



**Arrangements for:
National Certificate in Business
at SCQF level 5**

Group Award Code: G8WT 45

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Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of National Qualification Group Awards.

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification, and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below.

Version number	Description	Date
01	Original document	
02	5.1 Framework: Group A, optional Units — codes F394 11 and F395 11 changed to F394 12 and F395 12	4 March 2009
03	The Unit ECOM 11 'Preparing Final Accounts' has now been extended past its finish date and has a new start date of 1 August 2009 and code of F6TY 11.	25 February 2010
04	The following Units have been added to the framework: Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations (DV4K 11) Business Decision Areas: Finance and Human Resource Management (DV4L 11) Business Enterprise (DV4G 11) External Examination for Intermediate 2 Business Management (X234 11)	15 July 2010
05	Group B Framework — Unit DM3V 12 Information Technology for Management, credit value amended from 1 to 2.	09 September 2011
06	Framework – minor corrections made	19 November 2012

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1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the new Group Award in Business, at SCQF level 5. This document includes: background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure and guidance on delivery.

The award is designed to meet the needs of candidates who wish to develop a foundation for progression to further study and to provide appropriate skills and knowledge for those who wish to enter employment in business.

2 Rationale for the development of the Group Award

The rationale for the NC in Business is based on two main factors, both of which reflect gaps in current SQA provision in this area at this level. The first is the absence of a suitable, generally acceptable SQA award while the second is the limited availability of relevant, up to date Units suitable for the needs of those studying at this level. Both constrain the ability of Colleges to provide programmes of study which will prepare candidates adequately for employment or enable successful candidates to progress to further study and qualifications. This situation is consistent with the findings of the consultation on National Qualification Group Awards carried out by the SQA during 2004 and 2005.

Nature and purpose of the award

The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 is a 12 credit award designed as a flexible, business oriented programme which aims to provide candidates with a range of business skills and understanding. It recognises that learners will be at a stage where they are making choices about their future. As a result, it offers multiple exit routes towards employment or further study depending on the wishes of the student. Completing the course will put candidates in a stronger position to move to the next stage of their career and should substantially increase their chances of doing this successfully.

Establishing the need for the qualification

A Qualifications Development Team (QDT) was established in January 2007 with the remit to consider the extent and type of provision in Business and related areas at SCQF level 5.

At present, provision at NC level in Business consists of a one year programme of study which varies from centre to centre. This provided the starting point for the work of the QDT which was influenced by a number of factors:

- ◆ the nature of existing provision at SCQF level 5 and related provision at SCQF level 6
- ◆ the destination of candidates who completed NC Units in Business and business related areas
- ◆ the characteristics of candidates attracted to NC provision in Business and business related areas

Initially, the QDT gathered information on existing provision at levels 4–6 in order to clarify the nature of this provision. Scottish Group Awards (SGA) in Business at Intermediate 2 (level 5) and Higher (level 6) are available but few centres make use of them. A significant reason is that they are perceived as inappropriate for the needs of the learners who come to Colleges for courses at these levels.

Most centres, therefore, create their own programmes of study. Typically candidates follow a programme comprising 17–20 Units which may consist of a mix of SQA provision and that from other examining and awarding bodies. Candidates choose from a menu of Units which centres often structure into designated frameworks which are, in turn, usually tailored towards specific Outcomes such as preparation for entry to a particular HN award. These programmes are generally successful and have enabled centres to adopt a flexible, pragmatic approach to the diverse and changing needs and capabilities of learners.

Despite these benefits, the situation is not regarded as entirely satisfactory. In particular there is no recognised national award for candidates who successfully complete a programme of study. In the absence of a national award, several Colleges have developed College awards but, while valuable in themselves as recognition of achievement, they lack the credibility which a national award can bring. In addition the current Unit provision in Business is not entirely suited to the needs of learners at NC level. Many Units have not been revised for some time and many are theoretically based and insufficiently practical to prepare candidates for employment opportunities or to engage their interest.

The QDT made efforts to gather details of the destination of candidates who had successfully completed NC programmes in Business. The menu driven approach of current programmes means that they provide a number of possible progression routes. Precise destination data is not readily available from Colleges for this group of candidates. However, significant anecdotal evidence indicated that the most common single destination for successful candidates was progression into another course.

