

# Post-school Learning Choices in Scotland

This guide contains information relating to a range of both formal and informal learning opportunities in Scotland, including:

- Community learning
- Further education courses at college
- Vocational training and apprenticeships

For information on higher and postgraduate education, please see the [Lead Scotland guide 'Higher Education in Scotland'](#).

All Lead Scotland information guides can be made available in print, large print, Easy Read and other formats on request.

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# 1. Introduction

When making decisions about learning opportunities, you may want to ask when and where to apply, whether any extra support is available if you are disabled, and how you will pay for your learning if there are any fees. You might also need to think about how you will meet your living costs if you have to stop working to take part in learning.

This guide will be useful for:

- Young people thinking about their learning options after school;
- Adult learners thinking of taking up a new learning opportunity;
- Carers of disabled people considering their learning options.

## What are your learning options?

Learning opportunities are becoming more and more flexible in Scotland. This means you can choose to learn in your own home, at college, at a local learning centre, or even over the internet.

The option that is right for you will depend on your individual circumstances and preferences. You might want to learn a few hours a week around your other interests or commitments, or you might be looking for a full-time opportunity. Or perhaps you are a carer wondering how you can fit learning around your caring commitments.

## **2. Community learning**

If you don't feel college is the right learning environment for you, or if you are taking your first steps into the world of learning since school, community learning might be a suitable option for you. Community learning opportunities are often more flexible than other types of learning, and you may be able to learn in the evenings or weekends.

It is important to note that community learning opportunities may be different in different areas, and some may target certain groups (e.g. specific age groups, disabled people, or those for whom English is not their first language).

### **Where can I learn?**

Most community learning opportunities are provided by local councils or voluntary organisations/charities, and take place in places like libraries, community centres or learning centres, and other community venues.

### **What can I learn?**

Community learning covers many different subjects and types of learning, both formal and informal. You can choose to learn on your own, with a tutor, or perhaps with other people in your local community.

**Informal learning** (learning which does not normally lead to a qualification) might include:

- Support to improve your self-confidence;
- Developing core skills, e.g. interpersonal skills, communication skills, or citizenship;
- Support to help you access other learning opportunities or employment, e.g. volunteering;
- Learning new skills or/ brushing up on existing ones, e.g. reading, writing, or using a computer.

**Formal learning** (learning which leads to a qualification) might include:

- Core skills units: these are a group of skills which employers have identified as being key skills for the world of learning and work. They include Communication, Numeracy, ICT, Working with Others and Problem Solving;
- Further education courses: there are a range of further education courses which may be available as community learning opportunities (see the [section on 'learning in colleges'](#) for more details). These might include:
  - Short courses to meet your interests in particular areas;
  - General or work-related courses which might give you the qualifications needed to progress to further learning or as qualifications in their own right;
  - Access courses which are designed specifically for learners who need additional support, and might include things like independent living or other core skills.

- Customised awards: these are qualifications which are designed by learning providers to meet specific needs;
- Lead Scotland's 'Community Action and Leadership' award for disabled learners and carers. For more information on this, see the [Get Connected and Lead website](#).

### ***Other types of learning:***

- 'The Big Plus' helps adults to improve their reading, writing and number skills. It is a free service that allows you to work with a tutor in places like libraries, community centres or colleges. It is a flexible method of learning, and attendance can be suited around your individual needs. For more information, please call the Big Plus helpline on 0808 100 10 80 or go to [the Big Plus website](#).
- If English isn't your first language and you want to improve your verbal and written skills, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course could help. These courses can be taken in many learning centres and colleges across Scotland. [ESOL Course listings can be found on the Glow Scotland website here](#).

## **Helping you choose what to learn**

You can find out about all the learning opportunities available in your area by contacting your local council or by looking at the Learning Database on the ['My World of Work' website](#). For help in

identifying what opportunities might be suitable for you, phone the Lead Scotland helpline.

If you are thinking of taking up a formal learning opportunity (which leads to a qualification), you may find it useful to look at the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework on page 40](#) to help you see what level of learning is best for you. This places different qualifications into levels from 1 to 12, to give you an idea of the demands of each qualification. It will also help you see what your previous qualifications are worth, and what learning you might be able to do next.

Lead Scotland provides free one to one tailored support to disabled and disadvantaged people and carers to learn in their own homes or in the community. A Learning Co-ordinator will create an action plan that supports each person to learn in a way that suits them - Whether for fun, to gain skills for work, or to talk to someone about getting back into learning. Lead Scotland currently offers this service in the following areas: Aberdeenshire, Fife, Dundee, Moray Highland, North Lanarkshire and Perth & Kinross. See [Lead Scotland's Service Guide](#) to find out more.

### 3. Learning in colleges

Colleges offer a range of courses, most of which are known as ‘further education’ or ‘higher education’ courses. This guide focuses on further education options. For information on higher education courses in colleges (e.g. Higher National Certificates and Diplomas), please see the [Lead Scotland guide ‘Higher Education in Scotland’](#).

#### What is further education?

Further education is usually for people aged 16 years or over (with no upper age limit), and either takes place in colleges, the workplace or a combination of both. Occasionally, people under 16 can take further education courses at college as part of their [school based learning which you can read about on page 11](#).

Further-education level courses in college are mainly vocational (work-related), rather than degree-level courses, and include:

- Basic skills courses:
  - National courses in various topics (at National levels 1, 2 and 3), e.g. communication skills, Information Technology (IT), workplace skills, etc.
  - Courses which help prepare you for adult life (e.g. Life/Core Skills). Some courses may be offered at National levels (where you will receive a National award if

you successfully complete the course), whereas some basic skills courses do not lead to a qualification.

These courses can be particularly useful for people with learning difficulties as they provide the support needed to gain independence skills, as well as being a good starting point for moving on to other courses.

- General educational courses in various subjects, e.g:
  - National courses
  - Highers
  - Advanced Highers
  
- Work-related courses, e.g.:
  - Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), e.g. Plumbing, Cookery, Administration, etc.
  - Professional Development Awards (PDAs), e.g. Book-keeping, Medical Administration, etc.
  - Sector-specific qualifications (e.g. for working in the care sector)
  
- Basic skills courses, e.g.:
  - Literacy and numeracy for adults
  - Core skills
  - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

- Courses for school pupils in colleges, e.g.:
  - Link courses for pupils making the transition to college.
  - Skills for Work courses to prepare pupils for further learning or work.
- ‘Access to higher education’ courses: these allow people who do not hold formal qualifications to go on to higher education.
- Customised awards: these are designed to assess your competence in specific areas (these are usually designed to meet the specific needs of employers or other organisations, e.g. the Lead Scotland ‘Community Action and Leadership Award’ for disabled learners and carers). For more information, go online to the [Get Connected and Lead website](#).

## Further education options

You can study a further education course in various different places, including:

### (i) School

You may be able to stay at your current school if it accepts students beyond age 16. You can take academic courses such as Highers, or you might wish to take a work-based course such as an SVQ [or a Foundation Apprenticeship which you can read more about on page 19](#) for further details. You could also consider changing to a different school for a different course or more appropriate support. Your school should be able to advise you about what is best.

If you are leaving your school, your careers adviser or Skills Development Scotland Key Worker can help you find a new place to learn or train.

## **(ii) Gradual transition opportunities**

Many young people may find it easier to start a college course by making a gradual transition from school to college. Most schools have opportunities for pupils to take part in college courses while they are still at school. This may involve attending college for one or more days a week until they are ready to attend college on a full- or part-time basis.

Some colleges also offer transition and summer courses that can help you get used to the college campus and a new style of learning, as well as being helpful for getting support put in place before you start.

If you are an adult learner, you may be able to take evening classes before you apply to do a full-time course at college to allow you to try out the college and its facilities beforehand.

## **(iii) Going to college**

You may find your local college offers a wider range of courses than is available at your school. You can study full-time or part-time, or you may be able to take some courses as evening classes or study a distance learning course from home through the college.

#### **(iv) Attending a specialist college**

If your support needs cannot be met at a local school or college, you may want to think about going to a specialist college. They are likely to have more experience of supporting students with a range of impairments. There are no residential specialist colleges in Scotland, but you may be able to apply to a residential college elsewhere in the UK.

You can find information on specialist residential colleges online from the [Association of National Specialist Colleges website](#). This website also includes a directory of specialist colleges in the UK, including information on how to apply to them.

#### **(v) Open or distance learning**

If you do not want to attend a course at a set time or place, you could think about studying at home or at work instead. This is called open learning and courses vary in the way they are set up and how you study. For some courses you will be sent a list of books and worksheets to work through, or you might use additional study methods like the internet, videos, computer software or watching TV programmes.

Occasionally, attendance at college is necessary for practical work or supervised assessment, but this can usually be arranged flexibly. You will also have the support of a college tutor who can provide guidance and support on a regular basis.

## **(vi) Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

MOOCs offer another way to learn from home and still fit in with your needs and requirements. MOOCs are short courses that can be done online in your own home or at work. They are open to everyone and have no entry requirements. Courses are free, and are set at a variety of levels from a variety of institutions, including many prestigious universities from all over the world. Some MOOCs may lead to a formal qualification while others are not accredited. You can search for available MOOCs online at the [MOOC List website](#).

