Scottish Certificate of Education

Standard Grade Arrangements in Administration

Foundation, General and Credit Levels in and after 2001

March 1999

Contents

Introduction

In March 1998 the Scottish Qualifications Authority, in response to requests from centres, established a Working Group with the remit of revising and updating the Standard Grade Office and Information Studies course to enable full progression into the proposed Higher Still courses in Administration. The Business Studies and Economics Subject Panel was acutely aware of the current demands on teachers' time incorporating existing developments in business education, including 5-14 Environmental Studies, the introduction of the new Standard Grade Business Management and the implementation of Higher Still courses. It was felt, however, that to delay the revision of what was increasingly deemed to be an outdated course, particularly in the use of information and communications technology (ICT), would be unacceptable.

In November 1998, the proposed arrangements for Standard Grade Administration at Foundation, General and Credit Levels were issued to interested bodies for comment. In preparing the finalised Arrangements, the Business Studies and Economics Subject Panel, with the assistance of the Development Officer, took account of the observations received and amended the proposals.

The Standard Grade examination in Administration at Foundation, General and Credit Levels will be offered in and after 2001. The examination will be based on the syllabus and assessment arrangements set out in this document.

1   Rationale

Business and enterprise are essential elements in any nation's drive to ensure economic growth and security for its citizens. By studying Standard Grade Administration, pupils will have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge which will allow them to access, understand and contribute to the dynamic and complex business and information environment that is the world of work.

Irrespective of the size or complexity of an organisation there are a range of administrative functions which must be undertaken if that organisation is to successfully achieve its aims. The key role of administration is to provide support or services to underpin operations and decision making as well as to design, operate and evaluate systems for that organisation's activities. These functions, undertaken by staff who are competent in managing information, are essential to allow effective communication, decision making and control to happen.

The study of Administration will allow pupils to develop skills in problem solving and decision making. They will be required to look critically at a range of business and technological problems, to identify the most appropriate solutions and to plan for their successful implementation. As pupils work towards solving each problem they will be encouraged to review and evaluate the success or otherwise of their actions. The development of numeracy skills will also be encouraged and strengthened as pupils come up with 'best value' solutions to business and information communication problems.

Throughout the course pupils will develop skills in oral and written communication as they research, process and communicate business information in response to challenges set for them.

Administration seeks to use technology to develop the skills associated with the processing and communication of business information. The course emphasises the increasing role that information communications technology (ICT) plays in facilitating and underpinning the activities of all organisations. Pupils will be required to develop competence in the use of a range of software packages within a business environment and to use these packages to research, evaluate, communicate and summarise information in an effective way. The use of hardware and software, comparable to that used in business, will facilitate the transfer of skills from the classroom to the workplace.

Today's organisations expect individuals to be able to operate independently. They also expect them to be able to come together as and when necessary to work with others as part of a team for the good of the organisation.

Whatever career pathway is chosen by individual pupils, the study of Administration will provide them with useful and transferable skills which will enhance their individual effectiveness and prepare them for the next stage in their academic or vocational education or to enter the world of work.

2   Aims of Administration

2 1   Administration aims to develop the skills and knowledge associated with the processing and communication of business information.

2 2   The principal aims of the course are to

develop a knowledge and understanding of the nature and importance of administration

develop a knowledge and understanding of the administrative processes which support business

develop an awareness of the importance of information within and between businesses and develop competence in using a range of ICT
(core skill - Information Technology)

develop ICT skills in processing business information to solve problems and reach decisions
(core skills - Information Technology, Problem Solving)

develop skills in producing a variety of business documents to a standard accepted by business

develop personal effectiveness
- by adopting an orderly and systematic approach to work
- by demonstrating and maintaining good working practices

develop the ability to identify and apply methods for planning and organising work schedules
(core skill - Problem Solving)

develop safe working practices and an awareness and understanding of the health and safety practices in employment

provide a foundation for progression to Intermediate or Higher courses in Administration and other related courses and to provide a foundation for future education, training and work.

2 3   Core Skills

A Final Statement will be provided when validation procedures are complete.

3   Elements of Administration

3 1   Introduction

The Standard Grade Administration course is designed to enable pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of administration and to develop the ability to use information and communications technology to process information.

The knowledge, skills and practical applications contained within the course objectives are Knowledge and Understanding, Problem Solving and Practical Abilities.