For candidates achieving a good range of Units, this meant progression into an HN course, normally at the same institution. This could be into HNC/HND Business but could also be into more specialist awards such as the well established HNC/HND Accounting and the newer HNC/HND in Financial Services. For many Colleges, NC provision can be a key source of recruitment for awards at HN level and for candidates in this situation, the NC programme amounts to the first of two or more years of learning culminating in an HNC or higher award.

Candidates also moved into other forms of training. Many learners embark on current provision with limited prior achievement and a key purpose of existing programmes is to develop basic skills and capabilities.

Successful candidates also progress into employment. The general nature of courses in business at all levels and at NC level in particular meant there was no clear pattern of movement into particular types of jobs. The evidence that is available, however, suggests that candidates often entered customer facing jobs (in places like call centres, or occupational areas such as retail.) The lack of a recognised award may influence progression into employment. Candidates are able to show that they have succeeded in a range of Units but employers can find this confusing and are not always able to make an appropriate judgement on the value of student achievement.

On behalf of the QDT, a consultation exercise was undertaken among key stakeholders for a new award at NC level in Business. Stakeholders were asked to comment on general and specific aspects of an outline structure which, in essence, is the same as that which has been validated. Three relevant stakeholder groups were identified — employers, centres and past candidates. Two of these stakeholders, employers and centres, have a direct interest in any new award while the third, past candidates, would have suitable experience to make a judgment on whether the new award would enhance existing provision.

The response to the consultation was limited but the replies which were received were positive. The mandatory and options structure was considered suitable and there was support for key aspects of the content within the proposed structure:

- ◆ candidates completing the award would have gained appropriate skills
- ◆ the proposed award would provide appropriate preparation for work
- ◆ the proposed award would enable progression to other awards, including HN awards Units

Overall, therefore, the QDT felt there was a requirement for awards in NC Business which:

- ◆ lead to awards which would be recognised by employers and by educational institutions
- ◆ enable candidates to point to a significant measure of achievement
- ◆ retain the flexibility of existing arrangements including choice of options
- ◆ are compatible with successful local programmes
- ◆ provide multiple exit routes for candidates
- ◆ provide a progression route from Access courses
- ◆ enable candidates to develop appropriate Core Skills and skills relevant to business
- ◆ match the capabilities, expectations and interests of candidates enrolling for the awards

Establishing the level of the award

Current arrangements operated by centres are designed to meet the needs of learners at all three SCQF levels 4–6. This award, however, is aimed at SCQF level 5 but provides opportunities for learners who wish to do so to choose some Units at SCQF level 6. A National Certificate award at SCQF level 5 was chosen because this would suit the majority of learners presently undertaking NC programmes in Business at Colleges. There were several reasons for this:

- ◆ Current experience in centres suggests that 12 credits at level 5 was an acceptable target which most learners could achieve.
- ◆ A focus on level 5 would make it possible for learners to acquire skills and capabilities which would be meaningful and valuable to employers.
- ◆ An appropriate core and options structure would enable candidates to accumulate sufficient Units at level 6 to demonstrate their suitability for an HN programme.
- ◆ An award at this level fitted more closely with available information on current provision which could make transition to the new award easier. In this way the new award would provide progression both into employment or further study depending on the wishes of the candidate.

Overall the mandatory section of the award is commensurate with the SCQF descriptors at level 5. It covers basic knowledge in key business areas such as finance and marketing as well as introducing some theoretical components from underpinning disciplines such as economics. Where new Units have been written they have been designed to encourage candidates to relate the ideas to suitable business contexts and to encourage a straightforward problem solving approach. This has been further developed by the production of Assessment Support Packs in Units like Enterprise Activity. ICT and Communication Units have been included in the mandatory section to ensure that candidates develop the kind of generic skills required in contemporary business.

