



Advanced Higher Accounting — draft Course rationale and summary



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The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ
Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

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Course rationale

Background

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 Advanced Higher Accounting Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills needed to understand, analyse and interpret complex financial information in order to make informed judgements and decisions.

The Course will give learners an in-depth understanding of the pivotal role accounting plays in the dynamic world of business and our ever-changing economy, highlighting the need for an in-depth understanding of financial information in all types of organisations. By acquiring this, learners will become better informed and more active citizens who are able to responsibly contribute to an organisation's success and in turn to the economy.

The Course will provide many opportunities to develop learners' independence, through a high degree of independent study. This increased level of independence will offer learners opportunities to study, in-depth, the areas of the Course that particularly appeal to them, while taking on responsibility for personal time and task management, which will help prepare them for lifelong learning.

Learners will develop skills specific to accounting, which will enable them to produce, interpret, analyse and evaluate complex financial information with a high degree of accuracy and precision required by industry standards, making use of ICT when appropriate.

The Course covers a broad spectrum of learning and business contexts that allow 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.

Purpose and aims of the Course

A successful organisation will be built on the strength of having management teams who have been provided with accurate and timely financial information. Ensuring that all staff, but particularly those working in the accounting department, have an understanding of finance and a responsible attitude towards it will help contribute to the success and resilience of organisations. This in turn will enable them to make a positive contribution to the economy.

The main purpose of the Course is to enable learners to understand and interpret complex financial information, which will allow them to prepare accounting statements and use them to analyse and evaluate an organisation's financial performance. A main feature of this Course is the advancement of numeracy and thinking skills.

The Course aims to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop skills in preparing complex accounting information with a high degree of accuracy and precision
- ◆ enhance the skills of independent learning, critical analysis and problem solving
- ◆ analyse and evaluate complex accounting information to aid planning, control and decision making in business and make informed judgements to support management teams
- ◆ develop an in-depth understanding of the principles which underpin costing
- ◆ gain an understanding of the regulatory framework that underpins the production of accounting information of public limited companies for external use
- ◆ apply the use of information technology in complex accounting tasks
- ◆ gain an understanding of the importance of the effective management of finance and how this contributes to successful organisations and a thriving economy

The Course combines practical and theoretical aspects of learning related to accounting and encourages learners to think logically and to apply accounting principles in business.

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The banking crisis and economic recession which took place in 2011 have highlighted the important role finance plays in today's global business environment.

The study of Advanced Higher Accounting may be of greatest appeal to learners who are secure in their learning at Higher Accounting and who enjoy number processing and problem solving. Because of the Course's focus on independent problem-based learning, learners who are goal-orientated and solution-focused will relish the challenges posed by working independently through a series of tasks. It will be of interest to learners who feel their skills are more suited to Courses which require attention to detail and who enjoy applying numeracy skills to resolve financial issues.

By studying this Course, learners will develop many transferable skills, preparing them for everyday life, the world of work and further study. These skills include: presenting, interpreting, evaluating and analysing complex financial information to resolve issues and aid decision making at all levels; and comparing and contrasting complex accounting information to draw valid conclusions and make informed judgements to support management.

Learners will also develop skills which include: critical thinking and analytical skills in devising solutions to complex financial problems; ICT skills, using appropriate accounting-related software as a tool for the preparation and presentation of complex accounting information; and accuracy in using financial information, which develops numeracy.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

Successful completion of this Course opens up a wide range of progression routes for learners, including:

- ◆ degrees in Accounting and other related disciplines
- ◆ Higher National Diplomas in Accounting and other related disciplines
- ◆ careers in accountancy within a wide range of industries in the private, public and third sectors

Draft

Course summary

Course title: Advanced Higher Accounting

SCQF level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)

Course outline

Mandatory Units

The Course comprises the following mandatory Units:

Preparing Financial Accounting Information

(Advanced Higher)

12 SCQF credit points

Preparing Management Accounting Information

(Advanced Higher)

12 SCQF credit points

Course assessment

8 SCQF credit points

This Course includes eight 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.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

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

The Course consists of two mandatory Units. Within each there is a degree of flexibility in how study is carried out. By its nature, the Course develops a wide range of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, by providing learning opportunities in real-life business contexts. These include: essential employability skills and attitudes, including flexibility; adaptability; independence; critical thinking; 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 variety 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 would be beneficial if the use of ICT permeated all Units.

Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding relating to the preparation of complex financial accounting information for public limited companies. They will carry out learning activities that allow them to investigate, analyse and report on the organisation's current financial position and performance. Learners will gain an in-depth understanding of the regulatory framework governing published financial statements.

Preparing Management Accounting Information (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding relating to the provision of internal accounting information, and the ability to use a range of complex accounting techniques. They will carry out a range of learning activities to identify and calculate costs. Learners will gain an in-depth understanding of the significant impact that management accounting information has on the planning, control and decision making within a business. This will give learners the opportunity to provide solutions which can assist in future business financial planning.

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.

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.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of added value. 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 Advanced Higher Accounting Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

This will be assessed through a combination of an accounting [question paper](#)¹ and a practical accounting [project](#)².

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

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

¹ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

² See link above for definitions.