



# The Senior Phase

**Making choices in S3 for S4**  
**7 January 2025**

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# Aims of the Senior Phase

- The Senior Phase in Scottish secondary schools is from S4 to S6
- Pupils embark on appropriate programmes of study in S4/5/6 in order to gain qualifications that:
  - reflect their academic potential
  - develop skills and knowledge
  - provide for progression within school
  - provide for progression beyond school

# Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF)



Ready Reckoner for SQA Qualifications in the SCQF  
Customer Contact Centre 0345 279 1000 [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) helps people to understand and compare different qualifications in Scotland.

It does this by using two measures:

**Levels (1-12)** show how complex the learning of a qualification is.

**Credit points** indicate the volume of learning required to achieve a qualification.

One SCQF credit point represents 10 notional learning hours.

SQA qualifications are developed using SCQF level and credit points. This information is shown on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate. The Ready Reckoner shows the level and credit points for SQA Units, Courses and Group Awards.



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

Units	
Type	SCQF credit points
Higher National Units SCQF levels 5-12	8
National Units SCQF level 7	8
National Units SCQF levels 1-6	6
SVQ Units SCQF levels 4-12	varies

National qualifications		
	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
Advanced Higher	7	32
Higher	6	24
National 5	5	24
National 4	4	24
National 3	3	18
National 2	2	18
National 1	1	6

Scottish Baccalaureates	
SCQF level	SCQF credit points
7	104

Group Awards		
	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
Higher National Diploma	8	240
Higher National Certificate	7	96
National Certificate	4-6	72
National Certificate	2-3	54
Awards <sup>1</sup>	1-12	varies
Professional Development Awards <sup>1</sup>	6-12	varies
National Progression Awards <sup>1</sup>	2-6	varies

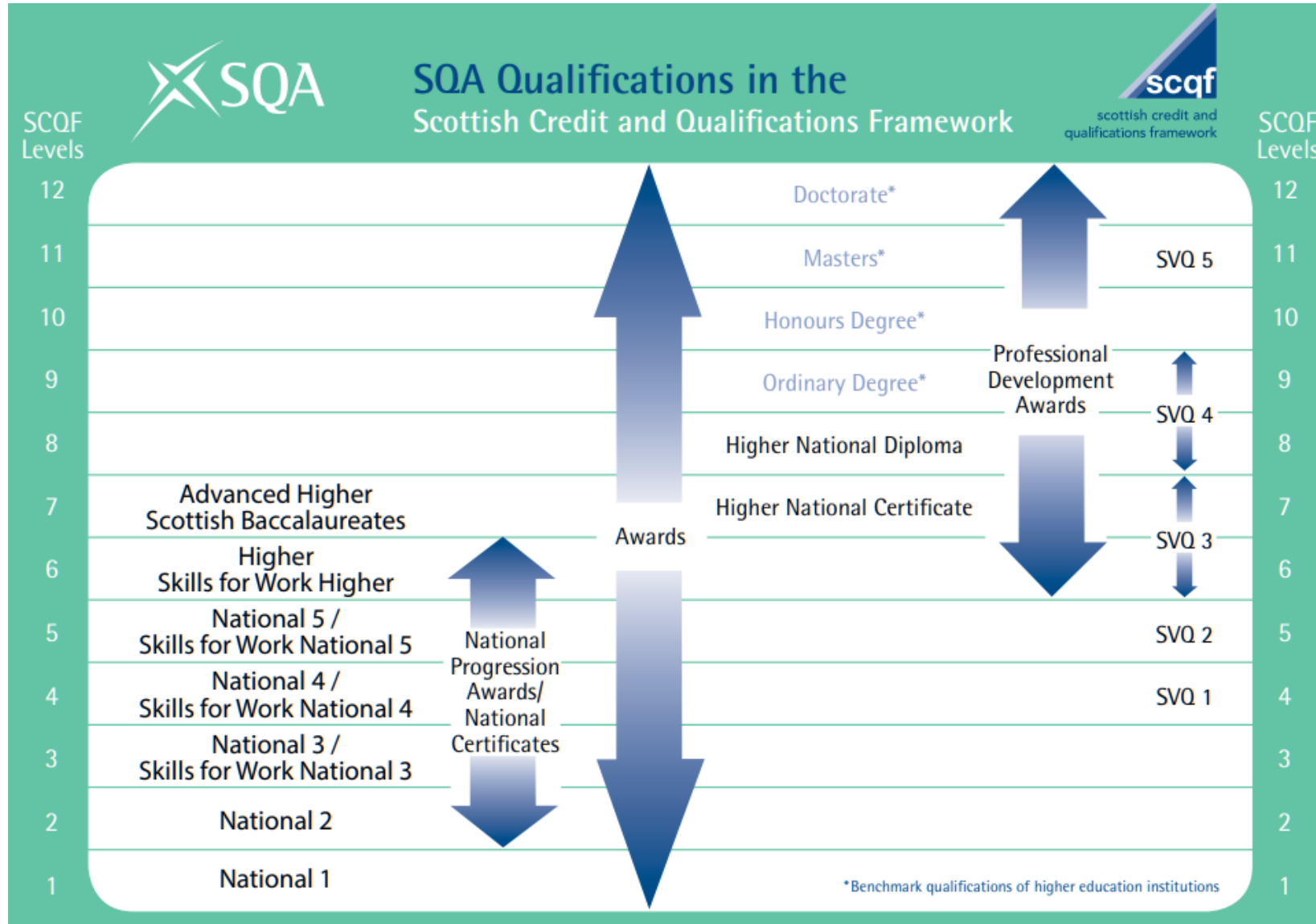
Scottish Vocational Qualifications <sup>2</sup>	
	SCQF level
SVQ 5	11
SVQ 4	8-9
SVQ 3	6-7
SVQ 2	5
SVQ 1	4

