Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Office Technologies

Unit code: F7J9 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to use office technologies effectively to support administrative functions. The Unit will be relevant to candidates wishing to enhance their knowledge and skills in the use of ICT in an office context, or who are interested in a career as an administrator or in an administrative environment.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1   Provide recommendations for selecting equipment and software to meet the needs of the administrative function.
2   Investigate and explain the benefits of using e-technologies to carry out administrative tasks.
3   Plan and organise work using electronic tools.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if candidates have some familiarity with administrative functions. This may be demonstrated by possession of the Unit *Administrative Services* (DM3P 11) or equivalent or relevant work experience.

Core Skills: The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Information and Communication Technology, and Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill component of Written Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, and these are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

General information for centres (cont)

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Opportunities for integration of delivery and assessment with other Units in a Group Award may be possible.

Assessment: Evidence can be generated through assessment of a case study or a real work place situation.

An Assessment Exemplar has been produced to show the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Office Technologies

Unit code: F7J9 34

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Outcome 1

Provide recommendations for selecting equipment and software to meet the needs of the administrative function

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Hardware
♦ Software
♦ Network and ICT security
♦ Mobile technologies

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that, in relation to a given scenario, they can:

♦ identify and explain one improvement in relation to hardware, wireless networks and mobile technology within an ICT system.
♦ identify three improvements to software used to carry out the administrative function. An explanation must be provided to justify each choice.
♦ identify four security issues which may arise from using ICT networks and describe the consequences to the organisation of each security issue.
♦ recommend solutions for each identified security issue. An explanation must be provided for each solution.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment could be a report, essay, presentation or business case. There may be opportunities to integrate assessments with the Unit *Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication* (DE3N 34) if the candidate submits a formal report, and the Unit *IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications* (F84C 34) if the candidate submits a presentation. There may be opportunities to assess Outcomes within this Unit using a simulated case study or a real workplace situation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

Outcome 2

Investigate and explain the benefits of using e-technologies to carry out administrative tasks

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦   Uses and benefits of the internet for sourcing information
♦   Advanced internet search methods
♦   Validity of internet resources
♦   Uses and benefits of e-technologies for communication

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦   use two e-technology communication methods and explain how each method helps the administrative function to perform more efficiently.
♦   describe the main benefits of using the internet for sourcing information and explain the main methods to ensure information is valid.
♦   source relevant information from the internet using a range of internet search methods for specific search criteria. Three items of appropriate information relating to the search criteria should be extracted using the following internet search methods:
   —   keyword
   —   key phrase
   —   two Boolean symbols

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates could demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by undertaking a contextualised practical assessment. The candidate could provide hard copy solutions to the tasks presented by the practical assessment and where necessary brief written explanations of how and why tasks were undertaken. Tasks may be linked to Outcome 1 and/or Outcome 3. The tasks can be based on a simulated case study or the production of a portfolio of evidence demonstrating actual performance which may be annotated to explicitly identify any aspects of knowledge and/or skills as necessary.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

Outcome 3

Plan and organise work using electronic tools

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ♦   File Management
- ♦   Planning and prioritisation of tasks
- ♦   Electronic planning tools

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ♦   use file management tools to complete the following:
    — create folder
    — create sub-folder
    — delete folder
    — move folder
    — delete file
    — move file
    — copy files
    — re-name file
    — organise file:
       – by type
       – date
       – size

Each task should be completed once.

Use electronic planning tools to carry out the following tasks:

- ♦   organise a meeting between a minimum of four people
- ♦   plan and prioritise work using a task list involving a minimum of eight tasks

The task list should include start dates and completion dates. Candidates must provide an explanation of the order in which the tasks are presented.

- ♦   set reminders for three tasks, one of which must include a follow-up

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates could demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by undertaking a contextualised practical assessment. The candidate could provide hard copy solutions to the tasks presented by the practical assessment and where necessary brief written explanations of how tasks were undertaken and why. Tasks may be linked to Outcome 1 and/or Outcome 3. The tasks can be based on a simulated case study or the production of a portfolio of evidence demonstrating actual performance which may be annotated to explicitly identify any aspects of knowledge and/or skills as necessary.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F7J9 34

Unit title: Office Technologies

Superclass category: AY

Original date of publication: August 2010

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Office Technologies

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to use office technologies effectively to perform administrative functions. This Unit is mandatory within HNC/HND *Administration and Information Technology* (G9M7 15 and G9M8 16), however it may form part of other Group Awards and can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit.

