Post-school education and skills lexicon

June 2023

A

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Term
Accelerated Degree	A degree that is completed in less time than the typical duration. Eg a 4 year degree completed in 3 years. The degree will still carry the same credit value as that completed over the longer timeframe	A degree that is offered for completion by learners in a shorter timescale than is generally typical.		Degree Degree Awarding Body
Accreditation	A process for approving a learning programme by an authorised external organisation. This could be by a university, a college, a professional body or a regulatory body.	A process for approving a learning programme by an external organisation.	"This term is also used to describe in particular the process by which awarding bodies, approved by SQA Accreditation, submit qualifications for formal recognition (approval) provided that they meet the requirements as specified by SQA Accreditation https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/home	Approval Validation
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships are designed to train people entering or progressing through defined occupational or professional sectors. All apprenticeships combine formal learning with workplace practice. Modern Apprenticeships also contain core skills or career skills relating to the level of apprenticeship. Scotland's apprenticeships are available in a wide range of sectors, and range in level from SCQF 5	A programme of learning which can combine off the job formal learning with workplace practice and includes core and career skills appropriate to the apprenticeship level. Apprenticeships are available in a range of sectors and at various levels.	https://www.apprenticeships.scot/ There is also currently a pilot of Foundation Apprenticeships at SCQF levels 4 and 5.	

	upwards. Six different types of apprenticeship have been developed in Scotland (Foundation; Modern; Technical; Higher; Graduate; Professional) to serve the varied needs of employers. With the exception of Foundation Apprenticeship there is a requirement to be in permanent employment when undertaking the apprenticeship.			
Approval	"The term 'approval' is used in varying contexts across education sectors in Scotland to refer to different processes such as: * accepting programmes as ready to be delivered * approving organisations capable of delivering programmes * approving organisations to carry out a range of activities for a specified organisation or purpose.	To accept something as meeting specific requirements, standards and quality.		**Validation Accreditation**
Articulation	A process of credit transfer allowing a learner to gain entry into either the second or third year of a university degree course after completing a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National	A term used particularly in HE to describe when students can move from an HNC/HND qualification to study a degree receiving credit for their previous study.	https://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/articulation/articulation.aspx#:~:text=Articulation%20is%20defined%20as%20a,(HND)%20gained%20at%20college.%20%0A	**Progression Credit Transfer**

	Diploma (HND). The Scottish Funding Council has specific definitions for this at time of writing.		The term 'articulation' is also sometimes used to describe any learner progressing from one qualification to another without having to repeat learning and there have been moves to adopt this wider definition.	
Assessment	Assessment is the process of evaluating an individual's learning. It involves generating and collecting evidence of a learner's attainment of knowledge and skills and judging that evidence against defined standards which are expressed in the learning outcomes.	The process of evaluating an individual's learning	Assessment may also be described in terms such as formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment - Assessment providing developmental feedback to a candidate so that they can adjust their plan for future learning. It can also provide feedback to the educator if the teaching needs adjusted. It is not recorded for external purposes. Formative assessment is often called 'Assessment for learning' Summative assessment measures and records an individual's achievement — the assessment of learning. It can be completed internally or externally. Holistic assessment - using the same evidence to meet multiple assessments Integrated assessment - a single piece of assessment is used to satisfy a number of performance criteria	
Awarding Body	An organisation which registers and issues certificates for qualifications which formally recognise the achievements of an individual	A body that awards qualifications	This term is also used specifically by SQA Accreditation to indicated an organisation approved by it for the purpose of awarding accredited qualifications. (see accreditation)	

	and which quality-assures the delivery and assessment of those qualifications. This can include universities/HEIs, colleges, SQA and other such bodies.			

B to C

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
Bursary	A monetary award to support specific groups of students into post school education and skills development. They are grants rather than loans ie they do not need to be repaid	A grant given to learners to assist with the costs of studying which does not need to be repaid	saas-student-funding-key-facts.pdf	**Grant**
Candidate	A learner registered or undertaking an exam or a practical competency based assessment	A learner registered or undertaking an exam or a practical competency based assessment		**Learner** **Student**
Centres	A term usually used to indicate that an education provider is approved to offer particular types of qualifications by an **awarding body**	A provider of qualifications	For example, many awarding bodies such as SQA will refer to those organisations allowed to offer SQA qualifications as **'centres'**	**Learning Provider**
College	A tertiary education provider that offers learning opportunities and qualifications in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects at many levels up to and including SCQF level 11.	An tertiary education provider that offers learning opportunities and qualifications in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects at many levels.	There is also a legal definition in the Further and Higher Education Act Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 (legislation.gov.uk)	
Community Learning and Development	CLD empowers people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities, through	CLD empowers people to make positive changes in their lives and in their	CLD Standards Council for Scotland	Professional Learning	