In addition, some colleges and universities offer distance learning course at various levels. You can search for distance courses online at the [‘My World of Work’ website](#).

## **Choosing a course**

You may want to study a course because you are particularly interested in it, or you may want to think about which courses are most likely to get you the job you want. Sometimes people think that they cannot study certain subjects because of their impairment. This is most often not the case.

You might find it helpful to arrange a meeting with the course tutor or careers adviser and/or the disability adviser. You might also want to speak to Skills Development Scotland who hold information on the whole range of courses available in Scotland (see ‘Useful Contacts’ section). They also have a useful ‘course finder’ tool on their website which allows you to find out about all the courses

0available across Scotland online at the [‘My World of Work’ website](#).

## **How do I apply to college?**

Once you decide which course you would like to take, you can either contact the college to get an application form or download it from the college website. You might find it useful to get in touch with the Learning Support department and visit the college before you apply to talk about the support you might need when you start the course.

## **When should I apply?**

Once you have decided which course you want to take, you should apply to the college as early as possible. This will give the college time to meet your support needs when you start college, as well as increasing your chances of getting accepted on to the course you want. Most courses starting in August tend to open for applications from January/February onwards.

## **What support can I get at college?**

Lead Scotland and the Scottish Government have created a guide to let you know what support is available at college and how to access it. Go online to the [‘Supporting you at College’ section of the Lead Scotland website](#) for more information and to access the guide.

## 4. Vocational training

There are a number of training opportunities available in Scotland to help you get into a specific job or improve your job skills. These usually involve on-the-job training or placements in the workplace and, in some cases, off-the-job training in a college. Training programmes are also available for people in employment wishing to develop or update certain skills, or for those about to start work. Some are aimed at specific age groups, while others are open to anyone.

Training programmes allow you to improve your job skills while providing you with practical work experience and in many cases, formal qualifications. Depending on what programme you are on, you might get paid as you are working. Some also allow you to study for a qualification at the same time (which may involve spending part of your time at college).

Some of the major training programmes in Scotland include:

### **(i) Certificate of Work Readiness**

This programme aims to give you a mix of training and a work placement to allow you to gain new skills employers want to see on a CV, as well as letting you build your self-confidence in the world of work.

## Who can apply?

It is aimed at young people aged 16-19 but is open to anyone who is not yet ready to go into work.

## What does it offer?

A Certificate of Work Readiness can offer a number of benefits such as:

- Developing your skills in reading, writing, number work, using a computer and working with others – the skills that employers usually look for;
- Building skills and work experience for your CV or application forms;
- Getting a reference from your employer or training provider;
- Gaining an SQA qualification valued by employers;
- Building your confidence and job-seeking skills;
- You could be offered a job with your employer or training provider, or it could help you move into another position – such as a Modern Apprenticeship. See **(iii) Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships**.

## How long does it take?

Usually the programme is 10 weeks long, but times may vary due to your individual circumstances and needs. You'll start with two or three weeks of training, to help you prepare for work, then you'll split your time between further training and a work placement with an employer.

## **What about money?**

You do not need to pay anything to take part in this programme. You may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week or you may be eligible for a training allowance.

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from this [Scottish Government webpage on EMAs](#).

## **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should speak to a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) adviser by calling 0800 917 8000 or you can complete the [‘contact us’ form on the SDS website](#) and they also respond to messages on the [SDS Twitter account](#).

## **(ii) The Employability Fund**

The Employability Fund aims to remove any personal barriers that may affect you, and allow you to move on to your next stage of development, which may be employment, further education, or training.

## **Who can apply?**

The programme is for 16-17 year olds who are not in education, training or employment and for people who are 18+ and have been in receipt of DWP benefits for more than 13 weeks or who don't

receive benefits and are not in education, training or work. Contact your local [Jobcentre Plus](#) to find out whether you're eligible.

### **What does it offer?**

With a strong focus on work experience, The Employability Fund supports you to develop the employability and vocational skills you need for a job with a local employer.

The Employability Fund can also be used to support you to develop the same employability and vocational skills to transition into a Modern Apprenticeship. See **(iii) Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships**.

### **How long does it take?**

Training is usually short in duration, but it can vary from just a few days to six months, depending on the subject. Training opportunities are linked to the needs of local employers to make sure that there is the opportunity of employment at the end of your training.

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should speak to a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) adviser by calling 0800 917 8000 or you can complete the [‘contact us’ form on the SDS website](#) and they also respond to messages on the [SDS Twitter account](#).

### **(iii) Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships**

Modern Apprenticeships are a means of working in a paid job while undertaking workplace training in order to gain new skills and recognised qualifications.

Foundation Apprenticeships are a new programme for those still at school. They provide a means of undertaking workplace or college training along with your other subjects.

#### **Who can apply?**

Modern Apprenticeships offer those aged 16-24 or 16-29 if you're disabled, paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs in a wide variety of sectors, at levels such as introductory, technician and management.

Foundation Apprenticeships are for pupils in school from S4-S6, or people studying Highers in college, and provide the opportunity to spend part of the week studying elements of the Modern Apprenticeship, including training with an employer, and the other part of the week at school/college.

#### **What does it offer?**

Modern Apprentices can gain job-related skills and qualifications that will help to start a new career without having to study full-time. Training programmes are available across a wide range of industries, such as craft bakery, business administration, electrical installation, or motor sports for example.

You will be given the chance to develop expertise and knowledge through on-the-job assessment, and gaining vital skills such as teamwork and problem solving. Many Modern Apprentices also attend colleges or training centres to study the theory related to their chosen occupation.

Foundation Apprentices can gain job-related skills and qualifications that will help to start a new career while still at school. You could progress to a Modern Apprenticeship in the same subject and complete it quicker, because you'll have done some parts of the qualification during your Foundation Apprenticeship. You could also move into college or university, as the qualification is recognised by many Scottish universities and colleges.

### **How long does it take?**

A Modern Apprenticeship can be completed within a time period that's suitable to you and your employer. In most cases, apprentices work toward an SVQ of Level 2 or above for between two and four years to gain the qualification.

Foundation Apprentices are usually completed in 2 years.

### **What about money?**

For a Modern Apprenticeship, your employer and Skills Development Scotland will pay your training fees. As a Modern Apprentice, you will have full employee status from the start of your training and you will receive a wage equivalent to at least the [national minimum apprentice wage](#) from your employer.

For a Foundation Apprenticeship, you do not receive wages however you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week.

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from this [Scottish Government webpage on EMAs](#).

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in taking up a Modern Apprenticeship or Foundation Apprenticeship you should contact your careers adviser or guidance teacher if you are still at school, or contact your local Skills Development Scotland centre for further details.

To find out about current Modern Apprenticeship vacancies, call the Skills Development Scotland helpline on 0800 917 8000, or visit the [Apprenticeships Scotland website](#).

### **(iv) Individual Training Account (ITA)**

This new programme replaces the Individual Learning Account (ILA), and provides learners with funding to help with the cost of an eligible course or training to help you get a job.

### **Who can apply?**

To apply you must be 16 or over (there is no upper age limit), have an income of £22,000 or less, or be in receipt of a qualifying benefit, not have a degree or postgraduate qualification or overseas

equivalent, not in any form of secondary, further or higher education, and not participating in training through the Employability Fund or Modern or Foundation Apprenticeship.

Unlike the ILA, only one course is permitted per year, and the course must be geared towards developing skills and experience to help you get a job or progress in a career.

### **What does it offer?**

Individual Training Accounts offer you £200 towards an eligible course. The £200 can cover the total cost of a course, but if a course costs more then you will have to fund the rest of it yourself.

### **How long does it take?**

Course lengths vary.

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in an Individual Training Account you can search for eligible courses online at the [‘My World of Work’ website](#) or call the Skills Development Scotland helpline on 0800 917 8000.

## **(v) Activity Agreements**

Provided by your local authority, an Activity Agreement is an individualised programme of learning and development that helps young people improve their skills and prepare for entry to employment, training, education and/or volunteering.

## **Who can apply?**

It is aimed at people aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training or those who are still at school but at risk of not moving into a positive destination after school. A 'positive destination' is a term the Scottish Government uses to describe what you do after you leave school and includes training, volunteering, employment, college and university.

## **What does it offer?**

The programme aims to provide you with an advisor who will work with you to create a personalised programme of activities and training geared towards helping reduce barriers to employment, training, education and/or volunteering. The advisor will continue to support you throughout the duration of an activity agreement until a positive destination is achieved.

## **How long does it take?**

They have no defined length, but a review process is put in place to ensure it works for you.

## **What about money?**

You do not need to pay anything to take part in this programme. You may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week or eligible for a training allowance.

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from this [Scottish Government webpage on EMAs](#).

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should speak to a Skills Development Scotland (SDS) adviser by calling 0800 917 8000 or you can complete the [‘contact us’ form on the SDS website](#) and they also respond to messages on the [SDS Twitter account](#), or speak to your local authority provider.

Lead Scotland delivers the Activity Agreement programme in Aberdeenshire. Please visit the [‘Aberdeenshire - Young People’ section of the Lead Scotland website](#) for information on how to contact our Learning Coordinator and for more information.