3 2   The Assessable Elements

The assessable elements of the course are:

3 2 1   *Knowledge and Understanding*

Knowledge and Understanding is concerned with demonstrating the ability to recall, describe and explain facts and concepts related to aspects of administration.

3 2 2   *Problem Solving*

Problem Solving is concerned with demonstrating in a variety of contexts, the ability to select, organise, interpret and use information to address problems and issues related to the business environment.

3 2 3   *Practical Abilities*

Practical Abilities is concerned with demonstrating in a variety of ways the ability to recognise, select and interpret administrative procedures in order to complete given tasks.

Practical Abilities evaluates the ability to follow procedures for analysing, organising, communicating and transmitting information in an accurate and logical manner.

3 2 4   Throughout the course it is essential that pupils are provided with learning experiences which will enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding of administrative support and ICT, their problem-solving skills and their ability to apply the knowledge and skills to practical tasks.

3 2 5   Assessment for national certification will be based on Knowledge and Understanding, Problem Solving and Practical Abilities.

4   Course Content

Administration is set in the context of the modern business environment and pupils will benefit from learning within this context. It is important that administrative procedures reflect current business practice. It is envisaged that throughout the course a realistic approach will be taken so that pupils learn how to work effectively by integrating their knowledge and skills to solve administrative problems. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the interaction between the 2 Areas of Study and not see the course as a series of separate topics.

Administration focuses on the ways in which information is accessed, processed and communicated in the business environment through the use of ICT.

Communication skills should permeate the whole course. This could be achieved by pupils communicating orally with peers, teachers and other adults in a logical and effective manner.

To reflect the vocational bias, emphasis must be placed on the presentation of information in a form appropriate to its purpose. Throughout the course pupils, whether working individually or with others, should be encouraged to produce work to the standard of accuracy, quality and presentation required to provide a finished article that is fit for purpose.

4 1   Areas of Study

Administration focuses on 2 Areas of Study. These are identified as:

- Administrative Support
- Information and Communications Technology

Pupils will be expected to cover both Areas of Study.

4 1 1   *Area of Study 1: Administrative Support*

Area of Study 1 considers and evaluates in depth the role of the administrative services which provide the support essential for the effective operation of a business organisation.

4 1 2   *Area of Study 2: Information and Communications Technology*

Area of Study 2 covers the skills and techniques required to successfully handle the storage, processing, retrieval and presentation of information to support business administration through the use of a variety of business software applications.

Pupils should be given opportunities to learn about the importance of ICT to demonstrate effective communication within and between organisations.

It is essential that knowledge and skills are integrated within both Areas of Study.

Throughout the Areas of Study emphasis must be placed on demonstrating good working practices, consistent implementation of house style, using equipment in accordance with instructions, maintaining workstations, identification of hazards and observing health and safety procedures.

Area of Study 1: Administrative Support

	Foundation Level	**General Level***	**Credit Level***
1 Introduction to Business Organisations **a** organisation of departments	• purpose of organisation charts • interpretation of organisation charts	• awareness of levels of responsibility • chains of command	• understanding line and lateral relationships • effects of organisational restructuring on an organisation chart
	Candidates will not be expected to construct complete organisation charts at any Level BUT at Credit Level they may be asked to construct a section of an organisation chart		
b key functions of departments within an organisation	A brief outline of 4 departments: Personnel/Human Resources, Finance, Purchases, Sales – including key personnel and key tasks. Candidates should also have an awareness of the other departments within an organisation.		
	Section 1 is designed to present a brief introduction to the course		

*Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)

Area of Study 1: Administrative Support (continued)

	Foundation Level	General Level *	Credit Level *
2 The Working Environment			
a office layout	• different types of office layout • appropriate furniture	• layouts for different activities • layout of work stations	• evaluation of different layouts • implications for management
b safe working practices and procedures	• potential hazards • first aid requirements • display screen regulations • working environment • emergency and evacuation procedures	• awareness of provisions of the main health and safety legislation • responsibilities of employer and employee	
		Candidates will not be expected to *detail* the main provisions of health and safety legislation	
c reception services	• reception should reflect the image of the organisation • reception duties	• layouts and features • reporting and dealing with problems security systems eg swipecards, CCTV, combination locks, ID	•procedures which organisations may use to deal with security problems
d mail handling	• internal and external mail (including e-mail and fax)	• choice of appropriate methods of sending different types of internal and external mail	•justification of choice

*Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)

Area of Study 1: Administrative Support (continued)

	Foundation Level	General Level *	Credit Level *
3 Storage and Retrieval of Information **a** purpose of filing	• storage and retrieval		
b methods	• alphabetical, numerical, chronological • electronic and manual methods	• when to use different methods	• evaluation and justification of methods
	A detailed knowledge of indexing rules is not required. **Pupils have to be able to use and access files to extract information, amend and input data.**		
c security of information	• use of password • care of discs • user access	• back-up procedures	• Data Protection Act
	A knowledge of security and confidentiality principles for the storage and retrieval of information will be required **but not the detail of legislation**		

4 Reprographics	• features of equipment:
	eg photocopier
	   laminator
	   binder
	   scanner
	   DTP
	   printers
		• choice of appropriate equipment for different tasks	• effects of choice eg staff training
			• in-house versus external agencies

*Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)

Area of Study 1: Administrative Support (continued)

	Foundation Level	**General Level ***	**Credit Level ***
	Reference sources for Sections 5 and 6 will be the same at all Levels of the course The complexity of the task which the candidates are required to complete changes at each Level		
5 Sources of Information paper-based electronic	• identify, access and extract information	• interpret information	
6 Preparation and Presentation of Information	• charts • graphs • forms	• memos • itineraries	• reports

7 Travel
 	
a arrangements
 	
b paying for travel
	• arrange a business trip eg dates, mode of
	  transport, numbers, venues
	• completion of travel documents
	  eg itinerary, booking form
	
	• payment for travel eg cash, cheque, credit
	  card, debit card
	• expense claim form
			• evaluation of arrangements

**Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)*

Area of Study 2: Information and Communications Technology

The ability to locate, input, edit and print data from existing files, and to create, amend, update and present information from a variety of software applications is essential. Access to business-standard computer hardware and software reflecting business practice will be necessary.

At all levels of ICT pupils should be provided with learning experiences which will enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding and practical skills in ICT.

	Foundation Level	General Level *	Credit Level *
	When using computers, loading, recalling, amending, saving and producing printed data should follow specific procedures.		
1 Communications telephone voicemail intranet internet e-mail fax pagers public address teletext electronic diary paper	• within and between businesses • appropriate uses • retrieve specified information	• choice for specific purpose • identify where problems may occur • locate appropriate information	• effective communication • suggest appropriate uses • recognise advantages/disadvantages • make appropriate use of information
2 Databases	• create simple database – minimum 6 fields – text, number • minimum 10 records • add, delete, edit record • search on one field • sort on one field	• create database – minimum 8 fields – text, number, date, £ • minimum 10 records • add and delete field • search on more than one field • sort on more than one field	• create database - minimum 10 fields • minimum 10 records • import into text document including mail merge
3 File Management	• simple organisation of files and folders	• move files between folders	

*Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)

Area of Study 2: Information and Communications Technology (continued)

	Foundation Level	General Level *	Credit Level *
4 Spreadsheets			
a create	• simple spreadsheet, text and numbers	• insert row/column • format – currency, date, percentage	• import into text document • format – cell height, cell width, font, alignment, style, borders
b use functions	• within a single cell add or subtract or sum	• within a single cell divide or multiply or percentage • replicate formula	• within a single cell use combined formulae • absolute references • sort data
c edit		• move cell	
	• change cell content		
d print	• value/formula view		• print range • print with/without rows and column headings • print with/without gridlines
5 Word Processing	**A full range of common business documents - letters, memos, forms, notices, reports, itineraries - should provide the context The Level is determined by the complexity of the formatting skills and the size of the task**		
a produce text – enter 　　　　edit 　　　　proof read and 　　　　correct	• single page	• multiple pages	
b format - margins 　　　line spacing 　　　highlighting 　　　tabulation 　　　justification	• default margins • default line spacing • bold, italics, underline • single default tab • full, centre, left • insert graphic	• set margins • set line spacing • change font, font size • set left, decimal tab • right • headers, footers • page break, page numbers	• change margins within text • change line spacing within text • select style • set right, centre tab • use bullet points • use borders • number from page 2

*Each Level subsumes the lower Level(s)

5 Assessment for Certification

5 1 Certification

Candidates will be assessed by a system common to all Levels.

