

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and European Credit and Transfer System: Information for Postgraduate Taught Students

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Heriot-Watt University is part of the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#). The SCQF brings together all Scottish higher education qualifications, as well as further education, vocational and secondary school qualifications, into a single, national framework. One of its main purposes is to help learners move more easily from one qualification to another.

Only qualifications with a taught component are included in the framework, and this includes research degrees which incorporate a course of instruction. Qualifications in the framework are described in terms of levels and credits. There are 12 levels in the framework (from Access courses to Doctorates with taught component), and the credits are called SCQF points. All Heriot-Watt University's postgraduate qualifications with a taught component comply with SCQF requirements.

Levels and Credit Points

The SCQF uses two measures to describe qualifications within the framework:

- The level of the outcomes of learning
- The volume of outcomes, described in terms of the number of credits

Credit points quantify student learning. At Heriot-Watt University a standard postgraduate taught course is rated at 15 credits (HW Online courses are 20 credits) and a student will typically take 150 hours of study time (including attendance at lectures, tutorials and self-study) to complete each course (or 200 notional effort hours in the case of HW Online courses). Postgraduate qualifications are typically credit-rated as follows:

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|----------------------------|-------------|
| • Postgraduate Certificate | 60 credits |
| • Postgraduate Diploma | 120 credits |
| • Masters degree | 180 credits |

Levels reflect the demand and complexity of learning in a course; courses in postgraduate programmes are rated at Level 11. The actual credit and level requirements of each programme are detailed in individual programme handbooks or equivalent information on programmes/courses.

Through the SCQF students may use credits acquired from prior qualifications and learning to gain entry to a programme or exemption from specific courses. Further information is available from Admissions and via the University's Recognition of Prior Learning [Policy](#) and [Procedures](#). For further details of the SCQF, go to the SCQF website: www.scqf.org.uk

European Credit and Transfer System

The European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) is the European framework designed to facilitate the transfer of credit between courses for students who choose to study at more than one European university, including exchange students. The ECTS defines credit slightly differently to the SCQF system; so, for example, a Postgraduate Diploma rated as 120 SCQF credit points equates to 60 ECTS credit points. Each standard Heriot-Watt postgraduate course rated at 15 credits is equivalent to 7.5 ECTS credit points. Heriot-Watt University will consider ECTS credits for students entering our programmes with prior qualifications from European universities.

For further details of ECTS, go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

SCQF and ECTS credits

Online results and academic transcripts will show both SCQF and ECTS credit totals.