



Higher Accounting — draft Course rationale and summary

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Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

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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 Higher Accounting Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and make use of financial information.

The Course gives learners a deeper 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 with accuracy.

This will support learners in becoming more self-confident in their abilities, as well as giving them a greater awareness of how understanding the financial information of businesses 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 our 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 therefore is of great relevance.

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 Accounting (National 5) 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 to prepare accounting statements and to analyse, interpret, compare and report on an organisation's financial performance. A main feature of this Course is the development of numeracy and thinking skills.

The Course combines practical and theoretical aspects of learning related to accounting, and will allow learners the opportunity to use software packages through the use of both computer- and paper-based assignments.

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

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 complex accounting information, and apply a systematic approach to the problem solving of complex financial issues
- ◆ develop and apply routine and more complex accounting techniques to equip them for entry into the world of business
- ◆ develop in-depth understanding of a range of sources of finance available to organisations, and the ability to communicate the most appropriate circumstances for the use of these sources
- ◆ apply the use of information technology in complex accounting tasks

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 sets are more suited to Courses which require attention to detail and who like to apply their logical and analytical thinking.

The Course develops the necessary skills of numeracy and supports literacy and health and wellbeing. It also develops essential skills that support personal financial awareness. It takes into account the needs of all learners by providing sufficient flexibility to enable learners 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 deepens understanding of accountancy 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 advanced accounting information to draw valid conclusions.

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

Learners will also develop skills which 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, using appropriate accounting-related software; 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.

Draft

Course summary

Course title: Higher Accounting

SCQF level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course outline

Mandatory Units

Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)

Preparing Management Accounting Information (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)

Analysing Accounting Information (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)

Course assessment (6 SCQF credit points)

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow 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

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

The Course consists of three 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 contexts. These include: essential 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 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 is beneficial if the use of ICT permeates all Units.

Preparing Financial Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills, knowledge and understanding relating to the preparation of routine and more complex financial accounting information. Learners will explore a range of current business structures and gain understanding of the application of a range of current financial accounting regulations associated with these structures. This will provide learners with an in-depth understanding of accounting standards and practices. The information will be used to establish the historical and current financial position and performance of the organisation.

Preparing Management Accounting Information (Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop skills, knowledge and understanding relating to the provision of internal accounting information, using a range of routine and more complex accounting techniques. They will carry out learning activities that extend their understanding of the significant impact that management accounting information has on decision-making for the future planning, control and success of the organisation.

Analysing Accounting Information (Higher)

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

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all 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 standards for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which will provide 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 Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

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

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

This will be assessed through an accounting [question paper](#)² and a practical 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: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

² See link above for definition.

³ See link above for definition.