The Certificate will record an overall award on a 7-point scale of grades, grade 1 being the highest. The Certificate will also record attainment in each assessable element. The overall award will be derived from the mean of the element grades, with the elements being weighted Knowledge and Understanding 30%, Problem Solving 30% and Practical Abilities 40%.

5 2 Pattern of Assessment

Grades in Knowledge and Understanding and in Problem Solving will be based on external assessment, using written examination papers.

Grades in Practical Abilities will be based on the external assessment of a series of integrated tasks. To ensure conformity with national standards, the Practical Abilities will be externally set and externally marked.

5 3 External Assessment of Knowledge and Understanding and Problem Solving

Three external papers designated as Foundation, General and Credit will be offered as follows:

Paper	Grades Assessed	Time Allocation
Foundation	6, 5	1 hour
General	4, 3	1¼ hours
Credit	2, 1	1½ hours

In all papers the elements Knowledge and Understanding and Problem Solving will be assessed with equal weighting being given to each element, although the total of marks allocated to each element within a paper may differ. A variety of question types may be used and candidates will be expected to attempt all questions.

The questions set will sample the Areas of Study. Questions will be set in relation to the Extended Grade Related Criteria for a particular Level in each element.

Marks will be allocated to each question and a total mark obtained for each element. The 2 grades associated with each Level will be distinguished by setting 2 cut-off scores. The lower score will reflect a satisfactory overall standard of performance, the upper score a high overall standard of performance.

5 4 Assessment of Practical Abilities

Practical Abilities will be assessed by means of a series of related tasks designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, problem solving and practical skills. These tasks will be set within a realistic context using the full range of business and ICT resources available in today's business environment. The tasks will be issued to centres by SQA.

5 4 1   *The Role of the Teacher*

    a   Preparing for Practical Abilities

            The teacher is responsible for providing opportunities for pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake the tasks. Such opportunities will require careful planning and should be integrated throughout the course.

    b   External Assessment of Practical Abilities

            Centres will be required to submit materials for assessment for each candidate for Practical Abilities. Attainment will be measured against the stated EGRC.

            Three sets of tasks will be provided by the SQA, one at each of the 3 Levels, Foundation, General and Credit. Each of these sets of tasks will be designed to be undertaken after the candidates have had the opportunity to acquire the skills in ICT identified in the Course Content. Each set of tasks should be completed within 15-20 hours of class time. Teachers should monitor the progress of candidates throughout the completion of the Practical Abilities to confirm that the appropriate Level is being undertaken.

            Practical Abilities tasks must be completed by the individual candidate concerned. Where a candidate is experiencing difficulty, **clarification** is perfectly acceptable. This may take the form **only** of "a point in the right direction", and/or reference to notes/appropriate text. **No other assistance should be given.**

            The task materials must not be taken out of school.

            The SQA will issue these sets of tasks for Practical Abilities assessment at the beginning of the second year of the course at which time teachers and candidates should be in a position to determine which Level of task is appropriate.

5 4 2   *Submission of Assessments*

The completed tasks for each candidate should be submitted by the due date in the year in which the external examination is taken. The SQA will issue appropriate forms for recording and submitting assessment tasks.

5 4 3   *Relationship between Levels and grades*

Grades will be awarded by SQA examiners to each candidate's project based on the percentage of available marks, as shown in the following table:

Percentage of available marks	Foundation Level	General Level	Credit Level
75-100	5	3	1
50-74	6	4	2
40-49	7	5	3
0-39	7	7*	7*

*Grades 6 and 4 are not available at General and Credit Levels respectively.

Normally where a candidate achieves:

- 75% or more of the total marks allocated to the project, the upper of the two grades appropriate to the Level will be awarded, ie grade 1 at Credit Level, grade 3 at General Level and grade 5 at Foundation Level
- between 50% and 74% of the total marks allocated to the project, the lower of the two grades will be awarded, ie grade 2 at Credit Level, grade 4 at General Level and grade 6 at Foundation Level
- between 40% and 49% of the total marks allocated to the projects at Credit level and General Level there is provision for the award of grade 3 at Credit Level and grade 5 at General Level
- less than 50% of the total marks allocated to the project at Foundation Level, grade 7 will be awarded
- less than 40% of the total marks allocated to the projects at Credit Level and General Level, grade 7 will be awarded

5 5   Presentations for External Papers in Knowledge and Understanding and Problem Solving

Candidates presented for the examination may attempt the written papers at 2 adjacent Levels, ie Foundation and General or General and Credit, but may not attempt both the Foundation and Credit Level papers. Candidates are not obliged to attempt papers at 2 Levels but are strongly advised to do so, since, other than as the result of an appeal, candidates can only be awarded one of the grades assessed by the paper(s) attempted, or grade 7 for the element(s) concerned.