Target client group

Evidence from centres indicates that there are three main client groups for current provision at this level. The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 is aimed at meeting the demand from these same client groups. They are:

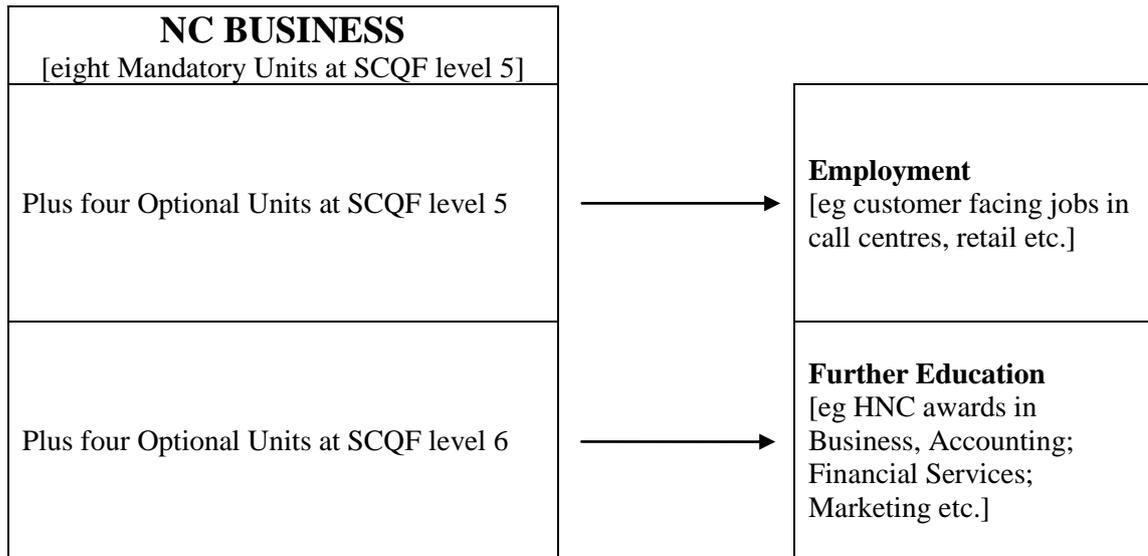
- ◆ young people who have left school in the relatively recent past
- ◆ mature ‘adult returners’ who have decided to re-enter education
- ◆ migrants to the United Kingdom

These groups have quite different characteristics. Many recent school leavers have limited formal school attainment. Adult returners may also possess few formal qualifications and, while they frequently have valuable experience, they may lack confidence in their ability to learn. Migrants do not have English as a first language and may need to develop the English language skills needed to become effective learners through the medium of English. In some cases, migrants may benefit from prior study in English before attempting an NC programme but others may have sufficient English language skills, particularly in oral communication, to embark directly on an NC Business.

Progression routes

The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 provides progression both into employment or further study depending on the wishes of the candidate.

The diagram illustrates how the award can lead to progression into employment or further education.



NB: Candidates wishing to progress to HN awards are likely to choose optional Units at SCQF level 6 in order to help them bridge the gap between SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 7. Their choice of optional Units is likely to depend on their preferred HN award. Candidates wishing to enter employment may find it beneficial to complete their National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 with optional Units which are also at SCQF level 5. There is however no requirement to do this and they may also undertake Units at SCQF level 6. It is likely also that all candidates will complete more Units than the 12 required for the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5. These additional Units may also influence progression routes.

Relationship to National Occupational Standards

There are no occupational standards specifically related to Business. The nearest relevant set of standards are the National Occupational Standards for Management. The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 does not aim to prepare candidates for managerial roles. Throughout the development the QDT checked to confirm that the Management standards did not have direct implications for the award.

3 Aims of the Group Award

The main aim of the Group Award is to provide a vehicle which will enable candidates to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to progress to a higher SCQF level in their study of Business or to move into employment in business.

3.1 Principal aims of the Group Award

The principal aims of the NC in Business are:

- ◆ give candidates a background in business which will enable them to reflect on their present situation in a business context
- ◆ enable candidates to consider the various options open to them and to make informed career choices for their future
- ◆ prepare candidates for entry into further qualifications such as Higher National awards in Business, Accounting and other related areas
- ◆ prepare candidates for entry into employment in a business context
- ◆ provide candidates with an opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary business context
- ◆ provide candidates with specific business related skills demanded by employers
- ◆ provide candidates with relevant Core Skills for business related occupations and for further study in business

The award will meet these aims through a mandatory core which will ensure that all candidates will develop key skills and knowledge relevant both to further study and to employment in business.

3.2 General aims of the Group Award

The general aim of the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 is to provide a robust award consisting of practically based Units which meets the needs of candidates, employers and centres. This is achieved by:

- ◆ ensuring that candidates develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding for the contemporary business environment
- ◆ providing the opportunity for candidates to take optional Units at SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6
- ◆ producing specialist Assessment Support Packs in newly devised Units and to enable generic Units to be delivered in a business context
- ◆ providing an award which is sufficiently flexible to allow for a number of different modes of delivery

3.3 Target groups

A key aspect of the rationale for this award was to meet the needs of three main groups of learners – young people who have recently left secondary school, adult returners and migrants to the UK for whom English is not their first language.

