

Guidelines on Complying with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

At its meetings in March and May 2003, the Senate approved the Learning and Teaching Board's proposals for the compliance of the University's undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). These Guidelines are designed to assist Schools in implementing the University's policy on SCQF.

1. Overview of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

The SCQF is a national framework which brings all Scottish mainstream vocational, School, FE and HE qualifications into a single unified framework. The SCQF is designed to clarify entry and exit points and routes for progression within and across sectors. It is also designed to maximise the opportunities for credit transfer. *The higher education part of the framework was implemented from September 2003.*

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 SCQF credit points
- a) **Levels:** there are 12 levels in the framework ranging from Access 1 to taught Doctorate. Each level has a descriptor which sets out characteristic general outcomes and reflects the demand and complexity of learning associated with the level. HE also has qualifications descriptors which detail general expectations of the purpose and outcomes of the main qualifications.
- b) **Credit points:** SCQF points are used to quantify the outcomes of learning and give them a value or currency. One credit point represents the outcomes of learning achieved through 10 notional hours of learning time (student effort hours).

2. The SCQF at Heriot-Watt University

Like other HEIs, Heriot-Watt University began implementing the principles of the SCQF on an incremental basis. By session 2007/2008, all undergraduate, graduate and taught postgraduate programmes were fully compliant with the credit and level requirements of the SCQF.

3. Credit and Levels of UG & PG Courses at HWU

The SCQF's credit point system and definition of levels apply to all postgraduate, graduate and undergraduate courses.

3.1 Credits

Postgraduate, graduate and undergraduate courses are credit-rated in terms of the SCQF credits, where 1 credit is equivalent to 10 notional hours of student effort (sehs):

- Undergraduate courses of 150 sehs are rated as 15 credits
- Postgraduate courses of 150 sehs are rated as 15 credits

The credit-rating is recorded on course descriptors, programme structures, results letters and transcripts.

3.2 Levels

The level of courses is determined by the SCQF definition of level:

- The complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding
- Links to academic or professional practice
- The degree of integration, independence and creativity required
- The range and sophistication of application/practice
- The role(s) taken in relation to other learners in carrying out tasks

4. HWU's Undergraduate Qualifications – SCQF Programmes (*all students*)

By session 2007/08, all HWU's undergraduate programmes were fully compliant with SCQF; therefore, the following sections outline the credit and level requirements **for all undergraduate students from 2007/08** (see paragraph 5.4 of Regulation A7., Ordinances and Regulations - Heriot-Watt University (hw.ac.uk))

4.1 Credit and Level Requirements

The *credit requirements* are the same for all HWU Honours and Ordinary degrees, with no distinction made between Specialist, Joint/Core or Combined Studies.

<u>Award</u>	<u>Credits for Award</u>	<u>Level Requirements for Award</u>	<u>SCQF Award Requirements</u>
Integrated Masters MEng/Mphys/MChem	600	A minimum of 120 credits at Level M (SCQF Level 11)	600 SCQFs; SCQF Level 11
Honours (incl MA)	480	A minimum of 180 credits at Levels 3 and 4, with at least 90 at Level 4 (SCQF Level 10)	480 SCQFs; SCQF Level 10
Bachelor (Ordinary, General)	360	A minimum of 60 credits at Level 3 (SCQF Level 9)	360 SCQFs; SCQF Level 9
Dip of HE	240	A minimum of 90 credits at Level 2 (SCQF Level 8)	240 SCQFs; SCQF Level 8
Cert of HE	120	A minimum of 90 credits at Level 1 (SCQF Level 7)	120 SCQFs; SCQF Level 7

4.2 Discretionary Award of Credits

Full compliance with SCQF also means that there will only be one scheme for the Discretionary Award of Credits at undergraduate level. Under the single scheme, the Award Board or Progression Board has the discretion to award credit points to a student who has not achieved the requisite credits for award or for progression from one stage to another. Discretionary credits can be applied only within a certain context as per the University Regulations. Refer to Document 3: Guidelines on the Discretionary Award of Credits.

5. HWU's Postgraduate and Graduate Qualifications

The credit and level requirements for postgraduate and graduate awards are:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Awards</u>	<u>Total Min. Credits</u>	<u>Minimum Credit & Level Requirements</u>
Doctorate	PhD/DPhil (<i>not research-based</i>)	540	Minimum of 420 credits at Level D (SCQF Level 12)

Masters	MPhil (<i>not research-based</i>)	300	Minimum of 270 credits at Level M (SCQF Level 11)
	Masters	180	Minimum of 150 credits at Level M (SCQF Level 11)
	PG Diploma	120	Minimum of 90 credits at Level M (SCQF Level 11)
	PG Certificate	60	Minimum of 40 credits at Level M (SCQF Level 11)
Level 3/4	Graduate Diploma	120	Minimum of 120 credits at a minimum of Level 3 (SCQF Level 9)
	Graduate Certificate	60	Minimum of 60 credits at a minimum of Level 3 (SCQF Level 9)

The discretionary award of credits can only be applied at the award stage and cannot be applied as a means to facilitate progression through the programme. The key criteria for the use of the discretionary award of credits, which was approved for introduction from 17 May 2006 for postgraduate/graduate taught programmes, are detailed within Document 3: Guidelines on the Discretionary Award of Credits.