

The Skillstart group awards: Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3)

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Notes

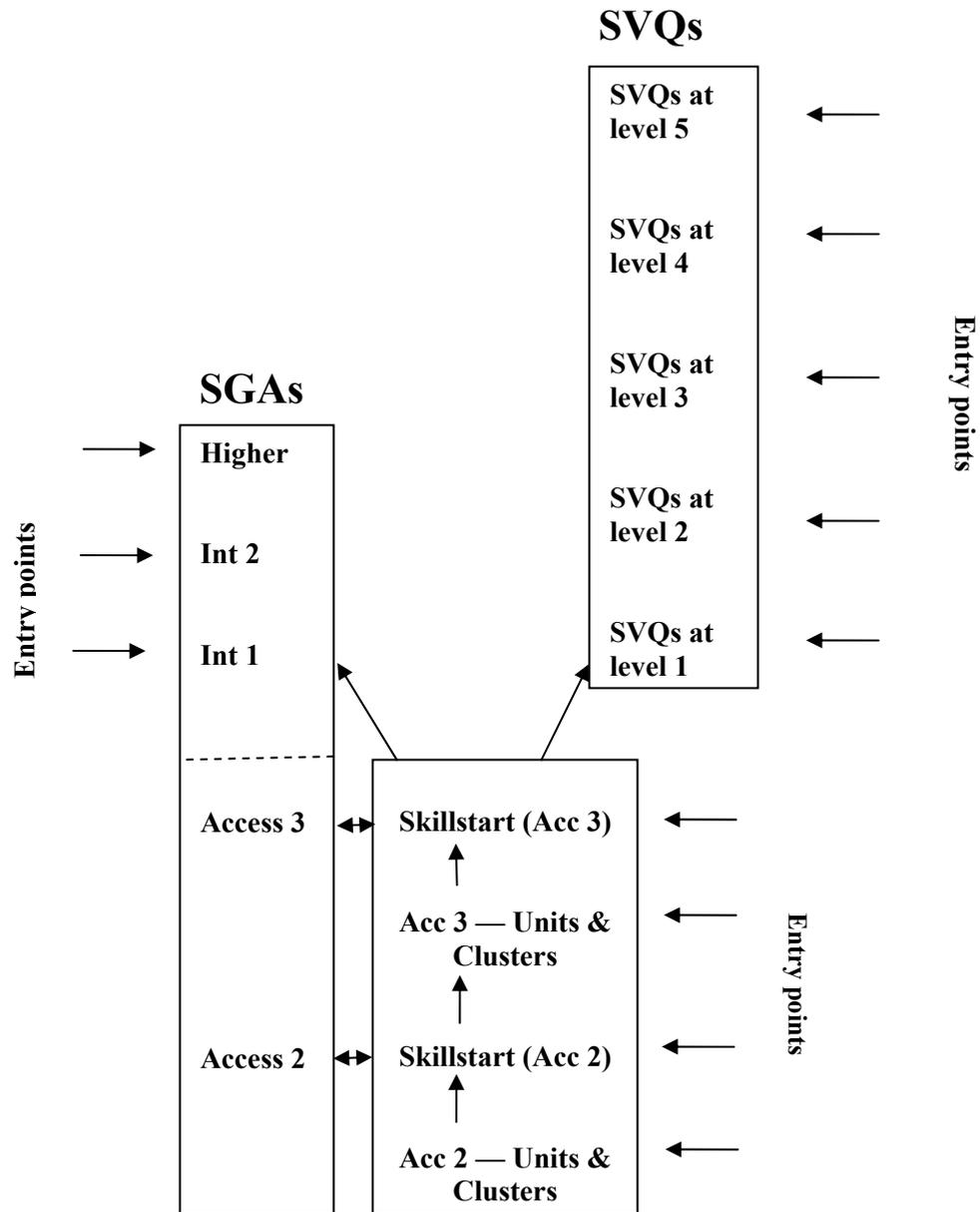
1. Throughout this Guide the term ‘candidate’ is used to refer to both candidates and trainees in schools, post compulsory education, or training.
2. The term ‘Skillstart (Access 2)’ is used to refer to the Skillstart Group Award (Access 2). Likewise ‘Skillstart (Access 3)’ is used to refer to the Skillstart Group Award (Access 3). Sometimes both qualifications are referred to as ‘Skillstart’ or ‘Skillstart awards’.

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Diagram 1

Skillstart Awards: progression



1 Introduction

This guide has been designed for teachers, lecturers or trainers who are considering whether to offer the Skillstart Group Awards. It explains the thinking behind Skillstart, gives some examples of delivery and offers advice on how to start-up and deliver the awards.