Candidates who attempt papers at 2 Levels will be awarded the better of the 2 grades achieved on these papers. Performance at one Level will not be taken into account in grading at the other Level.

5 6   Estimates

Presenting centres must submit to the SQA, by 31 March of the year of the examination, an estimate grade for each candidate for Knowledge and Understanding, Problem Solving and Practical Abilities. The teacher should determine the estimate grades on the basis of each candidate's actual work. Estimates may be used by the SQA for its internal procedures, including such cases as absence from the external examinations, adverse circumstances and appeal. Evidence in support of these estimates should be retained by centres for submission to the SQA if required. The evidence must be sufficient to support the estimates submitted and should therefore represent an adequate sample of the Extended Grade Related Criteria for the Areas of Study. For each piece of evidence, the element being assessed and the grade awarded should be clearly indicated.

5 7   Grade 7 and No Overall Award

For any element, grade 7 will indicate that the candidate has, in the element concerned, completed the course but has not demonstrated achievement of any specified level of performance as defined by the Grade Related Criteria.

The SQA will regard the submission of an estimate grade for an externally assessed element as evidence that the course has been completed in that element.

Candidates who have not complied with the assessment requirements in any element (eg due to unauthorised absence from the external examination or failure to submit Practical Abilities materials for assessment) will be deemed not to have completed the course, in that element. Such candidates will not receive a grade for that element and hence will not receive an overall award for the subject. In such cases, however, if a grade is gained for any other element, that grade will be recorded on the Certificate.

6 Grade Related Criteria

6 1 Definition

Grade Related Criteria (GRC) are positive descriptions of performance against which a candidate's achievement is measured. Direct comparisons are not made between the performance of one candidate and that of another.

6 2 Application of GRC

GRC are defined at 3 Levels of performance: Foundation, General and Credit.

Awards will be reported on 6 grades, 2 grades being distinguished at each Level. The upper of the 2 grades at a given Level will be awarded to candidates who meet the stated criteria demonstrating a high standard of performance; the lower grade to those who demonstrate a lower, but still satisfactory standard of performance. Special arrangements apply to Practical Abilities (see 5 4 3).

There will be a seventh grade for candidates who complete the course but fail to meet the criteria for any Level.

6 3 Types of GRC

Summary GRC are broad descriptions of performance. They are published as an aid to the interpretation of the profile of attainment by candidates, parents, employers and other users of the Certificate.

Extended GRC are more detailed descriptions of performance. They are intended to assist teachers in identifying targets for course construction, and in making assessments for each element and by examiners when conducting external assessment. In determining performance at the 3 Levels it is important to take account of the degree of complexity of sources and the extent, accuracy and sophistication of explanation offered by the candidate.

6 4 Knowledge and Understanding - Summary GRC

Foundation Level   (grades 6, 5)

The candidate has demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of a limited range of the course content in a variety of straightforward contexts.

General Level   (grades 4, 3)

The candidate has demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the course content in a variety of contexts.

Credit Level   (grades 2, 1)

The candidate has demonstrated extensive knowledge and understanding of the course content in a variety of complex contexts.

6 5 Problem Solving - Summary GRC

Foundation Level   (grades 6, 5)

In business contexts, the candidate has demonstrated ability to identify and apply information to reach conclusions and devise solutions in relation to straightforward problems.

General Level   (grades 4, 3)

In business contexts, the candidate has demonstrated ability to identify, analyse and apply information to reach conclusions and devise appropriate solutions to more complex problems.

Credit Level   (grades 2, 1)

In business contexts, the candidate has demonstrated ability to identify problems. They are able to organise the information, evaluate it and apply this information to reach sophisticated conclusions. They are then able to devise a solution to the problems and justify it.

6 6 Practical Abilities - Summary GRC

Foundation Level   (grades 6, 5)

The candidate has demonstrated ability to follow appropriate procedures to complete a variety of simple administrative tasks using appropriate business software.

General Level   (grades 4, 3)

The candidate has demonstrated ability to identify and follow appropriate procedures to complete a variety of administrative tasks using appropriate business software.

