

COREskills

Essential if individuals are to meet both their personal needs and the needs of society.



Communication



Numeracy



Information and
Communication Technology



Problem Solving



Working with Others

Individuals who can analyse and solve problems, communicate well, use information technology, and work with others effectively are well-equipped to assume the active, flexible and responsible roles which modern workplaces need and society expects.



The Core Skills standards come from what employers tell us they need, national initiatives, Scotland's social and political needs, and taking account of what is happening elsewhere in the UK.

They are owned by the Scottish Government. SQA are empowered to take the Core Skills standards and:

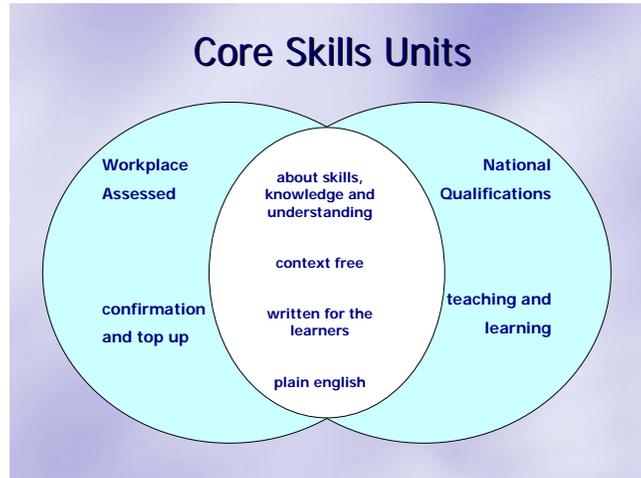
- ◆ develop qualifications to enable certification
- ◆ embed Core Skills standards within other qualifications so automatic certification occurs of the Core Skill following successful completion of the qualification
- ◆ signpost opportunities where Core Skills are likely to be developed in learning programmes



The framework of Scotland's Core Skills standards can be downloaded from SQA's website:

www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills

Core Skills Units are context free qualifications which can be used to develop a learning programme or to provide a means of certificating evidence from existing learning programmes. There are NQ Core Skills Units and Workplace Assessed Core Skills Units.



Because the Units come from the same standards, there are similarities between the two. For example, they are both about skills, knowledge and understanding, context free, written for learners, and use plain English. The main difference between the two is the learner who will use them and how they are used.

The Workplace Core Skills Units follow the Vocational Qualifications (VQ) approach which is about development and confirmation of skills that are learned in the workplace. They can often be achieved through flexible / open learning, experiential learning and targeted top-up learning required to meet the Unit standards. They have to be assessed in the workplace or in a simulated workplace environment which mirrors a work placement.

The NQ Core Skills Units are mostly used by schools, colleges and community-based learning programmes.

SCQF Levels	SCQF Qualifications	Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12		DIPLOMAS	
11		BACCALATS POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	S102
10		HONOURS DEGREE HONOURS DIPLOMA	
9		GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
8	HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA	DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	S104
7	HONOURS HIGHER HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	S103
6	HIGHER		
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT COURSE GRADE		S102
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL COURSE GRADE	NATIONAL PRODUCTION AWARDS	S101
3	SCOTLAND'S FOUNDATION COURSE GRADE		
2	SCOTLAND'S		
1	SCOTLAND'S		

The Workplace Core Skills Units cover SCQF levels 3 to 6.

The NQ Core Skills Units cover SCQF levels 2 to 6.

The SCQF helps learners, learning providers and employers compare and understand qualifications in Scotland.

Smaller NQ Units in Communication and Numeracy

The NQ Units at SCQF levels 2 and 3 for Communication and Numeracy have been divided into specific skills to make them more accessible to fragile learners.

Communication Units at SCQF levels 2 and 3 are available as a single Unit or individual skills as follows:



Reading



Writing



Speaking



Listening

Numeracy Units at SCQF level 2 are available as a single Unit or individual skills as follows:



Time



Money



Measure

87				
---	0823	1623	1653	1723
---	0829	1629	1659	1729
---	0834	1634	1704	1734
---	0841	1641	1711	1741
---	0847	1647	1717	1747

Using Graphical Information

Numeracy Units at SCQF level 3 are available as a single Unit or individual skills as follows:



Calculation



Measure



Using Graphical Information

Copies of the Core Skills Units are available to download free of charge from the Core Skills section of SQA's website.