Skillstart Awards in the SQA Framework see Diagram 1, page 1

The awards offer candidates a pre-vocational bridge to vocational qualifications at a basic level, for example a bridge to Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) at level 1.

Credit transfer is possible between Skillstart awards and Scottish Group Awards (SGAs) at Access. Credit transfer is two-way. Candidates who have achieved relevant Access Units can build these into a Skillstart award. Alternatively, candidates working towards an SGA may incorporate Skillstart Units that have already been achieved.

The Skillstart awards recognise the candidate's competence in life skills, awareness of the world of work and awareness of citizenship.

A successful Skillstart candidate achieves Core Skills in *Communication*, *Numeracy*, *Information Technology* and *Problem Solving*. In fact, the candidate can achieve all five Core Skills, while working on a Skillstart programme. This is explained later in this guide.

More about Skillstart (Access 2)

Although Skillstart (Access 2) is designed for learners with additional needs and those with social and behavioural problems, it may also be a useful experience for candidates whose progress may be slower or limited in some way.

Skillstart (Access 2) offers candidates the chance to gain a Group Award which recognises their abilities to use work skills in the conditions of the workplace, while being supervised. Completing a Skillstart (Access 2) programme gives the candidate an informed opinion of the workplace that is based on personal experience. The person can then use this experience to identify future learning and vocational training opportunities. Candidates who achieve Skillstart (Access 2) may progress to Skillstart (Access 3).

More about Skillstart (Access 3)

Skillstart (Access 3) is pitched at a slightly more demanding level than Skillstart (Access 2). The award can offer candidates another step in prevocational training on the way to starting an SVQ. This makes the award

especially useful for people who may be looking for a second chance in education or training.

This award is also designed for people, such as adult returners or people who have been unemployed for some time and who have no formal qualifications or who may be lacking in confidence. The award helps them to gain experience in specific vocational areas which in turn may improve their employment prospects or their chances of going on to further training or education.

What Skillstart offers candidates

Skillstart awards offer an important first step along the route to education and further vocational training to candidates.

Candidates may progress from Access level Units or Scottish Group Awards at Access level to Skillstart (Access 2) and then Skillstart (Access 3). This progression route gives candidates the opportunity to experience several vocational settings while being supervised. Achievement of a Skillstart award may improve motivation and boost self-confidence, after which a candidate may choose a particular occupational sector and possibly work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) specific to that sector.

For other candidates, for whom progression to higher qualifications may not be a realistic option, the Skillstart awards offer the chance to gain a substantial vocationally orientated award. For all candidates, the experience of undertaking Skillstart will enhance their understanding of the world of work and their place in this world — their citizenship.

Deciding which award to use

Consideration should be given to the aims of each award when deciding which Skillstart award would best suit an individual candidate.

Many Access Units are designed to encourage candidates to develop basic skills in independent living and some of the Access 2 Units are included in Skillstart (Access 2) allowing candidates a seamless progression from school-based to more vocationally focused education and training.

We have already emphasised that Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3) are designed to give individuals a gradual introduction to vocational training in measured stages. Skillstart (Access 2) encourages candidates to develop work skills in a learning and training environment, eg in a college or training workshop. Skillstart (Access 3) takes the candidate a step further by offering him or her opportunities to develop the vocational skills associated with a particular vocational area.

Skillstart awards provide a bridge to the world of work by:

- ◆ **recognising that candidates with additional needs are entitled to a curriculum that meets their needs**
- ◆ **offering a balanced curriculum of Units designed to accommodate learners working at a slower pace**
- ◆ **offering candidates the opportunity to achieve Core Skills at Access 2**
- ◆ **using activity-based Units to help candidates develop independent living skills**
- ◆ **using activity-based Units to help candidates develop work skills and to make realistic vocational choices**
- ◆ **offering candidates the opportunity to experience more vocationally focused Units in a safe and supported work-orientated environment**

Considering delivery

Skillstart awards are very flexible. They give candidates the opportunity to develop broad-based skills and to build on these skills to achieve a substantial vocationally orientated qualification over a period of time, and not necessarily just in one centre. For example, a person may achieve Access Units at school and then go to college to do pre-vocational Units in college.

Different centres will, of course, want to offer different kinds of learning programmes to suit their own candidates. To encourage this diversity, the Skillstart awards offer a variety of specially-designed Units centring on independent living skills, Core Skills and vocational skills. There is a wide range of Units to choose from in each award, and the Units can be delivered in various groupings.