Credit Level   (grades 2, 1)

The candidate has demonstrated ability to identify and follow appropriate procedures to complete a variety of complex administrative tasks using appropriate business software.

6 7 Descriptions of Grades

These describe performance within Levels. They apply to each element.

Grade 6   The candidate has met the criteria for Foundation Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

Grade 5   The candidate has met the criteria for Foundation Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

Grade 4   The candidate has met the criteria for General Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

Grade 3   The candidate has met the criteria for General Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

Grade 2   The candidate has met the criteria for Credit Level, demonstrating a satisfactory overall standard of performance.

Grade 1   The candidate has met the criteria for Credit Level, demonstrating a high overall standard of performance.

6 8   Knowledge and Understanding - Extended GRC

Foundation Level (grades 6, 5)	General Level (grades 4, 3)	Credit Level (grades 2, 1)

In relation to the course content detailed in the 2 Areas of Study, the candidate can:

a identify[1] and describe[2] the role and functions of administration within a variety of straightforward contexts

in addition, identify[1] and describe[2] a range of administrative concepts and functions in a variety of contexts

in addition, identify[1] and describe[2] a wide range of administrative concepts and functions in a variety of complex contexts

b use administrative concepts to interpret[3] and explain[4] straightforward administrative situations

use administrative concepts to interpret[3] and explain[4] administrative situations

use administrative concepts to interpret[3] and explain[4] in depth administrative situations

in order to demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding of administrative functions and concepts.

Notes:

[1]   identify   -   recall and state facts

[2]   describe   -   highlight the main features

[3]   interpret   -   understand and bring out the meaning

[4]   explain   -   give reasons for main features

6 9   Problem Solving - Extended GRC

Foundation Level (grades 6, 5)	General Level (grades 4, 3)	Credit Level (grades 2, 1)

In relation to the course content outlined in the 2 Areas of Study, the candidate can:

	Foundation Level (grades 6, 5)	General Level (grades 4, 3)	Credit Level (grades 2, 1)
a	in relation to a basic problem, select from a limited range of information and reach a conclusion	in addition, identify problems, suggest and apply information to reach conclusions	in addition, identify and analyse problems, evaluate and apply information to reach conclusions
b	devise straightforward solutions to given administrative problems	devise and explain appropriate solutions to administrative problems	devise and justify appropriate solutions to a range of administrative problems.

6 10   Practical Abilities - Extended GRC

Foundation Level (grades 6, 5)	General Level (grades 4, 3)	Credit Level (grades 2, 1)

In relation to the course outlined in the 2 Areas of Study, for the appropriate Level the candidate can:

|	Foundation Level (grades 6, 5)	General Level (grades 4, 3)	Credit Level (grades 2, 1)
	complete a variety of basic administrative tasks by using electronic and manual means to:	in addition, complete a variety of administrative tasks by using electronic and manual means to:	in addition, complete a variety of complex administrative tasks by using electronic and manual means to:
a	plan and carry out practical activities with the aid of step-by-step instructions	plan and carry out practical activities with the aid of detailed instructions	plan and carry out practical activities with the aid of outline instructions
b	produce practical solutions to activities using given procedures	produce practical solutions to activities by identifying and using procedures	produce practical solutions to activities by devising, using and evaluating procedures

Course Planning

Planning and preparation are essential to the successful delivery of Administration.

- The content identified in the Areas of Study provides guidance regarding course construction. Teachers should bear in mind that the course must provide opportunities for pupils to practise their information-handling and problem-solving skills within practical work.

- It is essential that pupils should be given opportunities to acquire the knowledge and understanding and skills through appropriate learning and teaching.

- Differentiation may be provided through variation in learning and teaching approaches or be based on outcomes measured against the Extended Grade Related Criteria.

- It is recommended that, where possible, the Areas of Study are integrated rather than taught as separate elements. A contextualised approach should emphasise the integrative nature of administrative work and the importance of using ICT to provide learning experiences through the imaginative and enterprising application of knowledge and skills.

- Teachers and pupils alike should appreciate that their subject is continually changing and so the importance of keeping up to date with current developments and practice related to the subject matter and resources used is essential.