The content of this Unit should encourage candidates to understand that the use of office technologies is crucial to the modern office environment and to the administrative function. The Unit is about the technologies available to administrators, combined with their practical application.

It is recommended that delivery encourages realistic workplace practices, use of industry standard hardware and software, and should take account of emerging technologies.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

If delivered as part of HNC/HND *Administration and Information Technology* (G9M7 15 or G9M8 16), there are opportunities for integration with the Units — *Office Administration* (F7JA 34), *IT in Business: Spreadsheets* (F84V 34), *IT in Business: Databases* (F84X 34) and *IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications* (F84C 34) to assist in the contextualisation of assessment.

Outcome 1

Candidates are required to provide recommendations for upgrading equipment and software to meet the needs of a given scenario.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

The scenario could include:

Investigating an existing system and identify potential difficulties, for example speed of system, systems crashing or introduction of new technologies. In recommending solutions candidates should be encouraged to research current industry software, hardware and network systems. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the costs and benefits of each improvement and how they will meet the current and identifiable future needs of the organisation. The scenario could include costs of changes to organisational processes, working practices, down time, training time, need to train or recruit new staff and could be adapted to include some of these issues. Candidates should also be encouraged to identify the potential changes to working practices that may or may not improve productivity, flexibility, availability of information across the organisation, use of intranet, new ways of communicating with customers, suppliers and itinerant workers, use of extranet etc

Candidates should make reference to the benefits of network systems to organisations including updating hardware and software. This could include:

♦   Demonstrating awareness of hardware/software requirements to support LANs and WANs
♦   Intranet
♦   Extranet
♦   The uses and benefits of networks
♦   The choice of system and how it would affect cost
♦   Organisational requirements
♦   Working practices
♦   Training

Possible examples could include an organisation considering a move from cable networking to wireless networking. Candidates would then need to consider the issues, benefits, costs etc. of such a course of action. Candidates could be encouraged to research current and emerging technologies and consider the implications of any developments in terms of organisational planning, working practices, training etc. Other examples might include — introduction of mobile technologies, eg PDAs, Blackberries, Notebooks, websites/intranets etc.

Centres should take account of emerging technologies and developments in ICT in providing recommendations for solutions to the issues identified.

The case study scenario could also require candidates to identify and describe security issues and recommend solutions. Appropriate issues could be — inappropriate access, confidentiality or housekeeping. Possible solutions could be back-up, use of passwords, virus guards, firewall, legislation or computer use policies.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

Where candidates are in appropriate employment, they may be able to draw on examples from their own work place to make recommendations in light of current technology. Candidates may need to obtain permission from their employer to use such examples, but where this opportunity exists candidates will benefit from applying their knowledge and skills to a real world situation.

Candidates should be encouraged to seek out their own source of materials which should be clearly referenced in any submission.

Outcome 2

In Outcome 2 candidates are required to demonstrate the benefits of using the internet for administrative work, internet communication methods and use the internet to source information.

This could cover various uses and benefits of the internet, for example, e-commerce and communication. Candidates have to use various internet search techniques including keywords, key phrases and Boolean symbols. This could be assessed by candidates being asked to find specific information and recording the search techniques utilised. This evidence could be generated and also used towards Outcome 1 where candidates are required to identify and explain various aspects of hardware, software or security resources or issues. Candidates could also be assessed by conducting research for other Units and recording the results and search techniques used.

Candidates could provide evidence of communicating with one another as they perform activities throughout the class in the form of emails, chat messages or blogs. Centres could use a checklist detailing the types of examples candidates have used, with annotations to explicitly identify knowledge and/or skills where appropriate. Alternatively, assessment could be by means of screen shots supplemented by a checklist, again with annotations if appropriate.