The award has been designed to provide the framework and flexibility to meet the needs of these quite different groups. The Units which comprise the award take a practical approach to both delivery and assessment which is reinforced in Assessment Support Packs which accompany both new and generic Units. This should help all learners develop and maintain an interest in the award but may be particularly important for those who have recently left school or who are returning to education. The optional Units include opportunities to undertake study at SCQF level 6 which should benefit those who wish to progress to HN level or to degree courses. Adult returners and migrants often have long term aims such as these. The inclusion of ESOL Units among the options is intended to enable those for whom English is not their first language to develop their communication skills in English alongside the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to business.

3.4 Employment opportunities

The award is designed to enable candidates to develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to contemporary business. As such the award is a stepping stone to both employment and further study. The inclusion of a Unit in Customer Care in the mandatory section is deliberately intended to help candidates to enhance their employment prospects. This should help them to gain employment in customer facing roles in areas like retail, logistics and distribution and call centres. Candidates who take the optional Unit *Developing Skills for Employment* should be able to increase their chances of obtaining suitable employment.

4 Access to Group Award

There are no specific recommended entry requirements for the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5. Entry to the award will be at the discretion of the centre. Candidates would normally be expected to be at a developmental stage in improving their skills, knowledge and understanding.

All the SCQF level 5 Units, both mandatory and optional, contain a statement that access is at the discretion of the centre or an equivalent statement such as ‘no formal entry requirements’.

In some cases, however, a Unit indicates that candidates would normally be expected to demonstrate some evidence of prior attainment. The PC Passport Units at SCQF level 5, for example, indicate that candidates should have *PC Passport: Introduction to IT Software* and *Presenting Information* (SCQF level 4). The mandatory Units in Communication, Marketing and Enterprise all advise that candidates should demonstrate evidence for the equivalent Unit at SCQF level 4.

Centres should, therefore, check that potential candidates for the NC Business are likely to cope with the award. Some may, for example, have some relevant previous attainment from school such as Standard Grades at Foundation or General level which suggests that they can successfully embark on an award at SCQF level 5. Others who may have no formal qualifications may have suitable life or work experience which indicates that they will be able to tackle Units at SCQF level 5. The latter may be particularly applicable for adult returners and, perhaps, for candidates who are migrants to the UK and whose first language is not English. Migrants may, however, have previous attainment gained in their own country which can show that they will cope with the requirements of the award.

All the SCQF level 6 Units also state that entry is at the discretion of the centre.

However, most of these Units also indicate prior attainment that candidates could demonstrate. All these Units are optional in the NC Business and candidates who do not have a suitable background for a Unit can be directed towards another option. Candidates wishing to attempt any SCQF level 6 optional Units will, however, have recent previous attainment at SCQF level 5 from earlier Units in the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5. As a result, they will have had an opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable of undertaking Units at SCQF level 6.

5 Group Award structure

The National Certificate in Business at level 5 will be awarded to candidates who achieve 72 SCQF points at level 5 or above.

This will be made up as follows:

- ◆ 48 SCQF points at level 5 from the mandatory Units in the award
- ◆ 24 SCQF points at level 5 or level 6 from the optional Units in the award

5.1 Framework

The mandatory Units are:

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Recording of Cash Data OR Recording Cash Transactions	D0W0 11 FN14 11	6	5	1
PC Passport: IT Software — Spreadsheet & Database	F1FB 11	6	5	1
PC Passport: IT Software — Word Processing & Presenting Information	F1FC 11	6	5	1
Communication OR Communication	D01B 11 F3GB 11	6	5	1
Enterprise Activity	D36N 11	6	5	1
Marketing: Basic Principles	F390 11	6	5	1
Skills for Customer Care	F38X 11	6	5	1
Market Operations and the Scottish Economy	F391 11	6	5	1

The optional Units are divided into three groups — Group A, Group B and Group C — and are listed below. Candidates must complete 4 optional Units in order to obtain the NC Business Group Award. Optional Units should be selected according to the following criteria:

Group A — minimum of two Units and a maximum of four Units can be selected

Group B — maximum of one Unit can be selected

Group C — maximum of one Unit can be selected

Beyond the 12 credits of the Group Award, centres and candidates are free to choose any other Units from the framework. Candidates who wish to complete PC Passport at SCQF level 5 or SCQF level 6, for example, can attempt the requisite Units in this way. Candidates who wish to attempt a further ESOL Unit can adopt a similar approach.

