



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: H60C 45

Superclass: HC

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit will develop skills in researching and presenting information in text and graphical form appropriate to a learner's vocational area. This Unit will also help learners prepare for further study at SCQF level 6, by showing them how to identify, locate, organise and effectively use information to address a specific problem.

It is anticipated that whilst working through the Unit, learners will develop their study and research skills by managing time; identifying appropriate sources of information; reviewing information and taking relevant notes; avoiding plagiarism, gaining permission if necessary, using appropriate research tools, and reflecting on completed work.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Investigate an agreed topic.
- 2 Present findings of the investigation.
- 3 Review and evaluate findings.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5)

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

F3GC 10 *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 4

F3GB 10 *Communication* at SCQF level 4

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

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.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This Unit 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.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Investigate an agreed topic.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Produce an overview of the agreed investigation topic identifying the main points.
- (b) Identify the suitable research tools for the investigation.
- (c) Identify a range of information sources for the investigation.
- (d) Collect relevant information from a range of suitable sources.
- (e) Record details of all information sources used.

Outcome 2

Present findings of the investigation.

- (a) Identify key points and organise information in an appropriate structured format.
- (b) Use software to effectively present findings.
- (c) Acknowledge sources of information in appropriate format.
- (d) Proofread and edit work, highlighting any errors found.

Outcome 3

Review and evaluate findings.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Evaluate findings to ensure they meet any required criteria.
- (b) Evaluate performance throughout the investigation.
- (c) Review time management techniques used.
- (d) Evaluate selection of information sources used.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

A holistic approach is recommended for assessment of this Unit and evidence must be generated in open-book conditions. Learners are required to produce a portfolio/e-portfolio of evidence.

- ◆ Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required which demonstrates knowledge and understanding of aspects of research and study skills and personal attributes required for independent learning.
- ◆ Performance evidence generated by participation in practical activities for this assessment should be carried out under supervision.

The assessor/centre must negotiate with each learner a feasible research topic, preferably of personal interest or relevance which has:

- ◆ sufficient published material available
- ◆ more than one source of information, eg the internet
- ◆ identified learning objectives

Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence showing a range of research activities have been carried out

- ◆ Overview of investigation topic
- ◆ Description of research tools and list of sources to be used
- ◆ Record of information collected in the form of notes, extracts
- ◆ List of information sources used
- ◆ List of research tools used

Outcome 2 — Written and/or oral evidence

- ◆ Structured presentation of investigation findings using an appropriate electronic method
- ◆ Proofread final document showing changes identified
- ◆ Original and edited versions of findings demonstrating use of appropriate editing techniques
- ◆ Acknowledgement of sources of information

Outcome 3 — Written and/or oral evidence

- ◆ Evaluation of findings
- ◆ Evaluation of own performance including any time management techniques used
- ◆ Evaluation of information sources



National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Computing with Digital Media at SCQF level 5, but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit. The overall aim of the Unit is to provide the learners with knowledge and skills required for further study at SCQF level 6 or above.

This Unit is expressed in generic terms but can be related to a context with which the learners are familiar.

Outcome 1

Learners will explore research methods in order to identify appropriate, efficient tools and procedures available to use for the research task. This will involve looking at a range of information sources, extracting and organising the information found, and evaluating the information to ensure it is relevant to the task. Learners should be given deadlines for each task to allow the development of time-management skills. Any, or all, parts of the investigation can be completed on an individual basis, or as a group, but each learner should provide their own documentation for their portfolio.

Learners should produce a list of the information sources used for the research task, including URLs, book titles and authors, brochures and leaflet titles.

Learners should also produce a list of the research tools used for the research task, including use of keywords, use of indexes or table of contents.

Outcome 2

On completion of Outcome 1, research findings should be presented in a clear and organised manner using an appropriate electronic method. Information should be edited and error-free, and completed within a set time limit. Learners should be shown how to spell-check, proof-read and use appropriate editing techniques. Learners should also use tracking tools to highlight edited documents.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Development of time-management skills can also be included by prioritising and scheduling tasks and setting goals to encourage self-disciplined study techniques. Learners should be made aware of plagiarism and also gain permissions, where necessary, for use of information and/or graphics.

It is important that copyright acknowledgement of sources of information used should be included in the presentation.

