of a qualification at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
Knowledge and understanding	Demonstrate and/or work with knowledge of simple facts and ideas in a subject/discipline.
Practice: applied knowledge and understanding	Relate knowledge to a few simple everyday contexts with prompting. Use a few very simple skills. Carry out, with guidance, a few familiar tasks. Use, under supervision, basic tools and materials.
Generic cognitive skills	Use rehearsed stages for solving problems. Operate in personal and/or everyday contexts. Take some account, with prompting, of identified consequences of action.
Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Use very 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 very simple tasks to process data and access information.</li> <li>• Use a limited range of very simple and familiar numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts.</li> </ul>
Autonomy, accountability and working with others	Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent and directive supervision. Identify, given simple criteria, some successes and/or failures of the work.

## SCQF Level 3

(Access 3, Foundation Standard Grade are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic knowledge in a subject/discipline.</li><li>• Simple facts and ideas associated with a subject/discipline.</li></ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Relate knowledge with some prompting to personal and/or everyday contexts. Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks. Complete pre-planned tasks. Use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Identify with some prompting a process to deal with a situation or issue. Operate in familiar contexts using given criteria. Take account of some identified consequences of action.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	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 data and access information.</li><li>• Use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts.</li></ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent supervision. Participate in the setting of goals, timelines, etc. Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes. Identify, given simple criteria, own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

## SCQF Level 4

(Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, SVQ1 are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge in a subject/discipline which is mainly factual.</li> <li>• Some simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline.</li> <li>• Knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts. Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements. Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Use, with guidance, given stages of a problem-solving approach to deal with a situation or issue. Operate in straightforward contexts. Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	Use straightforward 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 most straightforward features of familiar applications to process and obtain information.</li> <li>• Use straightforward numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Work alone or with others on straightforward tasks. Contribute to the setting of goals, timelines, etc. Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes. Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.

## SCQF Level 5

(Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, SVQ2 are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic knowledge in a subject/discipline which is mainly factual but has some theoretical component.</li><li>• A range of simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline.</li><li>• Knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology.</li></ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Relate ideas and knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts. Complete some routine and non-routine tasks using knowledge associated with a subject/discipline. Plan and organise both familiar and new tasks. Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively (e.g. without waste). Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Use a problem-solving approach to deal with a situation or issue that is straightforward in relation to a subject/discipline. 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. Use some abstract constructs - for example make generalisations and/or draw conclusions.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	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 applications to process, obtain and combine information.</li><li>• Use a range of numerical and graphical data in straightforward contexts that have some complex features.</li></ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum supervision. Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team with manager/supervisor. Take leadership responsibility for some tasks. Show an awareness of others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and make a contribution to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.

## SCQF Level 6

(Higher, SVQ3<sup>1</sup> are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalised knowledge of a subject/discipline;</li> <li>• Factual and theoretical knowledge.</li> <li>• A range of facts, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices, techniques about/associated with a subject/discipline.</li> <li>• Relate the subject/discipline to a range of practical and/or everyday applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding in known, practical contexts. Use some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements. Plan how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Obtain, organise and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving. Make generalisations and predictions. Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	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 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>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Take responsibility for carrying out of a range of activities where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision. Take some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work. Manage limited resources within defined and supervised areas of work. 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.

<sup>1</sup> SVQ3 spans SCQF Levels 6 and 7

## SCQF Level 7

(Cert HE, HNC, Advanced Higher, SVQ3<sup>2</sup> are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A broad knowledge of the subject/discipline in general.</li> <li>• Knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles.</li> <li>• An awareness of the evolving/changing nature of knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. Practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas which are routine to the subject/discipline. Use a range of approaches to address defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/discipline, 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 new contexts.</li> <li>• Use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data.</li> <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>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level. Take supervision in less familiar areas of work. Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined and supervised structure. Manage limited resources within defined areas of work. Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts. Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks. Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.