If assessment is not integrated with other Outcomes or Units, specific tasks can be set, which could again be assessed by screen shots and/or checklists.

Internet communication methods such as email, messaging, intranets, calendar, could also be assessed by candidates justifying the use of these in specific situations.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

Outcome 3

In Outcome 3 candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and use of file management procedures.

The opportunity exists to holistically assess this Outcome with other Units where candidates have the opportunity to perform similar functions which can contribute to the Evidence Requirements of more than one Unit. There may be opportunities to integrate the Evidence Requirements for file management within this Outcome to other Units, eg *IT in Business: Spreadsheets* (F84V 34), *IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications* (F84C 34) and *IT in Business: Databases* (F84X 34)**.** Evidence could be gathered by means of screen shots confirming completion of appropriate tasks supplemented by an assessor checklist. If assessment is not integrated with other Units, tasks for candidates to undertake can be set which can also be evidenced by screenshots supplemented by an assessor checklist.

Candidates are required to understand the importance of planning and prioritising workload by using tools such as action plans and to-do lists. The opportunity exists to integrate assessment with other Units, for example, time management and planning can be linked to Outcome 2 of *Office Administration* (F7JA 34) as it also an effective stress coping strategy.

Candidates should demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of industry standard electronic planning tools, for example — e-diary, task lists/planning, calendar, meetings requests, follow up. New developments in technology should be considered as and when appropriate. The opportunity exists to holistically assess the requirement for candidates to arrange a meeting with Outcome 1 of the Unit *Office Administration* (F7JA 34), where candidates are required to describe an administrative activity related to meetings.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6

In Outcome 1 candidates must evaluate problems within an existing scenario and offer appropriate business solutions and recommendations. Candidates will be required to read, understand and evaluate a set of facts and provide an analysis of them. Candidates will be required to produce evidence of practical recommendations and justifications for change within the scenario. They will be required to produce a document which conveys several items of information in order to provide a recommendation for the business solution. Candidates can meet the Evidence Requirements for both reading and writing components of the *Communication* Core Skill by producing a written report. In doing this, they could provide evidence for the general skills of the reading component — '*Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics'*. The report could allow candidates to demonstrate that they can meet all the specific skills associated with the general skill. The report would present all essential ideas and information in a logical and coherent manner, taking into account the purpose of the report. The report should use a suitable structure, format and layout, making use of layout conventions to achieve its purpose.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Office Technologies

The Core Skill *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5.

Outcome 2 requires candidates to provide information sourced from the internet against a specific search criteria. The general skill for this component is to use *ICT* independently, effectively and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks. The specific skills at level 5 are met for Accessing Information and Providing/Creating Information.

The Core Skill component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6:

The general skill for this component is '*Analyse a complex situation or issue*'. The Evidence Requirements for Outcome 1 require candidates to identify and explain solutions to business problems. This requires candidates to analyse a given scenario then identify problems, provide recommendations with justifications to improve the business system. Candidates could be encouraged to research current standards in use in industry, to identify solutions and to consider the legal implications of their recommendations.

Open learning

All Outcomes are appropriate to Open and Flexible Learning approaches with tutor support. Delivering centres will be responsible for ensuring authenticity of candidates work. If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources may be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**

General information for candidates

Unit title: Office Technologies

This Unit will allow you to develop the knowledge and skills required to use e-technologies effectively within an administrative environment.

In Outcome 1 you will learn about the hardware and software used to support the administrative function and how to identify and recommend improvements to ICT systems within an administrative environment.

In Outcome 2 you will learn how to use the internet effectively and efficiently for administrative and communication purposes, and demonstrate this by sourcing specific information.

In Outcome 3 you will learn about the importance of planning and prioritising your workload, and the ways in which e-technologies can help you achieve this. You will learn to use file management techniques to organise and plan workload.

You may be assessed by practical tasks designed around specific administrative scenarios or problems, and in some cases you will be asked to explain your actions. You will also be required to identify and/or explain various issues surrounding the use of e-technologies to support the administrative function and recommend a solution.

The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Information and Communication Technology, and Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.