Outcome 3

On completion of Outcome 3, each evaluation shown below, can be presented separately or holistically, and in any order. Evaluations can be printed documents or electronic. They can also be provided as slide shows, audio/video recordings, or any other appropriate method.

The following information should be provided:

- ◆ Evaluation of learner findings:
 - Learners could evaluate the results of their findings by asking the question — does it summarise the main points of the investigation accurately?
- ◆ Evaluation of learner performance:
 - Learners can evaluate their own performance in a variety of ways, eg did they achieve the deadlines they were set, or set themselves? What did they learn from this task? What would they do differently next time?
- ◆ Evaluation of sources of information used:
 - Learners can evaluate the source of information used by checking if they are authentic, reliable, up-to-date, accurate, etc.

In addition to the above, Assessor checklists could be used to record learner performance evidence for each Outcome, ensuring all Performance Criteria are met.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

This Unit is also available at SCQF level 6. The table below compares content in each level which may be useful for:

- ◆ Designing and planning learning activities for multi-level classes
- ◆ Ensuring seamless progression between levels
- ◆ Identifying relevant prior learning for all learners

Stage in Investigation	SCQF level 5	SCQF level 6
Defining research area	Agree topic with assessor/centre Identify some learning objectives	Topic chosen by learner Specify some learning objectives
Planning research	Describe search tools Describe information sources to be used Use time management techniques	Design a research plan Describe search tools and information sources
Carrying out research	Make notes Capture text and/or graphical data Record sources used	Make notes Record and reference data Work to a timeline
Analysing data	Select information to use Structure/organise Identify main ideas	Analyse collected information Produce a report Justify and acknowledge sources Present conclusions by applying critical thinking
Presenting findings	Present key findings effectively in electronic format Find and correct errors	Create a presentation Deliver findings to a group Collect feedback
Evaluating process	Evaluate success in achieving research goals/learning objectives Evaluate effectiveness in carrying out research	Evaluate performance in carrying out investigation Maintain log throughout investigation Identify personal preferred learning style Develop advanced time management skills

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

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. *Computing: Academic Skills* is an optional Unit in NC Computing with Digital Media at SCQF level 5.

Learners would benefit from the delivery of a combination of face-to-face, tutor-led and independent study. However a practical, hands-on approach to learning should be adopted with the emphasis on learning-by-doing. Terminology and underpinning knowledge should be introduced in a practical context.

Learners will require access to a range of information sources for Outcome 1.

Throughout this Unit, learner activities should relate to their personal, vocational or study interests. For example, learners should be permitted to choose topics which reflect their interests, or agreed curriculum needs, rather than prescribed topics chosen by their assessor. Their search for information and suitable information sources should be genuine (rather than contrived) and provide some relevant information on the subject/topic which the learner can actually use.

For Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 appropriate submission dates should be agreed with the learner.

The Unit has been constructed so that the Outcomes should be dealt with in the order they appear as they lead on logically from one to the next.

The actual distribution of time between Outcomes is at the discretion of the centre.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

The assessment should be contextualised.

A holistic approach is recommended for assessment of this Unit and evidence should be generated through open-book conditions. Learners are required to produce a portfolio/e-portfolio of evidence covering the relevant Performance Criteria. Where evidence is oral in nature this could be supported by an appropriate assessor checklist covering the relevant Performance Criteria.

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

- ◆ Word-processed documents
- ◆ Slide shows
- ◆ Digital photographs
- ◆ Audio/video recordings

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities within this Unit to develop learners' Core Skills in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 4, and also aspects of *Communication* at SCQF level 4.

Broader skills development in the areas of enterprise, employability, sustainable development and citizenship may also be included depending on the chosen investigation topic.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Computing: Academic Skills (SCQF level 5)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is intended to prepare you for further study at SCQF level 6 to ensure you have the skills required, and to help you become an effective independent learner.

The Unit combines research and study skills and you will develop skills in areas of time management, note-taking, searching, reading and referencing, and presentation of your findings.

The use of ICT is implicit throughout the Unit and you will access and use appropriate information that relates to an area of practice or study. During this Unit you will learn how to consider what constitutes a good source of information and how to determine how reliable the information is.

Assessment for this Unit is a holistic approach in the form of a portfolio/e-portfolio containing the required evidence, gathered over the course of the Unit. Deadlines will be given for various tasks, as designated by your assessor, to develop time management skills.