Group A

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Recording of Credit Data OR Recording Credit Transactions	D0W1 11 FN15 11	6	5	1
Recording of Data in Ledger OR Recording Data in the Ledger	D0W2 11 FN16 11	6	5	1
Preparing Final Accounts OR Preparing Final Accounts	EC0M 11 F6TY 11	6	5	1
Financial Accounting: An Introduction	F394 12	6	6	1
Management Accounting: An Introduction	F395 12	6	6	1
Financial Services: Market, Products & Regulation	F396 12	6	6	1
Microeconomics	DM4W 12	6	6	1
The UK Economy	DM4X 12	6	6	1
The International Economy	DM4Y 12	6	6	1
External Examination for Higher Economics	X038 12	6	6	1
Marketing Mix OR Marketing Mix	D0XV 12 F6V0 12	6	6	1
Marketing Research Practice	D0XS 12	6	6	1
Business Enterprise OR Business Enterprise	DV4G 11 DV4G 12	6	5 6	1
Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations OR Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations	DV4K 11 DV4K 12	6	5 6	1
Business Decision Areas: Finance and Human Resource Management OR Business Decision Areas: Finance and Human Resource Management	DV4L 11 DV4L 12	6	5 6	1
External Examination for Intermediate 2 Business Management OR External Examination for Higher Business Management	X234 11 X234 12	6	5 6	1
Contract Law: An Introduction	F392 11	6	5	1
Developing Skills for Employment	F393 11	6	5	1
Numeracy OR Numeracy	D01C 11 F3GF 11	6	5	1
Problem Solving	D01E 11	6	5	1

OR Problem Solving	F3GD 11			
Working with Others OR Working with Others	D01F 11 F3GE 11	6	5	1
Work Experience	D36H 11	6	5	1
Event Organisation	F3PN 12	6	6	1
Work Experience	D36H 12	6	6	1

Group B

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Administration: Presenting and Communicating Information	DM3T 11	6	5	1
Information Technology for Administrators	DM3R 11	6	5	1
Information Technology for Management	DM3V 12	6	6	2
PC Passport: Internet and On-line Communications	F1FD 11	6	5	1
PC Passport: IT Systems	F1FA 11	6	5	0.5
PC Passport: Working with Internet and On-line Communications	F1FF 12	6	6	1
PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information	F1FE 12	6	6	1
PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheet and Database	F1FJ 12	6	6	1
PC Passport: Working with Artwork and Imaging	F1FG 12	6	6	0.5
PC Passport: Working with IT Security for Users	F1FH 12	6	6	0.5

Group C

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
English for Speakers of Other Languages: Study-Related Contexts OR English for Speakers of Other Languages: Study-Related Contexts	DV36 11 DV36 12	6	5 6	1

5.2 Mapping information

The structure of the NC in Business meets the aims and the requirements of the award in a number of ways which can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ It provides skills, knowledge and capabilities needed for employment
- ◆ It provides multiple progression routes
- ◆ It retains the benefits of existing provision at this level but provides the credibility of a nationally accredited award
- ◆ It consists of Units which are practical and will engage the interests of learners
- ◆ It is compatible with the existing arrangements currently adopted by centres
- ◆ It provides the flexibility which learners and centres value
- ◆ It provides an opportunity for learners to develop Core Skills
- ◆ It provides opportunities for learners to gain other awards while completing an NC in Business

The content of the mandatory Units has been chosen to reflect the needs of learners and employers. Customer Service provides the customer facing skills which characterise the employment opportunities likely to be available for candidates who successfully complete the award. In addition, Communication and Accounting: Recording of Cash Transactions both provide further skills needed in the modern business environment. The Units from PC Passport enable candidates to acquire business related ICT skills but also open the way for candidates to gain a specific award to validate their achievement in this key skill area. The structure also includes recognised business subjects such as Marketing and Economics which also provide a foundation for future study in Business. Finally, Enterprise Activity enables candidates to gain practical experience of the entrepreneurial element which underlies all business activity. It also provides a context for business as a whole. When undertaking this Unit candidates will be able to gain an appreciation of how the various aspects of a business fit together.