## 5. Employability support

Since April 2017, the Scottish Government have new powers over employment support for disabled people and those with long term health conditions in Scotland. **Work First** and **Work Able** are the two programmes that will provide transitional arrangements for up to 12 months ahead of the full devolved service, **Fair Start**, in 2018.

These programmes in more depth:

### (i) Work First

Work First Scotland is for disabled people who, due to their impairment, may find it difficult to find or stay in work.

#### Who can apply?

It is a voluntary programme aimed at disabled people aged 16 and over.

#### What does it offer?

A Work First advisor will work with you to create a personalised plan to support you. That support may include:

- Helping you find jobs to apply for;
- Interview practice;
- Help with CV writing;
- Job-specific training, such as I.T courses;

- Work placements to help build confidence;
- Activities to aid in self-development and health and wellbeing.

Once you are in work or for people already in work, a Work First advisor can support in:

- Workplace adjustments and support with funding through Access to Work;
- Job specific development and training, such as I.T courses;
- Activities to aid in self-development and health and wellbeing.

A Work First advisor will offer further continuing support.

### **How long does it take?**

There is no timeframe put on this programme, as times are based on your needs.

### **What about money?**

You do not need to pay anything to take part in this programme and you can claim benefits at the same time if you are eligible for them.

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should contact your local Jobcentre Plus, or contact a Work First provider in your area: [Momentum](#), if you live in the Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast and

Grampian by calling 0141 419 5299 or by emailing [workfirstscotland@momentumscotland.org](mailto:workfirstscotland@momentumscotland.org), and [The Shaw Trust](#) if you live anywhere else in Scotland by calling 0300 30 33 111 or by e-mailing [support@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:support@shaw-trust.org.uk).

## **(ii) Work Able**

Managed by Skills Development Scotland, Work Able is for unemployed people with a disability or long-term health condition who want to work and need support to find and stay in sustainable employment.

### **Who can apply?**

It is a voluntary programme for unemployed people aged 18 years or over, receiving Employment and Support Allowance or the Universal Credit equivalent and have a desire and capability to work for at least 16 hours per week.

### **What does it offer?**

You will work with an advisor to develop a personalised plan to enhance your strengths and target areas that can be improved. The action plan may include:

- Helping you find jobs to apply for;
- Interview practice;
- Help with CV writing;
- Job-specific training, such as I.T training;

- Activities to aid in self-development and health and wellbeing.

As you move into work, an advisor will create a work plan to ensure you have everything you may need in place. Such as:

- Workplace adjustments and support with funding through Access to Work;
- Job specific development and training, such as I.T courses.

An advisor will offer further continuing support through your time in work, usually for 3 months.

### **How long does it take?**

There is no timeframe put on this programme, as times are based on your needs.

### **What about money?**

You do not need to pay anything to take part in this programme and you will continue to receive any benefits you are eligible for.

### **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should contact your local Jobcentre Plus or A Work Able provider in your area:

- [Progress Scotland](#) if you live in the Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast and Grampian by filling out the [contact form on the Working Links website](#) or by calling 0300 303 3131.

- [The Wise Group](#) if you live in Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside, Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire by calling 0141 303 3131 or by e-mailing [enquiries@thewisegroup.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thewisegroup.co.uk).
- [Remploy](#) if you live in Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde by calling 0300 456 8110 or by e-mailing [employmentservices.osc@remploy.co.uk](mailto:employmentservices.osc@remploy.co.uk).

### **(iii) Fair Start**

Details are still being finalised so the information we have right now is limited, but what we know is that in April 2018 following the 12 month end of transitional services **(i) Work First** and **(ii) Work Able**, the Scottish Government will introduce **Fair Start**.

The following information is for guide purposes only and is subject to change until the programme is finalised in 2018.

#### **Who can apply?**

It will be a voluntary programme aimed at disabled people aged 16 and over.

#### **What does it offer?**

Like the two services it will replace, you will work with an advisor to create a personalised plan to help support you into and through work. Supported Employment and Individual Placement will also be available to help you build your confidence with being in work.

## **How long does it take?**

There is no timeframe put on this programme, as times are based on your needs, but the programme will offer pre-work support of 12-18 months to enable you to feel ready and prepared for work, and offer up to 12 months of additional support when you are in work.

## **What about money?**

You will not need to pay anything to take part in this programme and will continue to receive any benefits you are eligible for.

## **Are you interested?**

If you are interested in this programme, you should contact your local Job Centre Plus.

## 6. Qualifications and progression

There are many different types of qualifications available across Scotland, ranging from basic starter courses to general educational courses to more specialised work-related qualifications.

Many colleges also offer higher education courses such as Higher National Diplomas and degree courses (for details of higher education qualifications in colleges or universities please see the [Lead Scotland guide 'Higher Education in Scotland'](#)).

### Entry requirements

Entry requirements will vary depending on the nature and level of the course. Although some courses ask for standard entry qualifications, such as Nationals, Standard Grades or Intermediate qualifications, formal qualifications are not required for entry to all courses. Some learning providers take into account the experience you may have gained informally, such as the skills you use in your daily/family life, voluntary work or key events and experiences in life (see the section on 'Recognition of prior learning' for more information). Although you may not be given formal 'credits' for this type of learning on its own, it helps others see what you have learned from these experiences. You may also be able to write about these experiences to reflect on what you have learned.

If you are returning to study after a break in education or you do not have the standard entry qualifications, you may be able to take

Access or introductory programmes to provide you with the background for further study in your chosen subject.

## Qualifications explained

The main qualifications (below higher education level) in Scotland include:

### (i) Introductory qualifications and awards

There are a range of qualifications and awards on offer for people who need extra support, or for those who don't feel ready to go into formal education yet. These include:

- **European Computer Driving License:** this is an introductory computer course which gives learners with little or no previous IT experience a good understanding of how to use a computer for work or at home. It is available at SCQF levels 4 to 7 ([see page 41 for more information on SCQF levels](#)).
- **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):** this is a useful qualification to help with verbal and written skills for people for whom English is not their first language.
- **Steps to Work award:** this award provides a stepping stone for some learners between school, further education, training and employment.

- **Volunteering Skills award:** this award provides formal recognition of volunteering activity.

## **(ii) National Qualifications (NQs)**

National Qualifications are awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the main awarding body in Scotland. They are available at 7 levels:

- Nationals 1-5
- Higher
- Advanced Higher

NQs cover many different subjects, and some can be taken as stand-alone National Units or built up into National Courses. So for example, if you complete three National Units in 'Business Management', 'Administration' and 'Travel', as well as passing an exam, you could gain a National Course award in Business.

You can also build up National Courses into 'cluster' awards such as Scottish Group Awards or National Certificates. These can be particularly useful for people who have been out of full-time education for a while as they allow you to build up Units at your own pace to gain an award.

The main qualification types are:

- **National qualifications 1, 2 + 3**

- National 1 is suitable for students who require considerable support with their learning;
- National 2 is suitable for students with mild support needs;
- National 3 is of a similar level to the old Foundation level Standard Grade.

Learning at National 1, 2 and 3 is assessed by the college and does not involve sitting an exam. National 1, 2 and 3 Units can be taken as qualifications in their own right, or as routes to further learning. A number of units in a particular area can also be grouped together into Courses or Group Awards.

- **National qualifications 4 + 5**

These qualifications are suitable for students who have completed National 3-5, Standard Grades, Access level 3, or those who wish to take up a new subject. For some students, National 5 is a stepping stone to taking a Higher.

National 4 + 5 qualifications can be studied at school or college - you do not necessarily need to have existing qualifications.

- **Highers**

Highers are aimed at students who have passed subjects at Credit level Standard Grade or Intermediate level 2 or National 5. Adults wishing to study for Highers at college may not need previous qualifications. Highers are normally needed for entry

into university or college to study for degree or Higher National Certificate or Diploma courses (HNCs or HNDs).

- **Advanced Higher**

These are aimed at students who have passed Highers, and they are usually taken in sixth year at school or in college. They extend the skills and knowledge gained at Higher level and are additional qualifications that are useful for entry into higher education or the workplace.

### **(iii) Scottish Vocational Qualifications**

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-related (vocational) qualifications and are aimed at giving you the skills and knowledge you will need in employment. There are SVQs which apply to most types of jobs, and they are available at college or in the workplace, or by a mix of college attendance and workplace training. SVQs are intended to guarantee your ability to do a particular job.

SVQs are available at 5 levels, each made up of a certain number of Units:

SVQ Level 1 – foundation or unskilled work.

SVQ Level 2 – semi-skilled / a broad range of skills and responsibilities.

SVQ Level 3 – complex / technical / skilled and/or supervisory work.

SVQ Level 4 – managerial / specialist.

SVQ Level 5 – professional / senior managerial.

Each Unit defines one aspect of a job or work-role, and says what it is to be competent in that aspect of the job. Each Unit can also be taken as an individual award. Some colleges may also offer National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

#### **(iv) Other qualifications**

Qualifications offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority:

- **Core Skills:** these are a group of five skills that are important for the world of learning and work. Employers have identified these skills as those that are most likely to be needed in any work environment. They can either be taken as stand-alone units, or embedded within other courses such as Nationals 1-5, or Highers. They include:
  - Communication
  - Numeracy
  - Information and Communication Technology
  - Working with Others
  - Problem Solving.
  