2 Skillstart Awards in the SQA Framework

Skillstart awards are an integral part of SQA's system of vocational qualifications. The awards are based on National Qualification Units. Skillstart (Access 2) consist of six Units, ie 6 credits, while Skillstart (Access 3) has nine Units, ie 9 credits. The number of credits for each award does not specify the nature or duration of the programme to be undertaken, but, in broad terms, one credit equates to a notional 40 hours of learning and teaching.

Progression

When planning progression for candidates, the following examples of opportunities for credit transfer between Skillstart awards and other awards may be useful.

Candidates can progress in a number of ways to and from Skillstart Awards using qualifications they have already achieved.

Example 1: Transfer to Skillstart (Access 2) from Life Skills and Leavers' programmes using Access 2 Units

A Life Skills programme in school or a Leavers' programme may well contain the following Units which could be used in a Skillstart (Access 2) programme and give candidates a real boost when they start Skillstart.

Transferable Units at Access 3

D0EL 08	Personal Awareness and Development - Personal Profiling for Independent Living (Acc 2)
D531 08	Using a Computer (Acc 2)
EF7K 08	Finding and Keeping a Job (Acc 2)

Example 2: Transfer to Skillstart (Access 3) from Life Skills and Learners' programmes using Access 3 Units

Candidates who have undergone a Life Skills programme in school or a Leavers' programme at the more challenging Access 3 level, may have achieved some of the following units at Access 3 which can be included in Skillstart (Access 3).

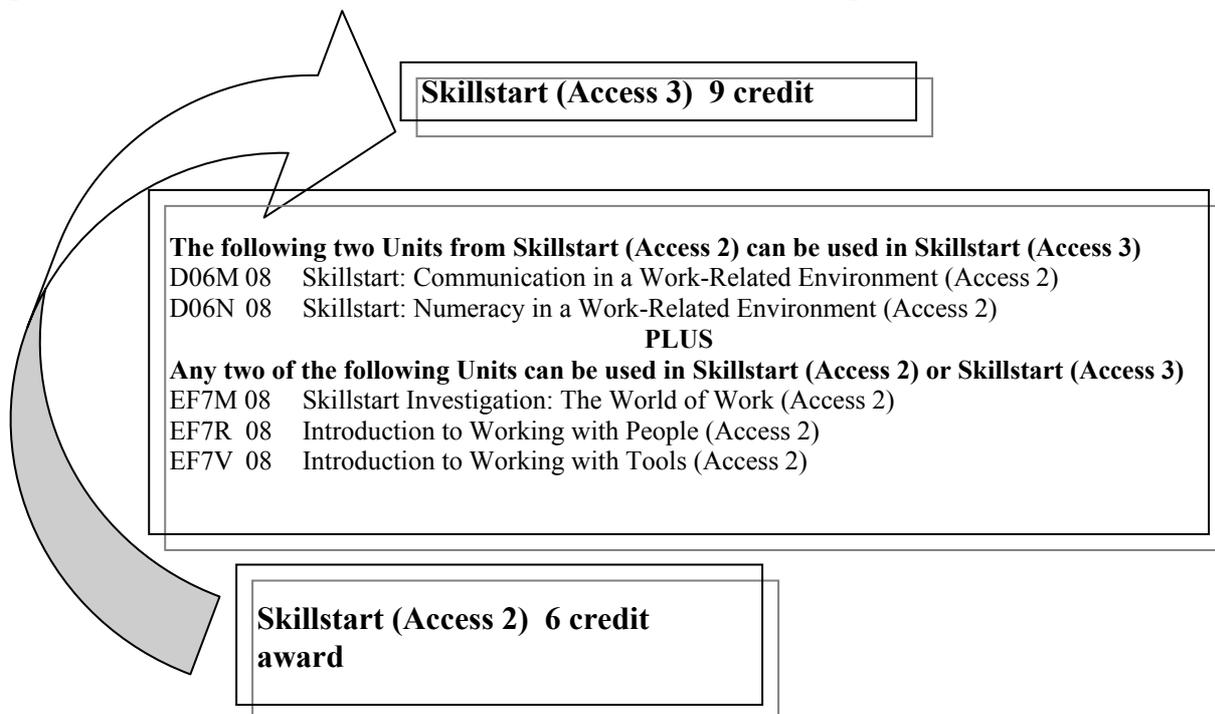
Transferable Units at Access 3

D364 09	Personal Awareness and Development (Acc 3)
D365 09	Social Awareness and Development (Acc 3)
D366 09	Vocational Awareness and Development (Acc 3)
D094 09	Computer Application Software (Acc 3)

Example 3: Progression from Skillstart (Access 2) to Skillstart (Access 3)

Several Units are common to Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3). Candidates who have achieved Skillstart (Access 2) can use up to **four** of their existing Unit credits towards Skillstart (Access 3) and will only need to gain a further five credits to achieve Skillstart (Access 3).