The optional Units have been chosen to allow candidates to develop the core Units in a way that suits their preferred objectives and which is consistent with their learning development. In broad terms, therefore, the optional Units allow learners to gain further employment related skills or to prepare themselves more fully for entry into further qualifications or training. Candidates who are unsure of their future direction and wish to keep their options open may choose to mix Units which develop employment related skills and ones which provide preparation for further education.

Suitable ESOL Units have been included among the options to allow candidates for whom English is not their first language to develop their competence in English. This should help them to progress further whether they choose to enter employment or move into further education.

The flexibility of the structure contributes significantly to the way in which the structure meets the requirements for a new award.

The structure is flexible for learners who are able to follow a range of routes within it depending on their interests, objectives and their development as learners. It is flexible for centres which can use it to accommodate the needs of a range of different learners. For example, candidates who wish to progress into an HN Accounting award can be directed towards the optional Accounting and Financial Units at level 6. In this way the structure retains one of the significant benefits of current provision in centres.

This example illustrates another facet of the flexible structure. Candidates are able to progress horizontally and vertically within the award. Those wishing to enter employment for example can move horizontally and take optional Units at level 5 such as Developing Skills for Employment. They may also build a full Core Skills profile at SCQF level 5. Candidates wishing to progress to an HN award at SCQF level 7, a major client group for this award, can progress vertically and take optional Units at level 6.

The inclusion of Units from PC Passport enables learners to begin the process of gaining a recognised marketable qualification within the framework of the NC Business. Candidates who wish to complete PC Passport at level 5 for example can choose a suitable optional Unit from Group B. They can then add the further Units required. This should be of particular benefit to candidates who wish to enter employment.

The structure also enables candidates who wish to do so to pursue studies in business subjects available at Higher level. This option may be particularly attractive to candidates wishing to progress to further study. The constituent Units of the Higher courses in Business Management and Economics are included in the optional Units. The external examination Units for both subjects are also included in the optional Units in Group A. Higher Business Management is a well-recognised pathway into study at higher levels in Business. It is also possible for candidates to achieve Higher Economics if they select the appropriate options.

There are also three Units which can be considered as equivalent to the two Units which comprise the Higher Accounting award. These Units have been prepared to ensure that candidates opting for these Units are well prepared for entry in HN awards in Accounting and other financial areas. These Units are supplemented by the Unit Financial Services: Markets, Products and Regulation (SCQF level 6) which should help to widen the progression options open to learners.

The flexibility of the award is further enhanced as structure takes into account that centres are likely to offer the NC in Business as the central part of programmes of 17–20 modules. The new award is, therefore, compatible with existing arrangements especially since choice of Units was influenced by those currently provided by centres.

Candidates will be able, therefore, to supplement the NC in Business with additional Units. As noted above, it would be expected, for instance, that candidates wishing to obtain PC Passport at level 5 would complete the Unit PC Passport: IT Systems (which is worth 0.5 credit) in addition to the 12 credits required for the NC in Business. Candidates wishing to progress to HN awards could, for example, attempt further Units at level 6.

Core Skills

The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 also provides opportunities for candidates to obtain some Core Skills and opportunities to work towards other Core Skills. These are based on the principle that Core Skills development is more meaningful for learners and provides more benefit to employers if it is undertaken in the context of Business.

The award develops Core Skills in several ways. *Communication* at level 5 is achieved through the inclusion of a discrete Unit in the mandatory section of the award. The accompanying Assessment Support Pack ensures that this is contextualised to a business environment. *Information Technology* at level 5 is embedded in the mandatory Unit *PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information*, for which assessment material is available.

Other Units in the mandatory section provide opportunities for learners to work towards aspects of the remaining three Core Skills. Enterprise Activity, for example, provides opportunities to work towards aspects of *Problem Solving* at level 5 as does *PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheet and Database*. Enterprise Activity also provides opportunities to work towards aspects of *Working with Others* while the mandatory Unit in Accounting provides an opportunity to work towards aspects of the Core Skill of *Numeracy* at level 4.