	learning using a range of formal and informal methods.	communities, through learning.		
Competence	The possession of skills, and knowledge which meet predetermined standards.	The possession of skills, and knowledge which meet predetermined standards.		
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	An ongoing process through which individuals personally and professionally develop their skills, knowledge and understanding either individually and/or with employer support.	Learning undertaken to extend work related knowledge and skills.		**Continuous Professional Development**
Core Skills	Fundamental skills that help individuals through life, learning and work. In Scotland core skills are Communication, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Information Technology, Working with Others.	Skills for life, learning and work	[Core Skills - home - SQA](#)	Transferable skills Soft skills **Meta skills** Key skills Functional skills Essential skills Career skills
Credit **Credit Points** **SCQF Credit Points**	Credit is awarded to a learner on achievement of a credit rated or credit bearing qualification /programme's learning outcomes. The amount of credit reflects the time required for a typical learner to achieve the qualification/programme.	Credit is awarded on completion of a qualification and gives an indication of the time (or effort) that was typically required to do so.	In Scotland credit normally refers to **SCQF credit (see SCQF)** with 10 notional learning hours equating to 1 SCQF credit point. However some agencies use references to credit using a different set of criteria for funding or other purposes (eg SQA/SFC credit descriptions) [Home | Scottish Credit and Qualifications](#)	**SCQF** **Credit Rating Body** **SCQF Levels** **Credit Transfer**

			Framework (scqf.org.uk)	
Credit Transfer	The transfer of SCQF Credit Points from one qualification/learning programme to minimise duplication of learning	Using credit points already achieved to gain access to a programme or to gain an exemption (ie not having to repeat learning already undertaken)	https://scqf.org.uk/	Credit Accumulation Credit for Prior Learning **Recognition of Prior Learning**
Credit Rating	The quality assured process of allocating SCQF levels and credit points to qualifications and learning programmes, including non formal and informal learning. These qualifications/programmes are then referred to as credit rated.	The process of allocating SCQF levels and credit points	https://scqf.org.uk/	**SCQF Credit Rating Body SCQF Levels SCQF Credit Points**
Credit Rating Body	An organisation approved to carry out credit rating for the SCQF	An organisation approved to allocate SCQF levels and credit points to programmes/qualifications (tie in with end of last sentence above).	Home | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)	**Credit Rating SCQF SCQF Levels SCQF Credit Points**
Curriculum for Excellence	The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the national curriculum for young people aged 3-18. It was implemented in 2010.	The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the national curriculum used for young people up to the	What is Curriculum for Excellence? | Curriculum for Excellence | Policy drivers | Policy for	

		age of 18. It was implemented in 2010.	Scottish education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland	

D to K

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
Degree	A higher education qualification at one of several levels, determined by the depth and breadth of study and awarded only for achievement in full of the outcomes set out in the appropriate qualification descriptor in the relevant qualifications framework. (eg 'bachelor's degree', 'master's degree', 'doctoral degree'.	A Higher education qualification which can be awarded at different levels (eg bachelor's, master's, doctoral).	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/	
Degree Awarding Body	A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA.	A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees.	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/	Degree Awarding Powers
Digital Credential/Badge	A visual representation of achievement or skills that can be displayed, accessed and verified online.	An online certificate or badge that can be accessed online only and confirms a learner's achievement or skills.		

Economic Activity/ Inactivity	Economically active is defined as those in employment plus those who are unemployed. Economically inactive people are those without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks, and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks.	active - those who are either in employment or unemployed and seeking work inactive - people who are not employed or unemployed and not seeking work	https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentand labourmarket/peopleinwork/employmen tandemployeetypes/methodologies/agui detolabourmarketstatistics	
Employability skills	A term that refers to skills, behaviours, attitudes and personal attributes that are necessary for an individual to seek, gain and sustain employment and function effectively in the workplace and are transferable to a variety of contexts.	A term that refers to skills, behaviours, attitudes and personal attributes that are necessary for an individual to seek, gain and sustain employment and function effectively in the workplace and are transferable to a variety of contexts.		**Work based learning**
Further Education	Learning normally at SCQF level 6 and below. There is a fuller legal definition in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Acts 1992 and 2005.	Normally refers to programmes that are at SCQF level 6 or below	Advanced Highers and SVQs at Level 7 are considered by the Scottish Funding Council as further education although they sit at level 7 which is normally considered higher education	
Grant	A monetary award to support specific groups of students into post school education and skills development. They are different from student loans ie they do not need to be repaid	A monetary award given to learners to assist with the costs of studying which does not need to be repaid	saas-student-funding-key-facts.pdf	**Bursary**

