



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Accounting Course Specification (C700 76)

Valid from August 2014

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: Higher Accounting

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C700 76

Mandatory Units

H1YP 76	Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points
H1YR 76	Preparing Management Accounting Information (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points
H1YS 76	Analysing Accounting Information (Higher)	6 SCQF credit points

Course assessment **6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 5 Accounting Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 5 Mathematics Course

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in Accounting or related areas
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Course provides learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to make use of financial information.

The Course gives learners a deep understanding of the dynamic world of business by developing skills in communicating essential financial information, in a variety of presentation formats, to the various stakeholders of an organisation.

The development of skills explicit to the Course will enable learners to successfully produce, interpret and analyse financial information.

These skills will support learners in becoming more self-confident in their abilities as well as giving them an understanding of how financial awareness can help them to make more informed decisions regarding their own financial future.

By encouraging working with others, the Course will help learners to participate responsibly in the ever-changing global business environment.

The Course covers a broad spectrum of learning that allows for further progression and depth of study at a later date. It provides opportunities that allow learning to develop in a challenging and enjoyable way. It relates the study of accounting to real-life scenarios and is, therefore, of great relevance to those who study it.

Purpose and aims of the Course

Accounting is a key function in all organisations. Without effective accounting procedures and accountants to provide timely and relevant information to management, organisations may perform less successfully than they otherwise might.

The Course aims to build on the knowledge; understanding and information handling skills gained in National 5 Accounting or, for some learners, can act as an introduction to accounting and the world of finance.

The main purpose of the Course is to enable learners to understand, and make use of, financial information so that they can prepare accounting statements and analyse, interpret and report on an organisation's financial performance. A main feature of this Course is the development of numeracy and thinking skills.

The Course aims to enable learners to:

- ◆ understand the significant function that accounting performs in industry and society
- ◆ develop accuracy in the preparation, presentation, interpretation and analysis of relatively complex accounting information, and apply a systematic approach to solving financial problems
- ◆ apply relatively complex accounting concepts and techniques in the preparation of financial information
- ◆ develop an understanding of a range of sources of finance available to organisations, and of the circumstances in which these sources might be used
- ◆ apply the use of information technology in relatively complex accounting tasks

The Course combines practical and theoretical aspects of learning related to accounting, and will allow learners to use ICT through tackling both computer-based and paper-based tasks.

Accounting relates to many aspects of everyday life, and therefore gives learners experiences which are topical and which develop skills for learning, life and work. The Course encourages learners to think logically and to apply accounting principles in their everyday lives, thereby supporting their personal financial awareness.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The study of accounting may be of greatest appeal to those learners who enjoy, or wish to take advantage of, numeracy-based learning opportunities. It will be of interest to learners who feel their skills are more suited to courses which require attention to detail and who like to apply their logical and analytical thinking.

The Course develops the transferable skill of numeracy and supports literacy and health and wellbeing. It takes into account the needs of all learners by providing sufficient flexibility to enable them to achieve in different ways and at different paces.

By developing many transferable skills, the Course prepares learners for everyday life, the world of work or further study of accounting and other business-related disciplines. It expands understanding of accounting and highlights a range of accountancy-based career opportunities that are available within all business sectors.

By studying this Course, learners will develop skills which include: describing, recording, presenting, interpreting and analysing complex financial information and comparing and contrasting accounting information to draw valid conclusions

Other skills developed by learners will include: critical thinking and analytical skills in devising solutions to complex financial issues; ICT skills as a tool for the preparation and presentation of detailed accounting information; and accuracy in using financial information, which develops numeracy.

Successful completion of this Course opens up a range of vertical and lateral progression routes for learners. These include other National Qualifications, National Certificates, Higher National Certificates, Higher National Diplomas and degrees in accountancy or other business related subjects. It may also lead to employment and/or training in an accounting related industry.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

The Course combines practical and theoretical aspects and is experiential in nature. Skills, knowledge and understanding are developed through a range of real-life contexts within the broad discipline of accounting.

The Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a degree of flexibility in how study is undertaken. By its nature, the Course develops a wide range of skills for learning, life and work by providing learning opportunities in real-life contexts. These include: employability skills and attitudes, including flexibility and adaptability; independence, reliability and working with others; and effective use of ICT in accounting-related contexts.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

However, there is scope in the design of the Units to allow the Course to be taught in an integrated, experiential way. It is beneficial if the use of ICT permeates all Units.

Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop the skills, knowledge and understanding relating to the preparation of both routine and complex financial accounting information. Learners will develop an understanding of current financial accounting regulations and the ability to apply them in a range of business structures.

Preparing Management Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop the knowledge and understanding of internal accounting information and the ability to prepare such information using a range of both routine and complex accounting techniques. Learners will carry out learning activities that extend their understanding of the impact that management accounting information has on making decisions about the planning, control and future success of the organisation.

Analysing Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of the interpretation and analysis of accounting information, and the ability to interpret and analyse such information using a range of techniques. They will carry out learning activities that allow them to analyse and report on the organisation's current financial position and performance, and to offer financial solutions that can assist in planning and decision making. This will provide learners with an understanding of financial analysis.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. These include:

- ◆ using a variety of cost accounting techniques to facilitate decision-making in both manufacturing and service related organisations
- ◆ recording, presenting and interpreting complex accounting information to determine business profits and costs
- ◆ using ICT to produce and communicate accounting information in a range of contexts
- ◆ analysing and evaluating a range of accounting procedures which may be used within cost and management accounting
- ◆ analysing complex financial and management accounting information, including drawing conclusions and suggesting solutions where appropriate
- ◆ calculating and interpreting an extensive range of accounting ratios
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the accounting theory covering partnerships and public limited companies
- ◆ applying and relating the knowledge and understanding of fundamental accounting concepts and theories to a range of accounting layouts

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ ability to prepare period-end financial statements for partnerships and public limited companies
- ◆ understanding of key financial accounting terms and knowledge of their application, in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

Preparing Management Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ ability to prepare sales, production and relatively complex cash budgets and a range of cost statements
- ◆ understanding of key management accounting terms and knowledge of their application, in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

Analysing Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate a range of complex accounting information to draw conclusions and suggest solutions regarding the current financial position of an organisation
- ◆ understanding of a range of complex analytical concepts used to assist financial decision making and knowledge of their application in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)¹. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Accounting Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

The learner will be assessed through an accounting [question paper](#)² and an accounting-related [assignment](#)³.

The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills accumulated from across the Course.

The assignment will require learners to combine the accounting knowledge and/or skills from across the Course in a practical context.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

² See link above for definition.

³ See link above for definition.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

2 Numeracy

- 2.1 Number process
- 2.2 Money, time and measurement
- 2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.1 Employability
- 4.2 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Minor rewording of Course structure — pages 6, 7 and 8.	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014

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