- **Group Awards**  
These include:

- **National Certificates:** these are designed to prepare people for employment, career development or progression to more advanced study at HNC/HND level. They are aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults in full-time education.
- **National Progression Awards:** these are work-related qualifications which are available in a variety of industry areas, e.g. Construction, Childcare, etc. They also help learners to gain general employability skills such as time management, working with others, managing people, etc.

- **International Vocational Awards**

These are qualifications for use in the international market, and can be formed from existing Scottish qualifications or tailored to suit specific needs.

Qualifications offered by other awarding bodies:

- **Access to higher education courses**

Some colleges also offer access to higher education courses in partnership with one or more universities. Most access courses are run at colleges and enable those who do not hold formal qualifications to go on to higher education. Most courses are one year full-time, and can guarantee you a place at college or university if you complete the programme successfully. You can get further advice about this, including information on the courses available from [the Scottish Wider Access Programme website](#).

- **Other awarding bodies**

Many learning providers offer the qualifications of other bodies such as City and Guilds, EAL and many other awarding bodies.

## **Recognition of prior learning**

If you have few or no qualifications, you may feel that you will be unable to take part in many learning opportunities. However, many learning providers and employers will take into account prior informal learning which you may have done. This might include learning gained through life and work experiences, voluntary work, or community-based learning for example. This is called 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL).

Using the RPL process can help you to:

- Think about the learning you have already achieved and plan how to build on this learning to meet your learning and career goals;
- Get a place on a course at a college, university or other learning provider;
- Gain credit towards a qualification to shorten the normal period of learning by showing that you already have the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for particular parts of the course.

[The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\) website](#) has an RPL 'profiling tool', which can help you to make connections between the life experience you have gained and what you have learned from these experiences.

## Developing your qualifications

The following table is based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and shows the different levels of further and higher education qualifications you might receive in Scotland. This helps learners understand how different learning opportunities relate to each other and how they can progress their qualifications.

Each qualification is placed at a 'level' from 1 to 12 to allow you to compare qualifications with each other. For example, the table shows that a credit level Standard Grade, an Intermediate 2, National 5, and an SVQ Level 2 are all at the same level – Level 5.

In this table, anything which takes place between SCQF levels 1 and 6 is classed as **further education**. Anything above this is classed as **higher education**, with the exception of Advanced Highers, which although are at SCQF Level 7, normally take place at school. It is important to know whether your course is classed as further or higher education, as the financial support you might receive will be different ([see section on 'Funding for disabled learners'](#) for further details).

When you have gained a qualification, you might want to progress on to the next level. As you progress you may be able to move from one area of learning in the below table to another, such as progressing from an SVQ 1 in Word Processing (at SCQF level 4) to a National Certificate in Office Administration (at SCQF level 5). Note: if you are using a screen-reader, you may prefer to read the written description of this table at [Appendix B](#).

# The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework



SCQF Level	SQA Qualifications (School, College and some Community Learning Centres)			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs (College and other providers)
12				Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diplomas & Certificates	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10				Honours Degree Graduate Diplomas & Certificates	Professional Apprenticeship
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors/Ordinary Degree Graduate Diplomas & Certificates	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate		Certificate of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher, Awards				Modern & Foundation Apprenticeship, SVQ 3
5	National 5 /Standard Grade Credit/Intermediate 2, Awards				Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4/Standard Grade General/ Intermediate 1, Awards	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ 1
3	National 3 replaces Access 3/ Standard Grade Foundation				
2	National 2 replaces Access 2, Awards				
1	National 1 replaces Access 1, Awards				

Notes to the table: This table includes reference to Standard Grades and intermediates which have been phased out and replaced with new 'National' qualifications but have been left in to help you see what they are now equivalent to.

The table only includes qualifications which have been placed on the SCQF framework, although many other qualifications are available in Scotland. It is also possible to align other qualifications with where you think they should be placed on the Framework by looking at the descriptors for each level. You can see [an interactive version of the SCQF table](#) with descriptors of each level and type of qualification online at the SQA's website. This can be a useful way of comparing the qualifications you have with other qualifications and finding out what level you might be at.

### **Acronyms in the table:**

SVQs – Scottish Vocational Qualifications

MAs – Modern Apprenticeships

## **Progression to higher education**

### ***HNCs and HNDs:***

If you complete certain courses at SCQF levels 5 or 6, you may be able to progress to higher education courses such as HNCs or HNDs at college.

### ***Degrees:***

Successful completion of an HNC programme may allow you to progress to the second year of an HND programme or Year 1 of a university degree.

Certain HND programmes may allow you to enter Year 2 of a university degree, and in certain cases Year 3, (depending on each university's entrance requirements). This can be particularly beneficial for people who start an HND course and feel they have the potential to progress further.

Many colleges have specific links with local universities which allow you to do this. Your careers adviser or course tutor should be able to give you further advice on progression opportunities.

Be aware that if you opt to study an HNC and/or an HND, this will reduce the number of years' of funding you may be entitled to when doing a degree course. Please contact the Lead Scotland Information Service if you want more information about this.

## 7. Disability-related support

It is important to find a learning opportunity that interests you, as well as making sure that your learning provider offers you the extra support you need because of your impairment or health condition. The Equality Act (which replaces the Disability Discrimination Act and other equality laws) says that all learning providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure a disabled person can access education. This might include, for example, providing course materials in electronic formats if you are visually impaired, or one-to-one support in the classroom if you have a learning difficulty.

For further information on your rights under the Equality Act, please see the [Lead Scotland guide 'The Equality Act in Post School Learning'](#).

### **Should I tell my learning provider I am disabled?**

If you need to fill in an application form, it should ask if you have an impairment or additional support needs. You do not have to fill this in, but if you do the learning provider will be obliged to try and meet your needs more effectively. All information given to the learning provider about your impairment or support needs will be kept private and will not be passed on to anyone else unless you give your permission. It is against the law for learning providers to discriminate against you because you are disabled.

By letting the learning provider know about your support needs at an early stage, you are giving their staff time to think about what changes, if any, would need to be made to support you if you are offered a place. If you do not tell the learning provider about your support needs before you start the course, these changes might not be in place for you when you start the course or it may not be possible to make the changes at all.

## **Assessing your needs**

### **(8) Community learning providers**

If you decide to take part in a community learning opportunity, your tutor or facilitator may produce an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) with you. This can be used to record:

- Your individual learning goals;
- What you want to learn and how you want to learn;
- Any barriers to learning which may exist, and the support you need to overcome these barriers;
- The way in which your learning will take place;
- Any goals or targets to help you measure your progress.

### **(ii) Colleges**

If you decide to go to college, it is a good idea to speak to the college support staff before you arrive at the college to find out what support they can provide to meet your needs. You will be able to talk about your course, the support you have used before and any new support that the college might be able to provide.

If necessary, the college will carry out an assessment of your needs to make sure you get the support you need to help you study. This will either take place at the college or at a separate Access Centre (the Access Centres for further education learners are based in Motherwell and Edinburgh – [see 'Useful publications and contacts' section](#)). If you don't live near an Access Centre, you may be referred to another college if your own college doesn't have the appropriate expertise to carry out an assessment which meets your needs.

If you have come straight from school to college, your education authority (with your permission) should have passed on any information to the college about your particular needs. Under the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004, your local education authority has a duty to ensure that your school starts planning what support you will need about one year before you expect to leave school.

If you are an adult learner, it would also be a good idea to make contact with the college a few months before you start to ensure that they are aware of your needs, as well as allowing you to familiarise yourself with the college.

### **(iii) Training programmes**

If you are thinking of starting a training programme, either the college, training provider or the employer will be responsible for meeting your support needs, depending on which training

programme you choose. For more information, you should contact your careers adviser at school or college, or a Skills Development Scotland careers adviser.

## **What kind of support is available?**

### **(8) Staying on at school**

As long as you remain in school, your education authority must ensure you receive the support you need. The support you have had up until now should still be available to you, whether you continue studying at the same school or move to a different school.

#### **(ii) Community learning providers**

As community learning providers are providers of services, they have certain duties towards disabled people under the Equality Act. This means that they need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to make sure they can access learning opportunities. This might include things like:

- Providing learning materials in alternative formats, e.g. large print, electronic, Easy Read, Braille, etc.
- Providing equipment and services to remove any barriers to learning, e.g. sign language interpreters, computer software for dyslexic learners, adapted computers and furniture, etc.
- Physical adjustments, e.g. barriers, ramps or disabled toilets;
- Changing course requirements to meet the needs of disabled learners.

If the providers cannot *reasonably* fund the cost of adjustments, you may be able to apply to charitable trusts for funding (contact the Lead Scotland Information Service for advice about this).