<sup>1</sup> These are flexible Group Awards. SCQF credit points will vary according to the number of credits that they are made up of.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to SQA's website for information on SVQs. The allocation of SCQF credit points and levels to SVQs will be undertaken as and when they are revised.

More information on the SCQF, and SQA's interactive ready reckoner, can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)

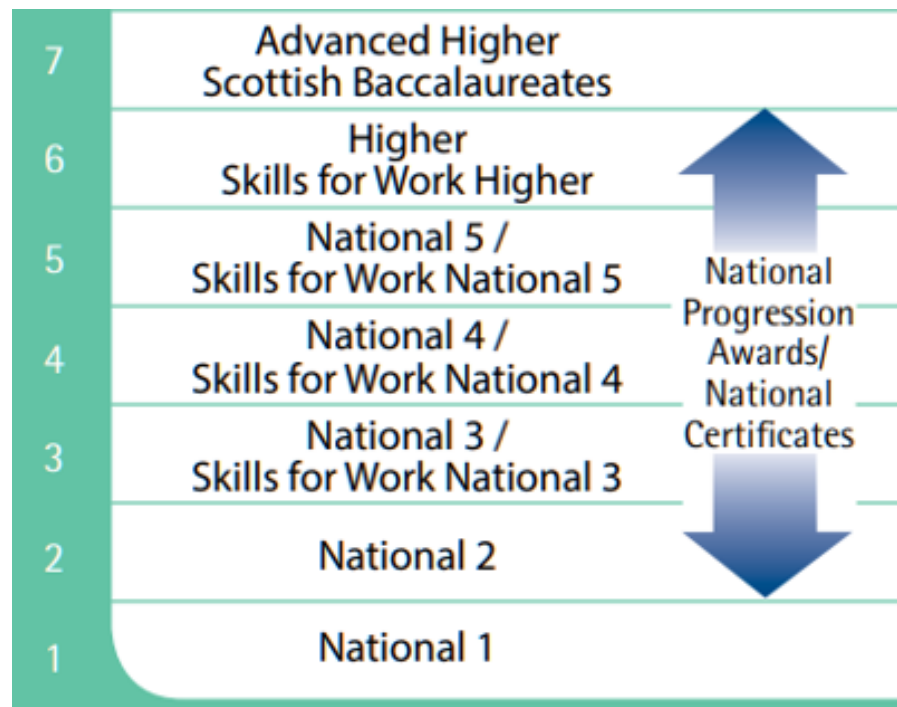
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The progression pathways within the Senior Phase are outlined below:

## **National Qualifications**

National 3 » National 4 » National 5

National 5 » Higher

Higher » Advanced Higher

## **Non-NQ Courses**

Level 4 » Level 5

Level 5 » Level 6

Level 6 » college/apprenticeships/training

**Pupils can select all subjects from either pathway or a mix of subjects across pathways.**



# S4 Experience

7 NQ subjects

## Curriculum Structure

- Four periods of English
- Four periods of Mathematics
- Five chosen subjects of four periods
- Two periods of Physical Education (core)
- One period of RMPS (core)
- One period of PSHE (core)





# Choosing Subjects

S4 courses are designed to follow on from work completed in S3 and the majority of pupils will simply drop one subject (not English or Maths)

Pupils asked to pick first and second choice for the subject they wish to drop. Promise to do our best to ensure everyone gets their first choice but on very rare occasions it doesn't work

Evidence to consider for deciding subject choices:

- Prior attainment – S3
- Tracking data/parent/carer reports
- Classwork/Homework/Coursework
- Assessments
- Professional judgement
- Career planning