Learning and Teaching

1 The aims and objectives of the course should be met through appropriate learning and teaching experiences derived from activities which will develop pupils' knowledge and understanding and applied practical and problem-solving skills. To reflect the integrative and practical nature of administration in the business context pupils should be given the opportunity to undertake the course in a realistic and holistic way. Learning and teaching approaches should emphasise that administration is at the heart of any organisation as the following diagram illustrates.
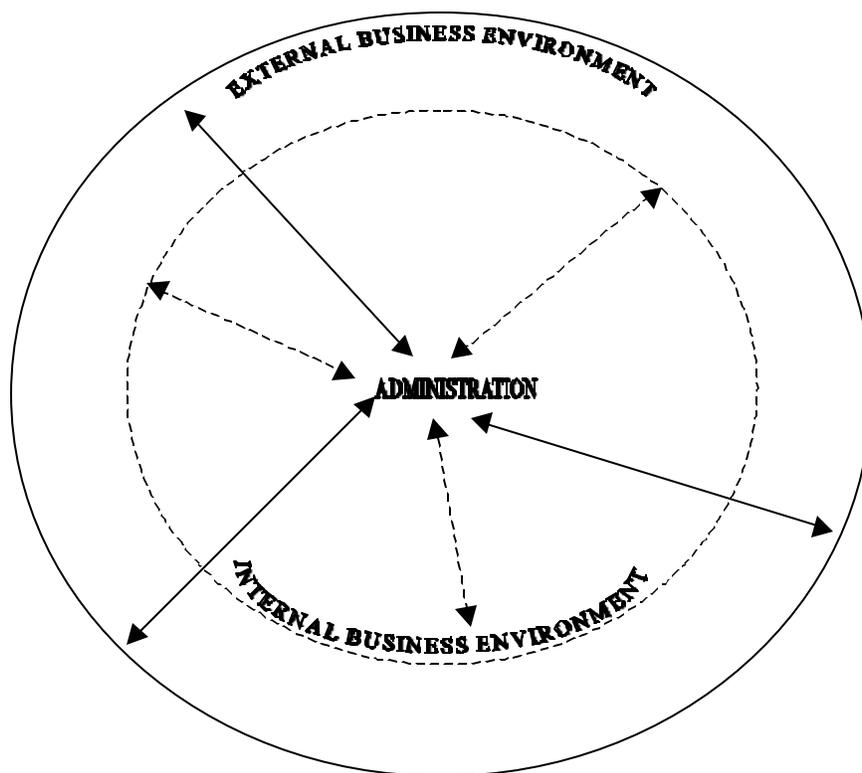
-------   transfer of information within an organisation
_____   transfer of information to the external business environment

The teacher will play a crucial role in the classroom in ensuring that all pupils have a valuable learning experience and make progress. The pupil-centred, active learning approach advocated requires sound management skills in planning, monitoring, recording and controlling on the part of the teacher. Classroom management should take account of the variety of learning approaches and experiences recommended and the need for differentiation of work within a common course.

Teachers should not underestimate their role in, and the value of, class and group lessons. This is particularly relevant in matters such as the introduction of topics, revision, reinforcement, generating group morale and cohesion and speeding the pace of learning.

The Grade Related Criteria give guidance on appropriate levels of understanding of Problem Solving and Practical Abilities. Learning and teaching approaches should reflect the practical and integrative nature of the course.

The Administration course offers the opportunity to use a wide range of learning and teaching approaches both within a single lesson and/or during a series of lessons.

2   Suggestions for Learning and Teaching Experiences

Learning and Teaching experiences should allow pupils to:

- have the opportunity to work individually and assume individual responsibility
- have the opportunity to work cooperatively and assume shared responsibility
- operate within a simulated administrative environment
- work in a well-ordered but relaxed atmosphere
- take responsibility for aspects of their own learning
- prioritise and work within deadlines
- acquire, understand and apply knowledge
- identify, solve and apply solutions to a problem
- create and present appropriate output
- achieve their full potential
- be involved in assessing their own work and the work of others
- build self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities
- regularly review their learning and identify strengths and development needs
- make links with their existing knowledge and experience
- be motivated and enjoy their experience
- provide evidence of performance in the 3 assessable elements.

