



# Understanding Credit Points and SCQF Levels

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All units are assigned a **credit point** and **level**. **One credit point** represents 10 notional hours of learning, showing the time the average learner would take to complete the unit or qualification.

**Credit points** are achieved by successfully completing units, either individually or when combined as part of a qualification or programme of learning.

The **level** provides an indication of the complexity of qualifications and learning programmes. 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, irrespective of whether that learning is academic, vocational, non-formal or informal.

## The SCQF Level Descriptors

Level descriptors are fundamental to the SCQF. The SCQF Level Descriptors describe in broad terms what learners should be able to do or demonstrate at a particular level. Within an integrated framework, these level descriptors provide a common vocabulary to assist with the comparison of qualifications and learning programmes.

Each level descriptor has five characteristics which provide a reference point for determining the level of a qualification, learning programme, module and unit of learning or for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning for individual qualifications. The five characteristics are:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;
- Generic cognitive skills;
- Communication, numeracy and ICT skills; and
- Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

# Level 1

## **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- 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.

## **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- 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.

## **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- 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.

## **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- 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.

## **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- 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.



# Understanding Credit Points and SCQF Levels

## Level 2

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - Basic knowledge.
  - Simple facts and ideas.

### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills 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.

### **Characteristic 3: 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.

### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use simple skills with assistance, for example:
  - Produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.
  - Carry out a limited range of simple tasks to process and access information.
  - Use a limited range of simple numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts.

### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent directive supervision.
- Identify, given simple criteria, some strengths and/or weaknesses of the work.

## Level 3

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
    - Basic knowledge.
    - Simple facts and ideas in, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.
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### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- Relate knowledge to personal and/or everyday contexts with some prompting.
  - 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.
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### **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- 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.
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### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use simple skills, for example:
    - Produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts.
    - Carry out simple tasks to process and access information.
    - Use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts.
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### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent directive 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.

# Understanding Credit Points and SCQF Levels

## Level 4

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - Basic knowledge.
  - Some simple facts and ideas in, about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.
  - Knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology.

### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts.
- Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements.
- Prepare for familiar and routine tasks.
- Select and use, with guidance, appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.

### **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- Use, with guidance, given stages of a process to deal with a problem, situation or issue.
- Operate in straightforward contexts.
- Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.

### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use some routine skills, for example:
  - Produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.
  - Use the basic features of familiar ICT applications to process and obtain information.
  - Use basic numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts.

### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Work alone or with others on tasks with regular, directive supervision.
- 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.

## Level 5

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - Basic knowledge.
  - A range of simple facts, ideas and theories in, about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.
  - Knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials and terminology.

### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- Relate knowledge and ideas to personal and/or practical contexts.
- Use a range of skills associated with the subject/discipline/sector to complete some routine and non-routine tasks.
- Plan and organise both familiar and unfamiliar tasks.
- Select appropriate tools and materials and use them safely and effectively.
- Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices.

### **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- Use a process to deal with a problem, situation or issue that is straightforward.
- 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.

### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use a range of routine skills, for example:
  - Produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts.
  - Use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.
  - Use a range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts that may have some non-routine elements.

### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum directive supervision.
- Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team.
- Take lead responsibility for some tasks.
- Show an awareness of own and/or others' roles, responsibilities and requirements in carrying out work and contribute to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes.

# Understanding Credit Points and SCQF Levels

## Level 6

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - An appreciation of the body of knowledge that constitutes a subject/discipline/sector.
  - A range of knowledge, facts, theories, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices and techniques about, and associated with, a subject/discipline/sector.
  - Relating the subject/discipline/sector to a range of practical and/or commonplace applications.

### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding:
  - In known, practical contexts.
  - In using some of the basic, routine practices, techniques and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.
  - In exercising these in routine contexts that may have non-routine elements.
  - In planning how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary.

### **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- Obtain, organise and use factual, theoretical and/or hypothetical information in problem solving.
- Make generalisations and predictions.
- Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.

### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use a wide range of skills, for example:
  - Produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
  - Select and use standard ICT applications to process, obtain and combine information.
  - Use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts which may have non-routine elements.

### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Take responsibility for carrying out a range of activities where the overall goal is clear, under non-directive supervision.
- Exercise some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work within a defined and supervised structure.
- 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.

## Level 7

### **Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding**

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - An overall appreciation of the body of knowledge that constitutes a subject/discipline/sector.
  - Knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts and principles of the subject/discipline/sector.
  - An awareness of the dynamic nature of knowledge and understanding.
  - An understanding of the difference between explanations based on evidence and/or research and other sources, and of the importance of this difference.

### **Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding:
  - In practical contexts.
  - In using some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.
  - To practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.

### **Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills**

- Present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are routine to a subject/discipline/sector.
- Use a range of approaches to address defined and/or routine problems and issues within familiar contexts.

### **Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills**

- Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example:
  - Convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form.
  - Use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
  - Select and use standard ICT applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data.
  - Use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination.
  - Use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.

### **Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others**

- Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector.
- Accept supervision in less familiar areas of work.
- Exercise some managerial or supervisory 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 when carrying out and evaluating tasks.
- Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice.

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## Level 8

### Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
  - A knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of the subject/discipline/sector.
  - Specialist knowledge in some areas.
  - A discerning understanding of a defined range of core theories, concepts, principles and terminology.
  - Awareness and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms.
  - Awareness and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes.

### Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding:
  - In using a range of professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector, a few of which are advanced and/or complex.
  - In carrying out routine lines of enquiry, development or investigation into professional level problems and issues.
  - To adapt routine practices within accepted standards.

### Characteristic 3: Generic Cognitive Skills

- Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues that are within the common understandings in a subject/discipline/sector.
- Use a range of approaches to formulate and critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems and issues.

### Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

- Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline/sector, for example:
  - Convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes.
  - Use a range of standard ICT applications to process and obtain data.
  - Use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets.

### Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

- Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level in practice or in a subject/discipline/sector.
- Exercise managerial responsibility for the work of others within a defined structure.
- Manage resources within defined areas of work.
- Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.
- Practise in ways that show awareness of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions when carrying out and evaluating tasks.
- Work, under guidance, with others to acquire an understanding of current professional practice.
- Manage, under guidance, ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.





One Awards  
1 Palmer Road  
South West Industrial Estate  
Peterlee  
Co Durham  
SR8 2HU

Tel: 0191 518 6550

Fax: 0191 518 6551

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

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