## Additional Courses S4

- Skills for Work: Hospitality (National 5)
- Practical Cookery (National 4 or National 5)
- Enterprise & Employability (SCQF Level 4, Level 5 or Level 6)
- Skills for Work: Health Sector (National 5)
- NPA Applied Sciences (SCQF Level 5)
- Photography (National Progression Award: SCQF Level 4 or Level 5)
- Skills for Work: Travel & Tourism (National 5)



# Health and Food Technology (HFT) pathway

Pupils who studied HFT in S3 and wish to continue with this subject area need to choose one of two options:

- Practical Cookery (National 4 or National 5) or;
- Skills for Work: Hospitality (National 5)

If a pupil is unsure which they are most suited to/would enjoy the most, they should speak to their HFT teacher.



# Mathematics pathway

In the Senior Phase, mathematics has two pathways:

- Mathematics (National 4, National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher):

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45750.html>

- Applications of Mathematics (National 4, National 5, Higher):

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/81277.html>

The mathematics staff should provide information on which pathway they think will give each young person the best chance of success.





# Options Process

- 7 January Career event for parents/carers
- 17 January Subject choice booklet available on the school website
- 28 January Options assembly and option choice form issued
- 28 – 31 January Interviews with Pupil Support teacher
- 14 February S3 reports issued
- 21 February Option choices form returned



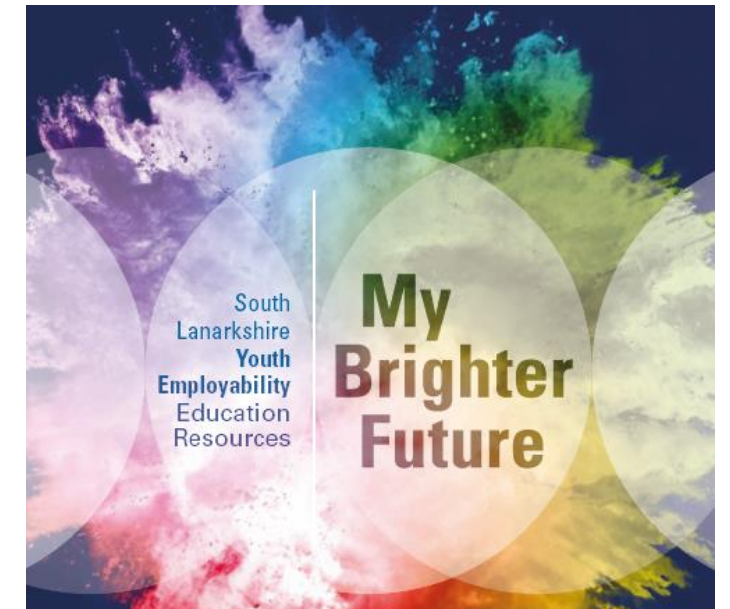


## Vocational courses

**GRADU8 programme** – Friday out of school per week studying for a SCQF Level 5 qualification in:

Beauty Skills, Construction, Early Education & Childcare, Engineering Skills, Hair & Barbering, Health & Social Care, Hospitality, Make-up Artistry, Uniformed & Emergency Services, Sport & Recreation, Work Experience and Winter leavers.

Pupils can get more information on these courses by speaking to their Pupil Support (guidance) teacher who has a detailed brochure on all GRADU8 programmes.





## Vocational courses cont...

### GRADU8 programme:

This is an excellent opportunity for pupils potentially doing a mixture of National 4 and National 5s.

GradU8 programme is particularly beneficial for pupils who are planning on leaving school at the end of S4 and the chosen course is specific to their career pathway.

More information on GRADU8 is available on the following video:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=8-XDq8oWDHo&feature=youtu.be>



## FAQs

- Can I drop more than one of my S3 subjects?
- Can I pick up a new subject?
- If I do GradU8 do I only study 6 subjects in school rather than 7?
- Are classes set by ability?
- Do all S4 subjects have exams?
- What are the exam arrangements for S4? Do pupils get study leave?
- What age can I leave school?





## Further information

Detailed course information on all subjects available in S4, including GRADU8, will be available on the school website from 17 January 2025. If you would prefer a printed copy, this is available at the school office.

The following websites should be familiar to pupils through PSHE and can help with the subject choices process:

Skills Development Scotland: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

My World of Work website: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>

SQA – A to Z of National Qualification subjects: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45777.html>





## Here to help

### **Pupil Support team:**

Avondale	Miss Harvey
Dungavel	Mrs Neil
Kype	Mr Dunn
Lethame	Ms McGinlay
Loudoun	Mrs Breddy

### **Year Head:**

Mrs Kane