Progression from Skillstart (Access 2) to Skillstart (Access 3) Diagram 2



Of course, not all candidates will want to progress from Skillstart (Access 2) to Skillstart (Access 3). Some may wish to progress to a more vocational qualification such as an SVQ at level 1 or in some case level 2.

Towards citizenship, the world of work and adult life

Skills covered by Skillstart awards form an important part of many existing programmes which help people with additional needs to prepare for adult life through a heightened awareness of citizenship and the world of work. Skillstart awards are not intended to replace these programmes but to offer further opportunities to recognise competence in life skills and to offer vocational options to those who are ready for them.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is a new way of understanding and comparing qualifications in Scotland. Its aims are to:

- ◆ make the relationships between the various qualifications clearer
- ◆ make progression and transfer between qualifications easier by clarifying entry and exit points and routes for progression

SCQF level	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework			SCQF level
	SQA National Units, Courses and Group Awards	Higher Education	SVQs	
12		Doctorate		12
11		Masters	SVQ 5	11
10		Honours Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate		10
9		Ordinary Degree Graduate Diploma/Certificate		9
8		Higher National Diploma Diploma in Higher Education	SVQ 4	8
7		Advanced Higher	Higher National Certificate Certificate in Higher Education	
6	Higher		SVQ 3	6
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade		SVQ 2	5
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade		SVQ 1	4
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade			3
2	Access 2		2	
1	Access 1		1	

The positioning of SVQs in the table gives a **broad** indication of their place in the framework. A major project is underway to clarify the position of SVQs within an overall UK context.

The table does not show every type of qualification. However, the main Scottish qualifications are represented.

The amount of **credit** attached to a qualification indicates how big it is, in terms of the amount of learning required. Credit is expressed in terms of SCQF points — one Unit at Access level is worth 6 SCQF credit points.

Skillstart (Access 2) has 36 SCQF points at SCQF level 2 and Skillstart (Access 3) has 54 SCQF points at SCQF level 3.

Further information is available on the SCQF website: **www.scqf.org.uk**.

3 Activity-based Learning with Skillstart

An important part of the thinking behind Skillstart is that the awards should take an activity-based approach which promotes the ‘hands-on’ style of learning suited to candidates with additional needs. This style of learning has the advantage of increasing candidates’ motivation by letting them sample the attractions and drawbacks of independent living or the challenges of a particular type of job. This in turn, can capture the interest of candidates, and give them the confidence to develop greater independence or seek further vocational experience and training.

Skillstart (Access 2) has optional ‘activity approach’ Units. The ‘activity approach’ Units emphasise practical work. They are intended to be delivered as far as possible under the conditions in the workplace. The Units are designed to include supervision appropriate to candidates with additional needs, thus providing a safe learning environment for candidates.

Example of activity based learning

The eleven Activity Approach optional units in Skillstart (Access 2) all have the same structure: the candidate should:

- Outcome 1** describe the main features of the work situation
- Outcome 2** carry out allocated tasks in the work situation while supervised
- Outcome 3** explain health and safety regulations and safe working practices appropriate to the occupation
- Outcome 4** analyse the contribution made by the experience to his/her awareness of personal suitability for the vocational area

Skillstart (Access 3) moves a step closer to the world of work. The award has Units which are more vocationally focused than those of Skillstart (Access 2) yet are still delivered under supervision in a supported environment.

Other aspects of the Skillstart Approach

Another important aspect of the approach is that candidates have the opportunity to develop a knowledge of the methods, tools and materials used in an occupational area — an experience which is appreciated by potential employers. In a Skillstart programme, it is vital that candidates are helped to develop a realistic appreciation of the types of occupation they could follow. In particular, candidates should be encouraged to follow programmes that best serve their long-term interests.

4 Achieving the five Core Skills with Skillstart

The five Core Skills are:

- ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Numeracy
 - ◆ Information Technology
 - ◆ Problem Solving
 - ◆ Working with Others
- Each Core Skill has National Units at Access 2, Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher.

The mandatory sections of Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3) include four of the five Core Skills, ie Communication, Numeracy, Information Technology, Problem Solving but not Working with Others.

Opportunities to achieve Working with Others are explained later in this section.

Core Skills are the broad, transferable skills that are essential for virtually all occupations and for training and education. Including Core Skills in Skillstart is firmly in line with the views of the Government, employers, trade unionists and educationalists.