The optional Units provide further opportunities to develop Core Skills. These Units include discrete Core Skills Units at level 5 in *Numeracy*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others*. The inclusion of these Units is deliberate as this will allow learners who select these optional Units to complete a full Core Skills profile at level 5 as part of the NC Business. In addition the optional Units in *Financial Accounting: An Introduction* and *Management Accounting: An Introduction* enable candidates to gain the Core Skill component of Using Number at level 5.

Information Technology at level 6 is embedded in the optional Unit *PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information*.

Most of the other optional Units provide opportunities to work towards aspects of other Core Skills at both level 5 and level 6 depending on the options chosen. Learners have opportunities to work towards *Problem Solving* at level 5 in the Law Unit for example and towards *Working with Others* at level 5 and level 6 in Work Experience, depending on the level of the Unit undertaken.

PC Passport Units such as *PC Passport: Working with Internet and On-line Communications* and *PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheets and Databases* provide opportunities to work towards aspects of Core Skills at level 6 in *Communication* and *Problem Solving*.

Overall, the optional Units provide opportunities for learners to gather evidence for all five Core Skills at level 6.

Full details of Core Skills development are given in Appendix 1.

5.3 **Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer**

Articulation

Although there is no direct articulation from the National Certificate in Business to HN Business, candidates who have completed optional Units at SCQF level 6 will be well prepared to embark on an HN programme in Business or in an associated area.

Credit Transfer

Candidates who have suitable prior qualifications or experience may be eligible for credit transfer for Units in the NC Business. Centres should follow appropriate procedures in cases where this arises.

6 **Approaches to delivery and assessment**

The delivery of the award is at the discretion of individual centres. The NC Business at SCQF level 5 has been designed to be compatible with arrangements in centres in which a full-time programme of 17–20 Units is provided to learners at SCQF levels 4–6. It would be expected, therefore, that centres would continue to offer a programme of Units but that this will include the eight mandatory Units and at least four optional Units from the framework of the NC Business.

The flexibility of the award means that centres can tailor the Unit programmes that they offer to suit their own particular circumstances. Centres could, for example, provide supplementary Units which would assist candidates who wish to progress to particular HN programmes. It may well be possible to use additional optional Units from the NC Business framework for this purpose. Centres may choose to provide learners with the opportunity to gain further certification — in PC Passport, in Core Skills or in qualifications at Higher level.

In some cases delivery may be influenced by the previous background of learners. In the ICT Units for example, some learners, particularly adult returners, may require a little time to orient themselves to the demands of the Unit. In other cases, delivery may have to be adjusted to allow for candidates whose first language is not English.

It is also possible to make other arrangements to deliver the award. For example, it could be delivered as a 12 credit package over a shorter period than a full academic session or through open learning.

The Units chosen for the NC Business are ones which lend themselves to practical methods of delivery and assessment. Specific learning and teaching methods will vary between and within Units but there is a common thread of presenting them in a way which will engage the interest of learners. The emphasis throughout is on exploring business situations and applying ideas from the Units to them.

Assessment Support Packs will be made available for all new Units, including the servicing Units in Skills for Customer Care and Event Organisation as well as for two existing Units, Enterprise Activity and the Core Skills Unit in Communication. These will reinforce the practical aspect of the Unit specification as well as reinforcing a common standard across centres.

Assessment Support Packs also have a critical role in ensuring that delivery of Units is linked to business and business related situations. The pack for Enterprise Activity, for example, has been written to increase candidate awareness of the different activities which make up a business. The Assessment Support Packs have, therefore, been designed to help ensure that a business focus is maintained as much as possible in the delivery of the Units.

7 General information for centres

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for candidates

The National Certificate in Business is designed to enable you to develop skills and knowledge which will help you in the world of Business. It will enable you to acquire skills and knowledge in key business areas such as finance, customer service and marketing as well as helping you to enhance underlying skills relevant to business such as communication and ICT.

Depending on your own preferences, the National Certificate in Business will give you a platform which will allow you to progress into further education or into employment. You can choose options which will help you prepare for Higher National awards such as HNC Business or ones which will develop additional skills which will help you in business related occupations. You may be able to combine options for different purposes.

The National Certificate in Business contains eight mandatory Units. In addition, you must choose a further four Units from a list of options. The options are divided into three groups, A, B and C. You may choose up to four options from Group A but can only pick a maximum one optional Unit from Group B and a maximum of one optional Unit from Group C. Together, the eight mandatory Units and the four optional Units make up the 12 Units you need to successfully complete the National Certificate in Business.