In order to accommodate the needs of different learners, it is important to use a variety of learning and teaching approaches. The following table provides some examples of this:

Type of Learner	Learning and Teaching Techniques
Pupils whose preferred learning style is through visual images will benefit from:	• videos appropriate to content • flow charts of organisational procedures • graphs, charts, tables, posters and other visual displays • highlighted key words and key terms

Type of Learner	Learning and Teaching Techniques
pupils whose preferred learning style involves verbal communication will benefit from:	• role-play • group discussion and reporting back • teacher-led discussions • visiting speakers • verbal instructions
pupils whose preferred style involves practical tasks and working with others will benefit from:	• outside visits • group work activities • completing tasks and activities

3 Learning and Teaching - some suggested activities/experiences

Area of Study	Some suggested activities/experiences	Possible sources/ resources
application of health and safety procedures	design and display notional health and safety procedures specific to own/external working environment case study complete accident forms mini-investigation design and display emergency procedures chart/poster	school/department handbook, catalogues, video, external publications, visit, summary legislation
sources of reference and information systems	library visit case study	maps, directories, brochures, travel agent, timetables, teletext, internet, route planning software
travel	simulation/case study to research and prepare an itinerary	as above
ICT	prepare procedures for role of team leader prepare observational checklist for team leader appoint team leader on a rotating basis from matching job and person specification, interview role play	

Proposals for the Use of Information and Communications Technology

1   General

The delivery of any course in business will necessitate the accessing of many different types of resource in order to make the learning process meaningful. In particular, access to business- standard ICT which truly reflects current business practice is essential.

Pupils should have access to:

- business-standard hardware and software with a Windows environment (AppleMac or PC) with a standard business package

- electronic mail facilities via network software, modem or fax

- a photocopier

- electronic sources of reference including the Internet and CD-ROM facility

- an electronic diary/organiser

- a voicemail/answering machine facility

The importance of keeping up to date with current developments and practice related to ICT is essential.

The layout of rooms to deliver Administration should be considered. A traditional layout may make it more difficult to access some of the learning and teaching experiences suggested in relation to a large proportion of the 2 Areas of Study.

Technician support is strongly recommended given the increase in dependency on ICT resources.

2   Specific

The assessment instrument for Practical Abilities is a series of externally set and assessed administrative tasks to be completed within 15-20 hours over a period of time during S4. In relation to the course content for the appropriate level the tasks will necessitate the candidate to follow procedures and use appropriate business ICT in conjunction with the Centre's house style.

It is envisaged that teachers will store some data, pro-forma, templates etc on disk, to be accessed by pupils for completion of the tasks. To complete tasks satisfactorily pupils will require maximum access to the ICT listed in the General proposals above.

Technological Activities and Applications Mode

"Pupils will be better equipped to live purposefully, productively and confidently in the world of today and tomorrow if they have been able to acquire and develop a broadly-based technological capability. This mode of study involves the development of technological capability through engagement with a combination of creative, practical tasks and a range of activities in which pupils develop an awareness of the impact of technology in the wider world and its interactions with society and the environment.

Technology involves the imaginative and enterprising application of knowledge and skills.   The inclusion of (Administration) in the curriculum helps ensure a balance between the acquisition of knowledge and skills and their application to meeting needs and solving problems.

Pupils must be given opportunities to engage in creative, practical tasks which require them to integrate and apply knowledge from a variety of sources. In doing so, they should learn about the scope and potential of technological activity and become increasingly aware of the pervasive influence of technology, reflecting critically and constructively on the interplay between technology, society and the environment".

Source – *Curriculum Design – Guidelines for Schools* (SCCC) (Consultative Draft)

This should be updated/amended on publication of the finalised Curriculum Design Guidelines.

Core Skills

Core skills "are needed to develop the self-reliance, flexibility and breadth that all individuals now need to succeed in the workplace, and in life".

(Source - *Human Resources Brief, CBI, January 1998*)

Administration equips pupils for lifelong personal development. It is the responsibility of the teacher to recognise and acknowledge the contribution made to the core skills through Administration and to promote the transferable skills across the Areas of Study which will encourage young people to be lifelong learners.

All subjects have a contribution to make to the development of core skills. Administration has a particular contribution to make to the components of core skills.

The core skills and their components are:

Problem Solving	Critical thinking
	Planning and organising
	Reviewing and evaluating
Communication	Oral communication
	Written communication
Numeracy	Using graphical information
	Using number
Information Technology	Using information technology
Working with Others	Working with others

With the increasing emphasis placed on core skills in education and employment, it is important pupils are given the opportunity to demonstrate the appropriate level of skill(s) they have achieved.

An audit is currently being carried out and a final statement will follow in due course.