Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC Administration and Information Technology (G9M7 15). Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1

Graded Unit code: F8KW 34

Type of Graded Unit: Examination

Assessment Instrument: Closed-book examination

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.

Purpose: This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Administration and Information Technology (G9M7 15):

♦ Demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice
♦ Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding underpinning the technical expertise developed throughout the course
♦ Apply interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role
♦ Demonstrate the knowledge required for progression to employment and higher education

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that candidates should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to these specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

F7JA 34   *Office Administration*
F84C 34   *IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications*
F7J9 34   *Office Technologies*
F84X 34   *IT in Business: Databases*
F84V 34   *IT in Business: Spreadsheets*

General information for centres (cont)

Core Skills: There are no Core Skills embedded within this Graded Unit specification.

Assessment: This examination-based Graded Unit is a timed, closed-book examination. It will consist of an examination of three hours, comprising two question papers — objective response question paper and an extended response question paper. The two papers constitute a single assessment event, however a break may be scheduled between them. If a learner does not pass either paper – or wishes to upgrade – they must re-sit both papers.

Evidence should be generated through assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. The objective response question paper (which is worth 30% of the total marks) is a 45 minute, closed-book examination undertaken in controlled conditions. The extended response question paper (which is worth 70% of the total marks) is a two-hour 15 minute closed-book examination undertaken in controlled conditions.

An assessment exemplar pack and marking guidelines have been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit code: F8KW 34

Graded Unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1

Original date of publication: August 2010

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1

Conditions of assessment

The assessment is based on a closed-book examination lasting three hours. The two papers constitute a single assessment event, however a break may be scheduled between them. If a learner does not pass either paper – or wishes to upgrade – they must re-sit both papers.

If a candidate does not achieve a pass or if a candidate wishes to upgrade, this must be based on a significantly different examination from that given originally. A candidate's grade will be based on his/her achievement on the new assessment event using a significantly different examination, if this results in a higher grade.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and invigilated conditions.

At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of examinations must be ensured.

To achieve a pass in this Graded Unit, the candidate must achieve a minimum mark in each paper, as described in the following table:

Paper	Marks available	Minimum mark
1	30	12
2	70	28

The examination will be marked out of 100. Assessors will aggregate the marks achieved by the candidate to arrive at an overall mark for the examination. Assessors will then assign a grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

♦   A = 70% — 100%
♦   B = 60% — 69%
♦   C = 50% — 59%

If a candidate does not achieve a pass or if a candidate wishes to upgrade, this must be based on a significantly different examination from that given originally. A candidate's grade will be based on his/her achievement on the new assessment event using a significantly different examination, if this results in a higher grade.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and supervised conditions. At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of examinations must be ensured. This is particularly important where centres conduct Paper 1 using electronic means.

All papers should be identified with candidate name, date and start and completion time of assessment.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Instructions for designing the assessment task:

The examination should be designed to assess the candidate's critical knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the specific aims which this Graded Unit is designed to cover. The questions and corresponding marks should be designed in accordance with the ranges indicated in the table that follows. However, the overall total mark for the examination is 100.

Paper 1 — 45 minute closed-book examination — objective response questions (30% − 30 marks)		
Topics	**Level of demand**	**Weighting/Mark Allocation**
Office Administration	Demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice.	(9 questions — 1 mark per question — 9 marks)
Office Technologies		(6 questions — 1 mark per question — 6 marks)
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding underpinning the technical expertise developed throughout the Units.	(15 questions — 1 mark per question — 15 marks)
IT in Business: Databases		
IT in Business: Spreadsheets		
Objective response questions must be sufficiently challenging to meet the demand of a SCQF level 7 qualification. Objective response questions will be limited to two types: Multiple Choice (MC) — a stem, followed by one correct answer and three distractors. Multiple Response (MR) — a stem, followed by four statements, where two or more statements match the question, together with distractors. In the Multiple Response Question, the candidate must select all the correct statements in order to gain the mark. The balance of MC and MR questions should be MC 66% and MR 33% but be sufficiently varied so that candidates cannot anticipate how the questions are constructed from one paper to another. All questions should be presented as a stem and a choice of four possible options. The correct answer may include the selection of one or more options.		

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Paper 2 — 2 hour 15 minute closed-book examination — extended response (70% – 70 marks)		
Topics	**Level of demand**	**Weighting/ Mark Allocation**
Part A — Mandatory (40 marks)		

Office Administration
 	
Office Technologies
 	
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications
 	
IT in Business: Databases
 	
IT in Business: Spreadsheets
	Candidates will assume the role of Administrator Office Supervisor and will be presented with a short, realistic business problem. In their response they should demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained from the mandatory Units noted here in answering this question. Their response should be structured in a coherent and logical manner where they identify the key issues, the consequences of ignoring them and make appropriate and realistic recommendations. One question must be based on Office Administration and at least two others from the Units listed.
	
	The question should comprise: background information, scenario, task and guidance.
	
	Marks to include:
	
	♦ Accuracy of content — 25 marks
	
	♦ Structure of essay — 5 marks:
	  — logical flow (1 mark)
	  — evidence of attempt to write a holistic essay, ie ability to take concepts and develop them using knowledge and skills gained from a range of mandatory Units (1 mark)
	  — clear essay structure with introduction; development of argument and a conclusion (1 mark for each aspect)
	
	Structure of essay does not include spelling, grammar or handwriting.
	
	Creativity/Innovation/Reading/Research — 10 marks
	
	The candidate may describe a novel but realistic approach to a problem; an innovative response to a problem; give evidence of wider reading or evidence of personal research thus taking the response from a rehearsed academic approach and moving it onto a realistic and relatively unique application of theory to practice. Evidence of such should be awarded up to a maximum of 10 marks.
	