Higher Education	Learning normally at SCQF level 7 and above. There is a fuller legal definition in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Acts 1992 and 2005.	Normally refers to programmes that are at SCQF level 7 and above	Advanced Highers and SVQs at level 7 are considered by the Scottish Funding Council as further education although they sit at level 7 which is normally considered higher education	
Higher Education Institution	Defined by Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 as a university; or a designated institution within the meaning of section 44(2) of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.	Organisations that primarily deliver programmes of higher education.		**University**

L to M

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
Labour Market	The term 'labour' refers to actual and potential input of people into economic production: actual in terms of people in work, potential in terms of people who are not in work but could notionally work. The labour market is the mechanism or market place in which buyers and sellers of labour engage. The term labour market is used widely in its broadest sense to cover a range of issues that are concerned with labour and the market for labour over time and generally is concerned with elements of labour supply and labour demand and how these interact.	The term labour market is used in its broadest sense to cover a range of issues concerned with elements of labour supply and labour demand and how these interact.		
Learner	Someone who directs and supports their own learning. Typically, a learner works at their own pace and is motivated by the acquisition of knowledge and mastery of skills. Learners may develop their own learning goals and monitor their progress.	A person who is taking part in education or skills development	There can be different definitions in different sectors and some sectors may differentiate between the terms **'student'** and **'learner'** and **'candidate'.**	**Students Candidates**

Learning Outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.	Statements of what a learner will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity	scqf_handbook_web_final_2015.pdf	
Learning Provider	Organisations across all education and training sectors that provide formal or non-formal learning	Organisations that provide learning		**Centre**
Lifelong Learning	The concept of learning as a process that continues throughout life to address an individual's learning needs. The term is used widely in adult education to refer to learning processes in many forms and at many levels.	Learning undertaken throughout an individual's life	Lifelong learning	Unesco IIEP Learning Portal	
Literacy	The ability to communicate by reading, writing, and listening and speaking or signing	The ability to communicate by reading, writing, and listening and speaking or signing	Education glossary	My school	Parentzone Scotland	Parentzone Scotland	
Meta skills	Meta-skills are timeless, higher-order skills that create adaptive learners; able to succeed whatever the future brings	Meta-skills are the human competences and qualities which enhance our potential in work, in learning, and in life.	In Scotland meta skills have been classified under the following 3 headings: Self Management Social Intelligence Innovation skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf (skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)	Transferable skills Soft skills Key skills Functional skills Essential skills **Core skills** Career skills

Micro-credentials	A micro-credential is the record of assessed knowledge, skills and/or achievements within a focused area of outcome-based learning. It is normally the outcome of a small, discrete credit-bearing course.	A micro-credential is the record of assessed knowledge, skills and/or achievements within a focused area of outcome-based learning. It is normally the outcome of a small, discrete credit-bearing course.		
Mode of study	Different ways of studying such as full time, part time, online or work based learning	Different ways of studying such as full time, part time, online or work based learning		

N to R

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
National Occupational Standards	National Occupational Standards describe what a person needs to do, know and understand to do a job competently.	National Occupational Standards describe what a person needs to do, know and understand to do a job competently.		
Numeracy	The ability to use numbers in order to solve problems by counting, doing calculations, measuring, and understanding graphs and charts, and results.	The ability to use numbers in order to solve problems by counting, doing calculations, measuring, and understanding graphs and charts, and results.	[Education glossary | My school | Parentzone Scotland | Parentzone Scotland](#)	
Positive destination	What a learner does after studying. Positive destinations after study include higher education, further education, employment, training, personal skills development and voluntary work.	What a learner does after studying such as further study, training, work etc but not including unemployment or being not available for work etc.		
Private Training Provider	A privately run organisation that offers training and assessment services	A privately run organisation that offers training and assessment services		Independent Training Provider Employer Training Provider **Independent Learning Provider**
Professional Body	An organisation that oversees the activities of a particular profession and represents the interests of its members.	An organisation that oversees the activities of a particular profession and represents the interests of its members.		Industry Body