### **(iii) Colleges**

All colleges have a duty to meet the needs of all students who are disabled or have other additional support needs. There are two ways in which you can receive support from your college:

- You can either take part in a mainstream course (which include disabled and non-disabled students), where the college will give you the support you need to succeed on your course. This might include extra teaching for students with dyslexia, an interpreter for deaf students, flexible timetables, or materials in alternative formats such as Braille or computer software, or;
- You can take part in courses which are specifically designed to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties or students who have complex needs. These programmes have fewer students than a mainstream class and all the students on the course will need additional support to help their learning. This might include Basic Skills courses which aim to develop your numeracy and literacy skills, or Independent Living Skills courses which prepare students for adult life.

Disability or student support advisers at colleges arrange disability support within the college. You should contact this person to discuss any individual support needs before you start your course. See [Lead Scotland's guide, 'Supporting You at College'](#) for more information about the type of support you can receive at college.

#### **(iv) Specialist colleges**

Specialist further education colleges provide education for disabled people only. Some specialist colleges cater for students with any type of impairment, while others provide mainly for those with a particular impairment. You may have access to helpful equipment or supported learning at a specialist college that you might not be able to access at your local college.

There are no residential specialist colleges in Scotland. However, you may be able to get funding for a placement in a specialist college elsewhere in the UK through a bursary from your local authority. If you want to attend a specialist college outside Scotland, you should ask your social work department for an assessment of your needs that takes into account any help you need in order to access appropriate education. Be aware that the costs involved in attending a residential specialist college are very high and opportunities to get public funding can be limited.

#### **(v) Work-based learning or training programmes**

If you are taking part in work-based learning (such as an SVQ) or training, you should be given enough support to enable you to take

part in and successfully complete the training. This will either be arranged by a college student support adviser (if the college runs your training programme), or your employer or training provider. As each programme differs, you should contact the provider to find out who will be responsible for arranging your support.

## Who provides the support I need?

If you are disabled you may need different kinds of support from different agencies while you are learning. It is therefore important to be aware of who is responsible for meeting your needs.

- **Educational needs**

Learning providers are responsible for meeting your educational needs. This might include learning materials in alternative formats, computer software, help with study skills, training in the use of specialised equipment, or arranging for extra time in exams. In some cases, you may receive an [allowance to pay for some of your own disability-related costs – see Page 61](#) for further details.

- **Personal care support**

The main source of help for personal care support for your daily living needs is your local social work department. This might include help using the toilet facilities, someone to help you travel to college, or help to prepare a meal. All disabled people have the right to an assessment of their needs. If you think you might need personal care support you should apply

to your local social work department for an assessment as early as possible.

- **Healthcare needs**

In many cases, your needs assessment by the social work department may identify a need for healthcare support in addition to your personal care support. If this is the case, your local NHS board will be responsible for providing that support, such as someone to give you medication at college. You should contact your local health centre to discuss this.

- **Careers advice**

Your school or college careers adviser or a Skills Development Scotland careers adviser can help you work out which education, training or employment options suit you best.

They can also give you information and advice about the support available when you have finished learning if you have additional support needs, such as going into employment, training or higher education. You can also [research careers on the My World of Work website.](#)

- **Transport needs**

You may have specific transport requirements, such as travelling by taxi, because of the nature of your impairment. If you receive the mobility part of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), either

funding or a Motability car, you will be expected to use this to pay for your transport costs. If you do not receive this allowance, and you need specialist transport to get to and from the college, this will be discussed by the college, your social work department and NHS board. These agencies should decide between them who will pay for your transport if this is necessary.

- **Other support needs**

You may find that you need help when you are moving from school to college, especially if you have to deal with various different agencies. If you have a disability or other additional support needs, you may be able to receive the support of a Skills Development Scotland key worker. Key workers can support you while you are moving from school to college by speaking to the different agencies involved and making sure that support is paid for and put in place before you begin your course.

## 8. Funding for disabled learners

As you may need to pay to access some types of learning opportunities, it is important to think about your finances before you enrol on a course to make sure that you can afford it. There are various types of funding support available depending on what type of learning you are doing and your personal circumstances.

### (i) Staying on at school

If you choose to stay on at school after your school leaving date, you may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week. You can also get an EMA if you undertake a course of non-advanced further education (SCQF Level 6 or below) at college or are completing an [Activity Agreement - See page 23](#).

To qualify for an EMA, you must:

- Be aged between 16 and 19 years old;
- Have a family income of less than £24,421 if you are the only dependent young person in the household (or an income of less than £26,884 if there are more than one dependent young people in the household);
- Have a 100% class attendance rate

More information on EMAs is available from your school, college or local authority, and also from [this Scottish Government website on EMAs](#).

## **(ii) Community learning**

Community learning opportunities are offered by a wide range of organisations, including local authorities (the local council) and various voluntary organisations. While some community learning opportunities are free to take part in, some learning providers charge fees. Many community learning providers, including local authorities, will offer discounted places for people on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.

### **Course costs**

If you need to pay for a learning opportunity, you may qualify for an **Individual Training Account (ITA)** of up to £200 each year towards the course costs. Unlike **ILA**, which ITA replaces, the course must be geared towards helping you get a job or progress in a career. If you are interested you can search for eligible courses online at the [‘My World of Work’ website](#) or call 0800 917 8000. The new ITA scheme comes into effect from October 2017.

To qualify for an **ITA**, you need to:

- Be 16 or over (there is no upper age limit);
- Have an income of £22,000 or less, or be in receipt of a qualifying benefit;

- Not have a degree or postgraduate qualification or overseas equivalent;
- Not be in any form of secondary, further or higher education, and not participating in training through the Employability Fund or Modern or Foundation Apprenticeship.

The above criteria is based on ILA eligibility criteria which is likely to remain largely unchanged for an ITA. You will also need to sign a declaration that you are either in work or actively looking for work. Further details on eligibility will be published on the [‘My World of Work’ website](#) in late 2017.

### **Disability-related support**

There are no specific funding sources to meet disability-related costs when learning on a community education course. However, under the Equality Act, community education providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that it is not impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled students to access courses. For example, this means that your education provider should offer materials in alternative formats, and things like communication support or accessible IT equipment. If you are taking part in a course funded through The Employability Fund, there is an Access Fund to help with additional support costs. Speak to the training provider running the course or Skills Development Scotland to find out more about this fund and how to access it.

### **(iii) College courses**

The following information relates to further education courses in colleges from August 2017 to July 2018. If you need information on funding for higher education courses at college (e.g. HNCs or HNDs), please see the [Student Awards Agency Scotland website](#).

#### **Tuition fees**

If you are taking a full-time course at college, you do not need to pay tuition fees (as long as you meet the country of residence conditions and you have not had funding previously. For further information on this, please see [Appendix A](#)).

If you are taking a **part-time** course, you may have to pay tuition fees. However, you may not need to pay fees if:

- You are taking part in a course which is specifically for disabled people; **or**
- You receive one of the following welfare benefits: Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Carer's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit (or contributory Employment and Support Allowance for new claimants since October 2008), Severe Disablement Allowance, or Attendance Allowance; **or**
- Either you or anyone in your family (only people you live with) receives Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; or Income-based Employment and Support Allowance; **or**

- You have a low family income (<sup>1</sup> see bottom of page); **or**
- You are an asylum seeker, or the husband / wife or child of an asylum seeker; **or**
- You are living in a children's home or foster home.

If you need to pay your own tuition fees, you might be able to apply for an [Individual Training Account \(see page 22\)](#) to help with these costs. You may also be eligible to apply for a non-repayable educational grant from a charitable trust. See [Lead Scotland's guide to charitable trusts](#).

## Repeat Funding

If you have received public funding for learning previously from the EU or UK, you may not be eligible for further funding, however the rules on this are complex and will be dependent on your individual circumstances. Contact the Lead Scotland Information Service for more information.

## Living costs

You might be able to get help towards your living costs in the form of a non-repayable bursary from the college – but only if you are studying full-time. The amount you could get depends on your own

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1. A low family income means that your family's total income in the tax year from 2016/17 is lower than:

- £8,282 if you live on your own
- £12,395 if you have a partner and no children
- £18,977 if you have children

and your family's circumstances and is discretionary, which means it's not guaranteed. Bursary allowances are as follows:

- Students aged under 18 with a parental income of less than £20,351\* per year:
  - **£0** if you live at your parental home
  - **£38.69** per week if you live away from your parental home

**Students under 18** may be entitled to [Education Maintenance Allowance \(EMA\) of £30 per week as well, see Page 55](#) for details.

- Students aged 18-24 who are supported by their parents with a family income of less than £24,275\* per year:
  - **£77.01** per week if you live with your parents
  - **£97.33** per week if you don't live with your parents

**Students aged 18-19** may receive an Education Maintenance Allowance of £30 per week instead of a bursary. This is at the college's discretion.

- Self-supporting students with a household income of less than £20,643\* per year:
  - **£97.33** per week

(Self-supporting students are those aged over 25, or those who are married, have no living parents, have children, or have supported themselves for more than 3 years)

\*If your family/household income is more than the amounts set out above, then the amount of bursary you are eligible for will be reduced. Please contact your college/prospective college's student finance department to get an estimate of how much bursary you may be entitled to.

If you are studying part-time, bursary grants are not normally available, but this is at the college's discretion. If you do get financial support for living costs, the amount given would be proportionate to the hours you attend college each week.