Assessment of the Core Skills Units can be through checking of skills, knowledge and understanding through undertaking a series of tasks or by using a portfolio approach:

Assessment Support Packs

Are available for all the NQ and Workplace Core Skills at each SCQF level. They expand on the requirement of the Unit by defining what is to be learned and to what standard. They also contain examples of assessment tasks and marking guidelines that can be used as off the shelf assessment tasks or contextualised to reflect the interests of the learner. These packs replace the National Assessment Bank materials (NABs) and are available to download from SQA's website.



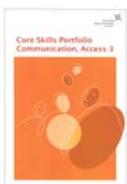
Prior Moderation — SQA approved centres who devise their own instruments of assessment to suit their particular learner needs can submit the materials to SQA, who will arrange for a Verifier to review them and confirm whether they are reliable and fit for purpose. SQA do not charge for this service.

Portfolio approach

Assessment of the Core Skills Units can be through a portfolio, in the same way as a VQ. This approach allows learners to learn the things that are relevant and meaningful to them and show their skills, knowledge and understanding in a way that can be gathered naturally without a test at the end. The following documents are available to download from SQA's website and illustrate how a portfolio can be used for Core Skills assessment:

Guidelines on Building a Portfolio of Evidence for Core Skills in Community Settings

This guide shows tutors how to build a portfolio of evidence that meets the Core Skills specifications while retaining the social practice approach of fitting learning around the individual and not the individual around the learning.



Core Skills Portfolio, Communication, Access 3

This document has been produced to accompany the Guidelines on Building a Portfolio of Evidence for Core Skills in Community Settings. The main purpose of this document is to illustrate to tutors and learners what a portfolio being put forward for accreditation at SCQF level 3 might look like.

The **Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills** provides useful information for people who are preparing to support or assess modern apprentices, employees, students or trainees in gaining certification for workplace-assessed Core Skills Units and is available to download from SQA's website.



Embedded Core Skills within other qualifications

Core Skills can be achieved in two ways, either through the Core Skills Units or embedded within another qualification so achievement of a particular qualification may also update a learner's Core Skills profile. Core Skills can either be consciously embedded or naturally occurring within a qualification.

Consciously embedded is where a Core Skill or component is deliberately built into a qualification development. Naturally occurring is where Core Skills have not been deliberately built into a qualification development but are explicit within the mandatory section.

CT Critical Thinking PAO Planning & Organizing RAE Reviewing & Evaluating
 WCO Working Co-operatively with Others RCD Reviewing Cooperative Contributions WC Writing Communications
 OC Oral Communication UN Using Number UGI Using Graphical Information
 AI Assessing Information PCI Processing/Creating Information ICT Information and Communication Technology

Unit Number	Unit	Core Skill component covered by Unit													
		Problem Solving		Working with Others			Communication			Numeracy			ICT		
		CT	PAO	SAE	WCO	RCD	WC	OC	UN	UGI	AI	PCI			
D007-10	Accident and Emergency Procedures			4											
D046-12	Accommodation and Facilities Operations														
D209-11	Accommodation and Facilities Servicing			4											
D068-11	Acids, Bases and Salts			3											
D024-13	Administrative Management			6											
D024-13	Administrative Management – Presentation and Communication														
D043-13	Analogue and Digital Electronics								6	6					
D041-12	Analogue and Digital Interfacing								5						
D046-13	Analysing Human Society 1			6											
D046-13	Analysing Human Society 2			6											
D026-10	Analysis and Development of Performance			4	4	4									
D026-11	Analysis and Development of Performance			5	5	5									
D026-12	Analysis and Development of Performance			5	5	5									
D026-13	Animal Behaviour			6						6					
D063-11	Animal Physiology			5	5	5				5					
D024-10	Applications of Mathematics								4	4					
D024-11	Applications of Mathematics								5	5					
D016-11	Applied Electronics			5	5	5				5	5				
D016-12	Applied Electronics			6	6	6				6	6				
D016-13	Applied Electronics			6	6	6				6	6				
D040-11	Applied Multimedia			5	5										
D040-12	Applied Multimedia			6	6										
D019-12	Architectural Technology: Building Design			5	1										

All Units and Courses which have embedded Core Skills are listed in the catalogue: **Automatic Certification of Core Skills** which is available to download from SQA's website.



If you are involved in the delivery and assessment of Core Skills then you will love this website. It provides:

- ◆ an explanation of the key features of each of the Core Skills with comparisons between levels
- ◆ examples of common mistakes in assessments and how to avoid them
- ◆ illustrations of good practice in assessments in a range of contexts
- ◆ examples of candidate responses within a range of scenarios, to enable self calibration

On-screen assessment tools

Provide a series of on-screen questions through a colourful, user-friendly interface. The tools are designed to be a positive experience for the learner and have a friendly quiz-like feel to them.