Progression	Achieving one qualification and moving on to another qualification normally at a higher level.	Achieving one qualification and moving on to another qualification normally at a higher level.		
Qualification	A formal outcome or achievement awarded on successful completion of a learning, training and/or assessment process. This would generally indicate that a specific level or standard has been evidenced and achieved.	The achievement of a formal learning, training and/or assessment process.	In the Scottish context, the term '**learning programme**' may also be used to describe outcome based, assessed and credit rated learning.	
Quality Assurance	The process to ensure standards are maintained ensuring the integrity of assessment and qualifications	The process to ensure standards are maintained	Sectors awarding bodies and other providers and organisations in the education and skills landscape in Scotland will have their own quality assurance arrangements, processes and standards.	
Recognition of Prior Learning	The process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained outside school, college and university, and outside formal learning situations such as through life and work experiences.	Recognition of learning already completed	RPL Tool | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)	other terms may be used to refer to the same process or specific sub-types of RPL: Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), Accreditation of Prior Certificated

				Learning (APCL) and **Credit Transfer**
Reskilling	The process of learning new skill, particularly to access alternative employment	The process of learning new skill, particularly to access alternative employment		**Upskilling**

S to T

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)	The SCQF is Scotland's national qualifications framework. It is a lifelong learning framework and has 12 levels. It provides a way of comparing and understanding Scottish qualifications by giving qualifications a level and credit points. The level indicates how difficult the qualification is and the credit points indicates the length of time it takes to complete the learning.	The SCQF is Scotland's national qualifications framework which helps people to understand and compare Scottish qualifications.	Home	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)	**SCQF credit points Credit rating Credit rating body Credit Credit points**
Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)	Work-based qualifications based on standards of competence (ie **National occupational standards**)	Work-based qualifications	SQA Accreditation - Qualifications We Accredit	**National Occupational Standards**
SCQF levels	The SCQF has 12 levels. The different levels indicate the level of difficulty of a particular qualification. Each level has a descriptor which outlines the general outcomes of learning at that level.	The SCQF has 12 levels. The different levels indicate the level of difficulty of a particular qualification, with level 12 being the most demanding.	About the Framework	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)	**SCQF SCQF Credit Points SCQF Credit Rating Body Credit Credit Points**

Student	A type of learner who enrols or registers for a programme of study which may or may not be assessed. Students normally have access to a range of support services offered by the learning provider.	A learner who enrols or registers for a programme of study and may also have access to a range of support services from the learning provider.		**Learner Candidate**
Tertiary sector	Institutions that deliver further and/or higher education including Colleges, Higher Education Institutions and Universities	Colleges, Higher Education Institutions and Universities.		
Third Sector	Organisations that are not fully in the private or public sector for example voluntary organisations, community groups etc.	This sector includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups.		

U to Z

Term	Technical Definition	Accessible Definition	Sector/Organisation/ Specific Information/Further Reading	Associated Terms
Unit	Units are a feature of many Scottish qualifications. They are individually assessed components which may be certificated as stand-alone 'mini qualifications' or may be combined into a larger qualification.	Units are normally components of larger qualifications but can sometimes also be taken as stand-alone qualifications.		Module
University	An independent, self-governing organisation that undertakes research and teaching. Universities are diverse in size, mission, history, and the range of subjects on offer. Universities have been established by a Royal Charter, Act of Parliament, Papal Bull or by Order of the Privy Council enabling them to develop their own programmes of study and award their own degrees.	An independent, self-governing organisation that undertakes research and teaching. Universities are diverse in size, mission, history, and the range of subjects on offer.	https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/ | **Higher Education Institution** |

Upskilling	Learning new skills, particularly related to current or planned employment. Upskilling is often facilitated by employers through providing training and development opportunities to enhance workforce abilities and minimise skills gaps.	Learning new skills, particularly related to current or planned employment.		**Reskilling**
Validation	The process used by awarding bodies to decide if the content , design and rationale for a qualification or unit within its own portfolio meets the required standards for the Awarding body to award and certificate that qualification or unit.	The process to decide if the content and design of a programme meets relevant standards and is fit for purpose.	This can sometimes also be referred to in some sectors as programme approval. In addition, the activities and requirements within that validation process may differ between awarding bodies and sectors.	Programme approval
Verification	The process to assure the quality of assessment. Internal verification is carried out by the assessing organisation. External verification is carried out by the external awarding body This process is also sometimes referred to as moderation.	The process to assure the quality of assessment.	Sometimes also referred to as moderation.	Moderation

Widening Participation	Increasing the involvement in education of people from a wider range of backgrounds	Increasing the involvement in education of people from a wider range of backgrounds		Widening Access
Work based learning	Learning that takes place, in part or as a whole, in the context of work.	Learning that takes place, in part or as a whole, in the context of work.		