## **Funding for disability-related costs**

Disabled students who have extra costs arising from their impairment while at college (either full- or part-time) can apply for an Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance. This allowance is not income assessed, and the college decides the amount that you can receive.

This allowance can be used to pay for disability-related study or travel costs. For example, you may need to buy additional software for a computer, you may need Braille paper, or have extra photocopying charges.

It is important to note that some types of study support and equipment will be provided directly by the college without you having to apply for any allowance, so it is always best to speak to college support staff before applying.

## **Travel costs**

You can apply to your college for a travel expense allowance to cover the costs of travelling to and from college every day. This allowance takes into account your family income for all students aged 18 or over.

You can also apply to the college for the Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance (see above) if you have extra travel costs because of your disability. For example, you can use this allowance if you need to travel by taxi rather than by bus if you have mobility difficulties. However if you receive the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), you will be expected to use this to provide you with transport to and from college, however the college may, at their discretion, top up these funds from the additional support needs for learning allowance.

If you cannot get funding from the college to pay for your travel costs, and you do not receive the mobility part of DLA or PIP, you may be able to get funding from your local social work department.

## **Other allowances**

There are various other allowances from colleges which you may be eligible to apply for. These include:

- **Study costs allowance:** this can be used to pay for essential books and materials, compulsory study trips, etc. (this

allowance takes your family income into account, unless you are under 18);

- **Childcare costs:** this helps you pay for the costs of childcare. Although all students with children can apply, funding is limited and priority is usually given to older or part-time students, and lone parents;
- **Discretionary (hardship) funds:** for students with particular financial difficulties or emergency needs. Colleges might also provide this funding to students who are moving from the benefits system to start a college course.

#### **(iv) Training programmes**

For information on funding available to learners taking part in training programmes, please see [Chapter 4](#).

#### **(v) Other sources of funding**

If you are not able to receive any of the funding listed above, or if you are looking for additional funding, you may be able to consider the following options:

- **Grant making trusts:** many trusts or charities offer funding to certain people. There are various trusts in the UK, and the amount of money that they give varies. Each trust has its own criteria for whom it will offer help. There are some trusts that specifically offer funding to disabled people and/or students.

Lead Scotland holds a list of various trust funds. Please contact our Information Service for further details on 0800 999 2568 or check our free online [guide to charitable trusts providing individual educational grants](#).

- **Professional and Career Development Loans:** these are bank loans of between £300 and £10,000 to cover a wide range of vocational training or learning opportunities. The government supports these loans by paying the interest on the loan while you are undertaking your learning. You can find further information about this scheme on [this UK Government webpage on Career development loans](#).
- **Sponsorships:** many industrial organisations and some government departments have schemes to support students. You may be able to get details of these from your local Jobcentre Plus office.

## 9. Support and funding for carers

As a carer, you may find it difficult to find the time to take up a learning opportunity which fits around your caring responsibilities. You may also have had to give up work to care for someone, making it difficult to afford to take part in certain learning opportunities.

There are various sources of support for carers to help you take part in learning, including financial help and practical support and guidance. The support you might get may depend on your personal circumstances, including your income.

### Financial support

[Section 7 contains information on the financial support](#) available to learners, much of which will be available to learners who are carers (with the exception of those specifically for disabled learners).

[Section 9 contains information on welfare benefits and tax credits](#) which may be available to some carers.

Carers may also be entitled to some of the following sources of financial support:

#### **Dependants' Allowance**

This is an allowance for students taking further education courses at college. You may receive up to £55.48 per week if you have financial, care or legal responsibility for an adult. This allowance

takes into account the income of the person you are caring for. It is paid by colleges.

## **Carer's Allowance**

This is a welfare benefit for people who care for someone with a severe disability.

It is important to note that not all learners qualify for this allowance. You may be able to get Carer's Allowance if you meet **all** of the following conditions:

- You are aged 16 or over;
- You are caring for someone who either gets Disability Living Allowance (at the middle or highest rate for personal care), the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, or Constant Attendance Allowance;
- You spend at least 35 hours a week caring for this person;
- You earn less than £116 a week after certain deductions (e.g. Income Tax);
- If you are studying, your course must be no more than 21 hours per week.

The weekly allowance is £62.70, which is reduced by the amount of certain other benefits you receive. You can claim Carer's Allowance by contacting the Carer's Allowance Unit or your local Jobcentre Plus (see ['Useful contacts' section](#)).

Carer's Allowance is among the benefits that are being devolved to Scotland. Right now it is in consultation so details are limited, but

proposed changes include: raising the weekly allowance to £73.10 and removing limits on work, study and age.

### **Carer's Credits**

If you don't qualify for Carer's Allowance, you may qualify for Carer's Credit. This is a National Insurance credit which lets carers build up qualifying years for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension. This means that there will be no gaps in your National Insurance record if you have to take on caring responsibilities.

### **Carer Premium (Income Support)**

If you're claiming Income Support and you are also entitled to Carer's Allowance, you may be able to get an extra amount in your Income Support known as a 'carer premium'. This is an allowance of up to £34.60 per week.

### **Community Care grants**

Provided by The Scottish Welfare Fund through your local authority, a Community Care Grant is for you if you're getting certain benefits and need financial help to ease exceptional pressure on your family. You could be eligible if you are over 16 and caring for someone who is ill or disabled. To find out more about Community Care grants including how to apply, visit [the Scottish Government's webpage on The Scottish Welfare Fund](#).

## Caring for a disabled child

If you are caring for a disabled child, you may be eligible for the following benefits and tax credits:

- **Child Tax Credit:** this is a means-tested allowance for parents and carers of children or young people who are still in full-time education. You may get an extra amount if you are caring for a disabled child.
- **Disabled Child Premium:** if you are responsible for a child under 19 you will get this premium if your child is either getting Disability Living Allowance or if they are registered blind.
- **Enhanced Disability Premium (child rate):** you may be entitled to this if your child gets the highest-rate care component of DLA.

## Support services for carers

Local authorities are responsible for providing various kinds of support to carers. To qualify for such support, you need to get a carer's assessment (if you are aged 16 or over). This is used to assess your needs and find out what support you need. Under the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act, you have a right to get such an assessment from your local authority.

### Support from your local authority

This might include:

- **Direct payments:** these are cash payments made instead of providing services directly, to someone who has been assessed as needing services.
- **Day care centres:** day centres provide a range of care services for people with different disabilities. They can benefit both the person being cared for and the carer (by providing respite breaks).
- **Home care help:** this might include home care workers such as care assistants or domiciliary care workers for personal care.

## Support from other agencies

There are a range of voluntary organisations who provide specific support and guidance for carers. Some support all carers, whereas others support specific groups such as young carers, or carers of disabled children. See the [‘Useful Contacts’ section](#) of this guide for more information.

## **10. Welfare benefits for disabled learners and carers**

As a disabled person or carer you may receive certain welfare benefits and tax credits. If you have any general enquiries about benefits or how to apply for them, you should contact the Jobcentre Plus or your local benefits office.

You need to be aware of how studying will affect your benefits before you start the course. You must inform your local Jobcentre Plus or your local benefits office of any major change in your circumstances as soon as it happens.

This section is a general overview of welfare benefits for disabled learners. For more detailed information, please see [Child Poverty Action Group's online Benefits for students in Scotland handbook](#) or contact the Lead Scotland Information Service.

### **What benefits might I be able to claim?**

There are a wide range of welfare benefits and tax credits, some of which are specifically aimed at disabled people and some which take into account your income. Some of the main ones are set out below.

#### **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

This is a benefit for disabled people aged under 65 who need help with personal care or who have mobility difficulties. This is a set rate of benefit and is not usually affected by savings or by other

money you have coming in. DLA has two components (you can be paid one or both depending on your needs):

- Care component, paid at either the lower rate (£22 per week), middle rate (£55.65) or higher rate (£83.10);
- Mobility component, paid at either the lower rate (£22) or higher rate (£58).

To receive DLA, you must satisfy the 'disability tests' for three months before you will be paid. You can only make a new DLA claim if you're under 16. If you are over 16 you will need to claim for **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** (see below). Your DLA will continue if you were born on or before 8 April 1948. To claim DLA, you can either call the Benefit Enquiry Line (0800 882 200) or contact your local Jobcentre Plus.

## **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

PIP is a benefit for disabled people aged 16-64, and is gradually replacing DLA. Like DLA, it is a set rate of benefit and is not usually affected by savings or by other money you have coming in.

PIP has two components (you can be paid one or both depending on your needs):

- For the daily living component, paid at either the standard rate (£55.65 per week), or the enhanced rate (£83.10);
- For the mobility component, paid at either the standard rate (£22), or the enhanced rate (£58).

To receive PIP, you will have to be assessed by a health professional, and your rates will be monitored to ensure you receive the right support. You will be assessed on how your disability affects day to day tasks, not just having a disability.

If you are already in receipt of DLA and are 16-64, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will write to you and invite you to apply for PIP. You do not need to do anything until the DWP write to you.

If you are in receipt of DLA or PIP and begin studying, you must inform DWP. This may trigger a re-assessment but is not standard practice.