The questions have an adult theme and are designed to be relevant to everyday life. They were written by Core Skills practitioners and mapped to the Core Skills Units from pre-SCQF level 2 to SCQF level 5.

Once the learner has answered the questions in a subject area, a result screen will be displayed which identifies the SCQF level the learner is working at.

Core Skills: Initial Screening Tools — provide a rough indication of a learner's existing knowledge and skills to better plan appropriate learning programmes and SCQF level.



Core Skills: Initial Screening Tools:

- ◆ Communication and Numeracy (on-screen interactive CD, pre-Access 2 to Intermediate 2 level)
- ◆ ICT (paper-based assessment at Access 2 level)

A tutor guidance pack and learner information sheet is also available on the CD in Microsoft Word format so you can customise the packs to suit the needs of your learners.

Core Skills: Diagnostic Tool – provides detailed feedback on a learner's existing IT skills through a series of on-screen tasks.



A Diagnostic Tool for:

- ◆ ICT (on-screen interactive CD, Access 3 to Intermediate 2 level)

A tutor guidance pack and learner information sheet is also available on the CD in Microsoft Word format so you can customise the packs to suit the needs of your learners.

Copies of the Core Skills Initial Screening Tool and ICT Diagnostic tool are available free of charge and can be requested through customer@sqa.org.uk.

Offering Core Skills Units

To ensure quality of learning provision and standardisation of assessment across all our qualifications, SQA have a set of quality assurance criteria which centres must be able to meet before they can be approved to offer any of our qualifications. Centres can become an SQA approved centre in their own right, or they can work in partnership with an existing SQA approved centre.

There are two types of approval:

- ◆ initial approval as an SQA centre
- ◆ approval to offer specific qualifications

Initial approval is a check by SQA to make sure that your centre has the management structure and quality assurance systems to support the delivery, assessment and internal verification of SQA qualifications.

Approval to offer specific qualifications is another check by SQA to make sure that your centre has the staff, reference and learning materials, assessment materials, equipment and accommodation you will need to deliver and assess a specific qualification.

The publication: **Core Skills Provision in Inverclyde** records one centre's experience of providing accredited learning in an adult literacies environment — from the initial decision process on whether to offer accredited learning, to how to make it happen. It is written for anyone involved in adult literacies provision who may be considering offering accredited learning.



If you would like further information on becoming an approved centre, please contact SQA's Customer Contact Centre in the first instance.

To deliver Core Skills the tutor should be qualified or have experience in the subject area they are delivering. They should also be competent to at least one SCQF level above the level they are delivering, for example, if delivering Communication at SCQF level 3 then the tutor should be competent in Communication to at least SCQF level 4.

To assess Core Skills the Assessor should be working towards the A Units (previously D32 and D33) or hold a Scottish teaching qualification. Further information on the A Units can be found in the publication: *Assessor/Verifier Units: Assessment Guidance*, publication code DB2889, which can be downloaded from SQA's website under Learning and Development.



The SQA website has a wealth of materials that can help you with the delivery and assessment of Core Skills. Everything listed in this leaflet so far can be found in there and more such as.....

www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills

Core and Key Skills Equivalences — Frequently Asked Questions and a handy Ready Reckoner.

Core Skills Bulletins — quarterly bulletins to keep you informed on new developments and exemplify good practice.

Promotional Materials — available to download for promoting Core Skills to prospective learners. Posters, postcards and leaflets like these:



Research and Development — several pieces of research commissioned by SQA to inform and expand our understanding of attitudes and awareness to Core Skills amongst candidates, employers and higher education institutions and to locate Core Skills developments in a European and international context.

Support Material for Delivery and Assessment of Core Skills — range of materials developed to support the delivery and assessment of Core Skills including examples of types of activities that could be used, learner work mapped to Core Skills Units and SCQF levels.

Examples of activities and learner work referenced to Core Skills are available for Communication and Numeracy at Access 3.

Contextualised resources in Core.Sport and Core.Hospitality — CD based teaching and learning resource packs contextualising Core Skills that could be used for formative assessment or for contributing towards a folio for developing learner work. Available for Communication, Numeracy and ICT.

Contacts

Margaret Tierney, Project Manager	Tel: 0845 213 5454	margaret.tierney@sqa.org.uk
Amanda Gray, Project Officer	Tel: 0845 213 5453	amanda.gray@sqa.org.uk
Gill Macfarlane, Project Officer	Tel: 0845 213 5461	gill.mann@sqa.org.uk