There are no specific entry requirements for the National Certificate in Business. However, for some Units, such as those involving ICT, it will be useful if you already have some basic ideas about computers and information technology.

You can discuss your situation with college staff, who will be pleased to offer you advice on how the course can be of help to you.

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk

SCQF credit points: One SCQF credit point equates to 10 hours of learning. NQ Units at SCQF levels 2–6 are worth 6 SCQF credit points, NQ Units at level 7 are worth 8 SCQF points.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

Dedicated Core Skill Unit: This is a Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills, eg National Units in Information Technology or Communication.

Embedded Core Skills: This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

Signposted Core Skills: This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

Qualification Design Team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the National Certificate/National Progression Award from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Consortium-devised National Certificates/National Progression Awards are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Core Skills

Appendix 1: Core Skills

The mandatory Units achieve the following Core Skills at level 5:

Core Skill	Achieved through
Communication	D01B 11 Communication
Information Technology	F1FC 11 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information
Problem Solving	D36N 11 Enterprise Activity
Working with Others	D36N 11 Enterprise Activity

The mandatory Units provide opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills at level 5:

Core Skill	Developed through
Problem Solving	F1FC 11 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Word Processing and Presentation F1FB 11 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Spreadsheet and Database F391 11 Market Operations and the Scottish Economy F390 11 Marketing: Basic Principles F38X 11 Skills for Customer Care
Information Technology	F1FB 11 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Spreadsheet and Database
Communication	F1FB 11 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Spreadsheet and Database F1FC 11 PC Passport: IT Software – Word Processing and Presenting Information F391 11 Market Operations and the Scottish Economy F390 11 Marketing: Basic Principles F38X 11 Skills for Customer Care

The optional Units achieve the following Core Skills at level 5:

Core Skill	Achieved through
Numeracy	D01C 11 Numeracy (Intermediate 2)
Problem Solving	D01E 11 Problem Solving (Intermediate 2) D36H 11 Work Experience
Working with Others	D01F 11 Working with Others (Intermediate 2) D36H 11 Work Experience

The optional Units achieve the components of the Core Skills at level 5 as listed below:

Core Skill	Developed through
Using Number	F394 12 Financial Accounting: An Introduction F385 12 Management Accounting: An Introduction

The optional Units provide opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills at level 5:

Core Skill	Developed through
Communication	F392 11 Contract Law An Introduction F393 11 Developing Skills for employment F1FD 11 PC Passport: Internet and On-line Communications
Problem Solving	F393 11 Developing Skills for employment F392 11 Contract Law: An introduction F1FA 11 PC Passport: IT Systems
Information Technology	F1FD 11 PC Passport: Internet and On-line Communications F1FA 11 PC Passport: IT Systems

The optional Units achieve the following Core Skills at level 6:

Core Skill	Achieved through
Information Technology	F1FE 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Word Processing and Presenting Information
Problem Solving	D36H 12 Work Experience
Working with Others	D36H 12 Work Experience

The optional Units achieve the components of the Core Skills at level 6 as listed below:

Core Skill	Achieved through
Critical Thinking	DM4W 12 Microeconomics DV4G 12 Business Enterprise DV4K 12 Business Decision Areas: Marketing and Operations DV4L 12 Business Decision Areas: Finance and Human Resources

The optional Units provide opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills at level 6:

Core Skill	Developed through
Problem Solving	F1FJ 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheets and Databases F1FG 12 PC Passport: Working with Artwork and Imaging F1FH 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Security For Users F1FF 12 PC Passport: Working with Internet and On-line Communications F1FE 12 Working with IT Software — Word processing and Presenting Information F38X 11 Skills for Customer Care
Communication	F1FE 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information F1FJ 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheets and Databases F1FH 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Security For Users F1FF 12 PC Passport: Working with Internet and On-line Communications F396 12 Financial Services: Market, Products and Regulations F38X 11 Skills for Customer Care
Information Technology	F1FG 12 PC Passport: Working with Artwork and Imaging F1FH 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Security For Users F1FJ 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Spreadsheets and Databases F1FE 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software — Word Processing and Presenting Information F1FF 12 PC Passport: Working with Internet and On-line Communications
Working with Others	F396 12 Financial Services: Market, Products and Regulations