## **Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)**

JSA is for people who are available for and actively looking for work. You can either claim:

- Contributions-based JSA (if you have made enough national insurance contributions) of £57.90 per week for under 25s or £73.10 if you are 25 or over;
- Income-based JSA (this is worked out in the same way as Income Support, so the amount you will get will vary depending on your circumstances – see below).

## **Income Support**

Income support provides financial help for people between 16 and 60 who are on a low income and not expected to sign on as

available for work. It is mainly available for lone parents with a child under 5, and carers, to help you with day-to-day living expenses.

Please note that from October 2008, new claimants can no longer claim Income Support on the grounds of incapacity. Instead, people who are unable to work because of illness or disability will receive support through [Employment and Support Allowance \(see Page 79\)](#)

## **Universal Credit**

Universal Credit is a monthly payment that is gradually replacing the following benefits:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA);
- Housing Benefit;
- Working Tax Credit;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
- Income Support.

To claim Universal Credit you must be over 18, but 16 and 17 year olds will be considered in certain circumstances.

You cannot claim Universal Credit if you are on a full time course unless:

- You are responsible for a child;
- You are ill/disabled;
- You are under 21 (or are 21 but were under that age when you started your course) on a full-time non-advanced course and are 'without parental support', e.g., you are estranged from your parents or living away from them in other specified circumstances;
- You are a single foster parent (this includes some single kinship carers), or you are in a couple, both of you are students, and one of you is a foster parent;
- You are over the qualifying age for state pension credit
- You have taken time out because of illness/disability or caring responsibilities and have now recovered or your caring responsibilities have ended, and you are not eligible for a grant or loan;
- You have a partner who is not a student, or who is a student and one or both of you fit into one of the groups above.

Universal Credit is being rolled out slowly across the UK and is currently only available to some people in certain areas. To find out whether it is available in your area, visit the [Universal Credit postcode search website](#). If it is not currently available in your area or you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you can still claim the 'legacy' benefits that it is replacing for the time being. To find out whether you are eligible for Universal Credit while you study see this [Universal Credit and Students factsheet from Child Poverty Action Group](#), or contact the Lead Scotland Information Service.

## **Housing Benefit**

This benefit helps you with the cost of your rent if you are on a low income. Full-time students in further education under 21 are usually eligible to claim. Your local council's housing department will be able to give you more advice and provide you with application forms. Other students including those responsible for a child, carers and disabled people may also be able to claim Housing Benefit. Students in receipt of Income Support, income related Job Seekers Allowance and income related Employment & Support Allowance may also be eligible to claim. Contact the Lead Scotland Information Service to check your eligibility.

Part time students are normally eligible to claim Housing Benefit.

## **Council Tax Reduction**

If you are liable to pay Council Tax, your eligibility for Council Tax Reduction, which has replaced Council Tax Benefit, is worked out in the same way as for Housing Benefit. As this benefit is means-tested, the amount you are eligible to receive will be affected by student support entitlement.

## **Tax Credits**

Full-time and part-time students with dependent children are entitled to claim Child Tax Credit from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Disabled students who work 16 hours or more a week may be eligible for Working Tax Credit (for full-time and part-time students). Students over 25 working at least 30 hours a week on a low income may also be entitled to Working Tax Credit.

How much help you get depends on your circumstances, including you and your partner's income. To find out more, visit the [UK Government's webpage on Working Tax Credit](#) or call the Tax Credit Information Line on 0845 300 3900. Also see this [factsheet on Students and Tax Credits](#).

## **Benefits which may be affected by studying**

It is important to note that you cannot continue to claim many benefits if you are studying full-time (unless you meet certain conditions – please see [Child Poverty Action Group's Benefits for students guide](#)).

If you are studying part-time you may be able to continue to receive certain benefits, such as Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Carers Allowance and Tax Credits.

## **Benefits which are not affected by studying**

As Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are based on your day-to-day care and mobility

costs, your entitlement to these benefits should not be affected if you decide to start studying. You should inform DWP if you received these benefits and you start studying. This may trigger a re-assessment but it is not standard practice to do so. Contact the Lead Scotland Information Service if you have any concerns about this.

## **Incapacity Benefit & Employment Support Allowance**

These include Incapacity Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance which you will receive if you have been assessed as being 'incapable of work' or having 'limited capability for work'.

Although there are no rules which say that taking part in studying affects your ability to work, once the Jobcentre Plus has been told you are studying or are planning to study, they may decide that you are no longer 'incapable of work'. Obviously, this is not automatically the case. Many people are able to do courses of education but are not able to work. So although education may trigger a review of your claim, it cannot in itself be used to decide that you are capable of work. These benefits can only be withdrawn if you do not pass a test of incapacity.

### **(i) Incapacity Benefit**

Incapacity Benefit was replaced by Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in 2008. If you are still claiming Incapacity Benefit, you will be reassessed under the ESA system.

If you receive contributions-based Incapacity Benefit, you can continue to claim it if you are studying full-time.

## **(ii) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**

Employment and Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit for all new claimants from 2008. It is for people who are unable to work on the grounds of ill-health or disability. It has an income-related part for those on low incomes, and a contributory part (for those who have paid National Insurance contributions through work, or if you became disabled at a young age).

The focus of ESA is to consider what you are capable of, rather than what you are incapable of. In order to assess this, claimants need to undertake a test called the 'Work Capability Assessment' which assesses your capability for work and work-related activities. This can result in 3 possible outcomes:

- You are assessed as having 'limited capability for work', and able to take part in at least some type of 'work-related activity', and you will receive the work-related activity component of ESA as well as the basic allowance;
- You are assessed as having 'limited capability for work-related activity', and you will receive the support component of ESA as well as the basic allowance;
- You are assessed as being capable of work, and can instead apply for Jobseeker's Allowance to help you get back into work.

If you receive the work-related activity component of ESA, you will be expected to attend the work-focused interviews to discuss what steps you can take to move towards work. Taking up a learning opportunity does not automatically make you exempt from attending these interviews, although your Jobcentre Plus adviser may agree that it would be unreasonable to expect you to look for work until you complete your course.

## **How is ESA affected by learning?**

### ***Full-time students***

If you are receiving **contributory ESA**, you can continue to claim it as long as you continue to satisfy the limited capability for work test and have paid enough national insurance contributions.

If you are receiving ESA on the grounds of low income (**income-related ESA**), you can only continue to claim it if you also get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Receipt of DLA or PIP means you are usually automatically treated as having limited capability for work and you do not need to satisfy the limited capability for work test (if you are under 20 and taking further education courses you still need to satisfy this test).

### ***Part-time students***

If you are studying part-time, you will have to satisfy the limited capability for work test to continue claiming ESA. You do not need

to be receiving Disability Living Allowance or PIP to be eligible for  
ESA.

## 11. Useful publications and contacts

### Useful publications

#### Disability Rights UK guides

A range of information guides are available online at the [Disability Rights UK website](#):

- Understanding the Equality Act: information for disabled students;
- Adjustments for disabled students
- Careers and work for disabled people
- Funding from Charitable trusts

**Disability Rights UK Handbook. A guide to rights, benefits and services for all people with disabilities, their families and carers.**

The handbook is available for purchase from [the store on the Disability Rights UK website](#), updated annually and published by the Disability Rights UK, Ground Floor, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London, N1 6AH.

Telephone: 020 7250 818

Email: [enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org)

Website: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

## Lead Scotland guides

Lead Scotland produces a range of information guides, including:

- [Higher Education in Scotland](#)
- [Supporting You at College: A guide for people with additional support needs in Scotland's Colleges](#)
- [Supporting You at University: A guide for people with additional support needs in Scotland's Universities](#)
- [Arranging Support Workers in Higher Education](#)
- [A List of Charitable Trusts providing Educational Grants to Individuals](#)
- [The Equality Act in Post School Learning](#)

## Association of National Specialist Colleges Directory

[The NATSPEC website](#) has a 'search and browse' function.

## Which School? For Special Needs (2016/17)

This guide lists independent, non-maintained and state-maintained special schools and colleges, plus independent mainstream schools with special provisions. Available to order from various online book retailers, such as the [Amazon.co.uk website](#).

## Information on student funding

### Colleges in Scotland

Your college will be able to give you information and advice about the funding you may be eligible for. You can get an up-to-date list of colleges in Scotland from the [Association of Colleges website](#).

**Scottish Government guide, [Helping you meet the costs of Learning and Training](#)**

### ITA Scotland

To request an application for an Individual Training Account (formally ILA), call the free Skills Development Scotland helpline or visit the [My World Of Work website](#) for more information. Please note the fund will not be available until October 2017.

Helpline: 0800 917 8000

## Information on welfare benefits

### Turn2Us

For advice on disability, sickness benefits, carers' allowances and grants. Contact can be made through [the contact form on the Turn2Us website](#). There is also a [Benefit Calculator on the Turn2Us](#)

[website](#) that allows you to check your benefit entitlement. For more information visit: [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

## **Citizens Advice Scotland**

Free online publications, a dedicated helpline and local advisors at Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland, providing information and advice on benefits, debt and money, legal rights, housing, work related issues, consumer rights and relationships. Go to [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

For other benefits enquiries, contact your local [Jobcentre Plus](#) or you can call them on:

### **New benefit claims**

Telephone: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

### **Existing benefit claims**

Telephone: 0345 608 8545

Textphone: 0345 608 8551

## **Carer's Allowance Unit**

For general enquires about Carer's Allowance.