	Assessors should allocate whole marks only — no half marks are permitted.
		(40 marks)

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Paper 2 — 2 hour 15 minute closed-book examination — extended response (70% – 70 marks)		
Topics	**Level of demand**	**Weighting/ Mark Allocation**
Part B – Two questions from a choice of three (30 marks)		
Question 1		
Office Administration Office Technologies	The benefits of IT in business communication.	(15 marks)
Question 2		
Office Administration IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications Office Technologies IT in Business: Databases IT in Business: Spreadsheets	Use of IT to improve working practices within the administrative function.	(15 marks)
Question 3		
Office Administration IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications Office Technologies IT in Business: Databases IT in Business: Spreadsheets	The role of the Administrator/Office Supervisor in a modern business environment.	(15 marks)
The last three questions are intended to sample across the listed Units for each question. The sampling of Units should vary from paper to paper in such a way that the candidate cannot identify the Units likely to be assessed. **Each question will begin with a brief scenario followed by one or more questions based on that scenario.** Assessors should allocate whole marks only — no half marks are permitted.		

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as a C (competent), A (highly competent), or B (somewhere between A and C). The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table:

Grade A	Grade C
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work or exam script which consistently:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work or exam script which:
♦ interprets and understands the question in a way which demonstrates insight and clear understanding of issues and relationships	♦ interprets and understands the question in a way which enables the candidate to meet the basic criteria required
♦ answers demonstrate a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of relevant information	♦ answers demonstrate an acceptable but limited analysis, evaluation and explanation of the question and other relevant information
♦ responses are logically structured and coherently expressed demonstrating consistent use of correct terminology	♦ responses are uneven and convey acceptable but limited understanding, although some relevant points are made
is clear and well structured throughout with language and terminology used of a consistently high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content	♦ is satisfactorily structured and language and terminology used is adequate although not always consistent in terms of level, accuracy and technical content
♦ consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills linking concepts and ideas and relating answers explicitly to the question	♦ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but may lack continuity and consistency and fail to show clear links to concepts and ideas
♦ convincingly argues and shows links between discussions and conclusions demonstrating comprehensive knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation skills	♦ argues and justifies conclusions in an acceptable way but conclusions may lack reasoned understanding, may not link well to discussions and may show acceptable but limited knowledge
♦ provides evidence of possible alternative approaches and arguments as well as understanding of different interpretations	♦ is likely to show only one approach and acceptable but limited understanding of different interpretations

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Support notes

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.

This Unit is designed to assess the candidate's ability to integrate knowledge across a range of mandatory Units within the HNC Administration and Information Technology, focusing on the following objectives:

♦ Demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice
♦ Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding underpinning the technical expertise developed throughout the course
♦ Apply interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role
♦ Demonstrate the knowledge required for progression to employment and higher education

The notional 40 hours could be used to extend the candidate's ability to present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are routine to the subject discipline.

Paper 1 (Objective Response) — Candidates should be able to demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice, for the Units noted in Instructions for Designing the Assessment Task.

Paper 2 (Extended Response) — Candidates will assume the role of Administrator/Office Supervisor and will be presented with:

♦ Mandatory question, with brief scenario, to enable the candidate to demonstrate integration and application of skills and knowledge acquired throughout the Group Award. Credit for innovation, extended reading, and practical examples will be given in this question.

♦ Choice of two questions from three. Each of the three questions will have a theme but should only sample from the Units listed in the Instructions for Designing the Assessment Task, therefore there is flexibility in the design of assessment instruments.

This Unit is designed to develop the skills and competencies required of an Administrative/Office Supervisor. The Unit should build skills and competencies that meet the criteria of SCQF level 7 together with the ability to present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are routine to the subject discipline.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

This Unit will give centres the opportunity to show candidates how the mandatory Units in the Group Award are integrated. In the delivery of this Unit candidates should be encouraged to explore contemporary issues relating to new and emerging administrative practice. This could be achieved by case studies, reading, internet research and discussion. As part of the preparation for the Graded Unit Examination, centres could consider examination technique and terminology and the structure and presentation of written responses.

Preparation for the Graded Unit should feature in the delivery of the mandatory Units noted in this Unit specification.

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

The Graded Unit is designed to integrate the apply knowledge across a range of mandatory Units for the HNC Administration and Information Technology (G9M7 15). The award is designed to develop skills and underpinning knowledge associated with the role of administrative supervisor and reflects modern business practice and the importance of Information and Communication Technology as a tool to enhance this function.

The first question paper (45 minutes) requires you to answer 30 objective response questions based on the following Units:

F7JA 34 *Office Administration*
F84C 34 *IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications*
F7J9 34 *Office Technologies*
F84X 34 *IT in Business: Databases*
F84V 34 *IT in Business: Spreadsheets*

The second question paper (2 hours 15 minutes) requires you to write **three** extended responses based on stimulus material across the above Units.

You will be encouraged to read extensively and reference all sources in any work submitted. Marks will be awarded for evidence of extended reading, innovative solutions and appropriate examples to illustrate the concepts developed.

You will be required to achieve a minimum mark in each paper to pass the Graded Unit as a whole, at least 12 marks from an available 30 in Paper 1, and at least 28 marks from a possible 70 in Paper 2. The overall pass mark is 50 out of 100, therefore achieving the minimum acceptable pass mark in each paper does not guarantee achievement of the Unit as a whole.

Successful achievement of the Unit will be graded based on the final mark attained as follows:

♦ Grade A: 70–100%
♦ Grade B: 60–69%
♦ Grade C: 50–59%

This grade will apply only to the Graded Unit and not to the Group Award as a whole.