<sup>2</sup> SVQ3 spans SCQF Levels 6 and 7

## SCQF Level 8

(Dip HE, HND, SVQ4<sup>3</sup> are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/discipline.</li> <li>• Detailed knowledge in some areas.</li> <li>• Understanding of a limited range of core theories, principles and concepts.</li> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms.</li> <li>• An outline knowledge and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Use a range of routine skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline, a few of which are advanced or complex. Carry out routine lines of enquiry, development or investigation into professional level problems and issues. Adapt routine practices within accepted standards.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues that are within the common understandings of the subject/discipline. Use a range of approaches to formulate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues. Critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline, 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 applications to process and obtain data.</li> <li>• Use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level. Take significant managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work. Manage resources within defined areas of work. Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts. Take continuing account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks. Work in support of current professional practice, under guidance. Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices, under guidance.

<sup>3</sup> SVQ4 spans SCQF Levels 8 and 9

## SCQF Level 9

(Bachelors Degree, SVQ4<sup>4</sup> are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Demonstrate and/or work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of a subject/ discipline.</li> <li>• A critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts and terminology.</li> <li>• Knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. Use a few skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are specialised or advanced. Practise routine methods of enquiry and/or research. Practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues. Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues. Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences.</li> <li>• Use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work.</li> <li>• Interpret, use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level. Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources. Practise in ways that take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities. Work, under guidance, with qualified practitioners. Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices, seeking guidance where appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> SVQ4 spans SCQF Levels 8 and 9

## SCQF Level 10

(Honours Degree is an example of a qualification at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	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.</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.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Use a range of the principal skills, practices and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline. Use a few skills, practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject/discipline. Execute a defined project of research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes. Practise in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse complex/professional level problems and issues. Offer professional level insights, interpretations and solutions to problems and issues. Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in a subject/discipline. Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues. Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources.
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences.</li> <li>• Communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues and specialists.</li> <li>• Use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify refinements/improvements to software to increase effectiveness.</li> <li>• Interpret, use and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets.</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/equivalent activities. Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources. Practise in ways which show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities. Work effectively, under guidance, in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners. Work with others to bring about change, development and/or new thinking. Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices. Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.

## SCQF Level 11

(PG Cert, PG Dip, MA, MSc, SVQ5 are examples of qualifications at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</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 a subject discipline – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions.</li><li>• A critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts.</li><li>• A critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principles and concepts.</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 and one or more specialisms.</li></ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are associated with a subject/discipline. Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are at the forefront of, or informed by, forefront developments. Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry. Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development. Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices. Practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront of, or informed by, developments at the forefront of a subject/discipline. Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues. Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues. Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline. Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.

## SCQF Level 11

*continued*

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<p><b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b></p>	<p>Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <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 software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness.</li> <li>• Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b></p>	<p>Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.            Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.            Take responsibility for a significant range of resources.            Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development.            Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.            Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>

## SCQF Level 12

(Doctoral Degree is an example of a qualification at this level)

Characteristics	The following descriptions are for guidance only — it is not expected that every point will be covered
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts.</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.</li> </ul>
<b>Practice: applied knowledge and understanding</b>	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use and enhance a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms.</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</p> <p>Design and execute research, investigative or development projects to deal with new problems and issues.</p> <p>Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices.</p> <p>Practise in the context of new problems and circumstances.</p>
<b>Generic cognitive skills</b>	<p>Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues.</p> <p>Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues.</p> <p>Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues.</p> <p>Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.</p>
<b>Communication, ICT and numeracy skills</b>	<p>Use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <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.</li> <li>• Use a range of software 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>
<b>Autonomy, accountability and working with others</b>	<p>Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues.</p> <p>Work in ways which are reflective, self-critical and based on research/evidence.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues.</p> <p>Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>

39 St Vincent Place Glasgow G1 2ER

T 0845 270 7371 F 0845 270 7372 E [info@scqf.org.uk](mailto:info@scqf.org.uk) [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

**scqf** | SCOTLAND'S LIFELONG LEARNING FRAMEWORK

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