Telephone: 0845 608 4321

## **Direct Government**

Government website containing useful information on:

- support and services for disabled people
- welfare benefits and tax credits
- support for carers
- and much more...

Website: [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)

## **Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance Helpline**

Telephone: 08457 123 456

Textphone: 08457 224 433

(Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 6.30pm)

E-mail: [DCPU.Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DCPU.Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Information on learning opportunities**

### **Hot courses**

Allows you to search for non-degree courses including adult learning.

Website: [www.hotcourses.com](http://www.hotcourses.com)

## **Lead Scotland Information Service**

Room B05, Edinburgh Napier University Merchiston Campus  
14 Colinton Road  
Edinburgh  
EH10 5DT

Freephone Helpline: 0800 999 2568. Available Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 2pm-4pm and Tuesday & Friday 10am-12pm.

Email: [info@lead.org.uk](mailto:info@lead.org.uk)

Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity to offer face-to-face advice, but arrangements can be made in exceptional circumstances if you are unable to receive advice via telephone and/or email contact.

Office Telephone: 0131 228 9441

Textphone: (18001) 0131 228 9441

E-mail (general enquiries): [enquiries@lead.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lead.org.uk)

Website: [www.lead.org.uk](http://www.lead.org.uk)

For details of the Lead Scotland Information Service, see the back cover of this guide.

## **Learning Link Scotland**

Robertson House  
152 Bath Street

Glasgow  
G2 4TB

Telephone: 0141 353 7300

E-mail: [info@learninglinkscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@learninglinkscotland.org.uk)

Website: [www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk](http://www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk)

## **Skills Development Scotland**

Skills Development Scotland (formerly known as Careers Scotland) can provide advice about learning and training opportunities, careers advice and employment.

Monteith House  
11 George Square  
Glasgow  
G2 1DY

Office Telephone: 0141 285 6000 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday

Helpline: 0800 917 8000

Email: [info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](mailto:info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

Website: [www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

My World of Work website: [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)

## **Support for disabled people**

### **Access Centres**

Most colleges and universities across Scotland have validated access centres located at one of their campuses. The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) hold a full list of all validated access centres in Scotland on their website, click the below link to access the list.

[SAAS list of Access Centres in Scotland](#)

### **Advice Service Capability Scotland**

11 Ellersly Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 6HY

Telephone: 0131 337 9876

Textphone: 0131 346 2529

E-mail: [ascsc@capability-scotland.org.uk](mailto:ascsc@capability-scotland.org.uk)

Website: [www.capability-scotland.org.uk](http://www.capability-scotland.org.uk)

### **Disability Rights UK**

Ground Floor  
CAN Mezzanine  
49-51 East Road  
London, N1 6AH.

Telephone: 020 7250 818

Email: [enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org)

Website: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

## **Dyslexia Scotland**

Advice and guidance on Dyslexia related issues in Scotland.

2nd floor — East Suite

Wallace House

17–21 Maxwell Place

Stirling

FK8 1JU

Helpline: 0344 800 84 84

Monday to Thursday

10am to 4:30pm

Friday

10am to 4:00pm

Email: [helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

Website: [www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

The commission works to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality and protect and promote human rights.

The Optima Building  
58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8DU

Telephone: 0845 604 5510 (Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm)

Textphone: 0845 604 5520

Email: [scotlandhelpline@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:scotlandhelpline@equalityhumanrights.com)

Website: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland>

## **Enquire**

Information and advice on provisions for pupils with additional support needs.

Children in Scotland  
Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5EZ

Office Telephone: 0131 337 5050

Helpline: 0345 123 2303

Fax: 0131 337 5050

E-mail: [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk)

Website: [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

## **Social Work Departments**

Social Work Departments are part of the local council and their contact details can be found in your telephone book (listed under the council name), on the local council's website or by contacting your local library or Citizens Advice Bureau.

## **Disability Information Scotland**

Their website provides a database of disability related services available across Scotland.

Thorn House  
5 Rose Street  
Edinburgh  
EH2 2PR

Telephone: 0300 323 9961

[E-mail through the contact form on the Disability Information Scotland website.](#)

Website: [www.disabilityscot.org.uk](http://www.disabilityscot.org.uk)

## General information

### **National Union of Students Scotland**

1 Papermill Wynd,

Edinburgh

EH7 4QL

Tel: 0131 556 6598

E-mail: [mail@nus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:mail@nus-scotland.org.uk)

Website: [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)

## Appendix A: Residency conditions for student support funding

The following information relates to learners taking further education courses at college.

The residency requirements for UK nationals are as follows:

- (i) You must be 'ordinarily resident'\* in Scotland on the first day of the first academic year of the course (this will be the start date of your course).
- (ii) UK nationals must also have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the 3-year period immediately before the start of the course.

There are different rules for asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers, EU nationals and UK nationals who have been living in the European Union. You can contact a student adviser at your college to find out if you meet the residency conditions which make you eligible for financial support.

\* 'Ordinarily resident' means that you, your parent, or your spouse or civil partner live in a country year after year by choice throughout a set period. In most cases, you may not be treated as 'ordinarily resident' in Scotland if your main purpose for being here is to study and you would normally be living somewhere else.

## **Appendix B: Developing your qualifications**

(This section is a written description of the flowchart on page 42 which readers using a screen reader may find useful.)

The flowchart provides information on the main qualifications available in Scotland and the level at which they are placed on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), ranging from levels 1 to 12. It categorises these qualifications into those which can be taken at school, college, university and in the workplace.

Qualifications which can be taken in schools include Standard Grades, Highers and Advanced Highers. Qualifications which can be taken in colleges include National levels 1 to 5, Highers, HNCs and HNDs. Degrees, Master's and Doctorate level courses are usually taken in universities, while SVQs can be taken at college or in the workplace (or by a mix of both college and workplace attendance).

For each qualification, there is a suggested progression route for qualifications which you might want to consider as the next step in your learning path.

### **Qualifications at SCQF level 1:**

This includes National level 1 courses. After completion of this course, you might want to progress to National level 2 (SCQF level 2) and 3 (SCQF level 3).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 2:**

This includes National level 2 courses and Core Skills Units. Upon completion, you might want to progress to National level 3 (SCQF level 3).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 3:**

This includes National level 3 courses, Literacy, Numeracy and Core Skills Units. After completion of a National level 3 course, you might want to progress on to a National level 4 course (SCQF level 4).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 4:**

There are three qualifications available at this level, including National level 4 courses, Literacy, Numeracy and Core Skills Units and SVQ level 1 courses. Upon completion, you might want to move up to a National level 5 course.

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 5:**

There are 3 qualifications available at this level, National level 5, Literacy, Numeracy and Core Skills Units and SVQ level 2. After completion of a National 5 you might want to progress to Highers (SCQF level 6) at either school or college. If you have completed an SVQ level 2 you might want to progress to SVQ level 3 (SCQF level 6).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 6:**

Level 6 includes Highers, Core Skills Units and SVQ level 3. After successfully completing Highers, you could consider several options, including:

- progression to Advanced Highers (SCQF level 7)
- progression to an HNC course (SCQF level 7)
- progression to an HND course (SCQF level 8)
- progression to a degree course (SCQF levels 9 and 10)

After completion of an SVQ level 3 course, you might want to progress to SVQ level 4 (SCQF level 8).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 7:**

There are two qualifications available at SCQF level 7, including Advanced Highers and HNCs. The suggested progression routes for Advanced Highers are similar to Highers (i.e. HNDs or degrees). After successful completion of an HNC, you might want to progress to an HND (SCQF level 8) or a degree level course (SCQF levels 9 and 10).

## **Qualifications at SCQF level 8:**

This includes HNDs and SVQ level 4. After completing an HND, you might want to progress to a degree (SCQF levels 9 and 10). After successful completion of an SVQ level 4 course, you might want to progress to SVQ level 5 (SCQF level 11).

## **Qualifications at SCQF levels 9 and 10:**

Level 9 includes Ordinary degrees and level 10 includes Honours degrees. You can apply to either Ordinary or Honours level in your chosen course, however entrance to Honours level is usually dependent on your performance in your first two years at university.

If you apply for an Ordinary level degree, you might want to progress on to Honours if you achieve the required grades. On completion of an Honours degree, you might want to progress to postgraduate study, such as a Master's level course (SCQF level 11) or a Doctorate (SCQF level 12).

## **Qualifications at SCQF levels 11 and 12:**

Level 11 includes Master's courses (postgraduate level), and SVQ level 5. Level 12 includes Doctorate level qualifications (postgraduate level). After completing a Master's course, you might want to progress to Doctorate level.

For information and advice on the issues discussed within this guide, contact the Lead Scotland Information Service at:

Tel: 0800 999 2568

(Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 2-4pm, Tuesdays & Fridays from 10am-12pm)

Website: <http://www.lead.org.uk/support-for-disabled-people-to-learn/how-we-support-your-learning/free-telephone-helpline/>

E-mail: [info@lead.org.uk](mailto:info@lead.org.uk)

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