Candidates can achieve their Core Skills through automatic certification of the Units in Skillstart. Core Skills will be shown on the candidate's Core Skill profile on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate.

Communication: the ability to write and talk appropriately for a particular purpose and audience, and to understand and interpret information through reading.

Communication Core Skill at Access 2 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3) when your candidate achieves D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment

Information Technology: the ability to use computers to sort, process and retrieve information and to present information in forms appropriate to a particular purpose and audience.

IT Core Skill at Access 2 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 2) when your candidate achieves D531 08 Using a Computer.

IT Core Skill at Access 3 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 3) when your candidate achieves D094 09 Computer Application Software.

Numeracy: the ability to use a range of arithmetical and basic statistical techniques to reach conclusions in practical situations.

Numeracy Core Skill at Access 2 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 2) and Skillstart (Access 3) when your candidate achieves D06N 08 Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment.

Problem Solving: the ability to identify and evaluate problems, to devise approaches to address them, and to plan, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of problem-solving approaches.

Problem Solving Core Skill at Access 2 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 2) when your candidate achieves D0EL 08 Personal Awareness and Development — Personal Profiling for Independent Living.

Problem Solving Core Skill at Access 3 is achieved automatically in Skillstart (Access 3) when your candidate achieves D366 09 Vocational Awareness and Development.

Working with Others: cannot be achieved by successfully completing the Units in the mandatory section of either Skillstart award.

However, candidates who select and achieve Unit D365 09 Social Awareness and Development in Skillstart (Access 3) will achieve the Working with Others Core Skill at Access 3.

It is also possible for you to deliver the Core Skill Unit D01F 08 Working with Others (Access 2) along side Skillstart (Access 2) or Skillstart (Access 3) as explained in the example given.

Delivering Core Skill Unit Working with Others (Access 2) with Skillstart (Access 2) or (Access 3)

Diagram 3

Core Skill Unit
D01F 08 Working with Others (Access 2)

O1 Plan a simple, known task in co-operation with others

O2 Carry out the simple, known task in co-operation with others, with teacher/lecturer support

O3 Review the effectiveness of own contribution to the co-operative task.

Assess using NAB
Working with Others D01F 08/NAB001

During assessment your candidates complete a log:
Section 1 — Planning the task
Section 2 — Carrying out the task
Section 3 — Reviewing the task

The task is embedded in your Skillstart programme

Example of Skillstart Task to achieve Working with Others (Access 2)

Task five members of the Skillstart group of candidates are to prepare a wall display of job or training opportunities in the local community for themselves and their peers.

Cooperative Group Work
O1 each candidate contributes while the group plans activities they will do for this task, (eg getting materials for the display, checking with Skillstart trainers/lecturers on local training and job opportunities), each candidate says which activity(s) he/she would like to do most and agrees with lecturer/trainers on individual activity(s) for the group members.
Assess using Working with Others NAB D01F 08/NAB001 Section 1 — Planning the task

O2 each candidate carries out own activity(s) as well as he/she can with a responsible attitude towards the success of the group work, works co-operatively by giving information to and getting information from others in the group.
Assess using Working with Others NAB D01F 08/NAB001 Section 2 — Carrying out the task

O3 each candidate reviews his/her contribution to the group task by answering the lecturer/trainer's questions about what he/she did and by talking about how well she/he worked with others in the group.
Assess using Working with Others NAB D01F 08/NAB001 Section 3 — Reviewing the task

5 Gathering evidence

The Skillstart awards are designed to help candidates gather evidence of their competence.

Candidates use their normal mode of communication

Candidates are encouraged to use their normal mode of communication when learning and providing evidence to achieve a Unit. Communication may be verbal or non-verbal and may include one or more of the following: speech, writing, signing, lip-reading, Braille, word processing, computer-assisted communication. The one exception is Unit D06M 08 Skillstart:

Communication in a Work-Related Environment which actually **assesses** a candidate's skills in reading, writing, listening and talking.

Centres are encouraged to integrate assessment thus reducing assessment load

Centres are encouraged to integrated assessment. Each Skillstart award should be thought of as a coherent whole and, wherever possible, teaching and assessment should aim to reflect this, by drawing together the skills and knowledge required in the different Units which go to make up the awards.

Of course, it may be more suitable for some of your candidates to take Units one by one over an extended period, perhaps even at different centres. For them, the amount of integration possible may be limited.

Further advice on administering assessment is provided in the following publications (see Appendix 3 for more details):

- ◆ *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*
- ◆ *Supporting candidate assessment of National Qualifications, Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS)*

Support materials for assessment of Skillstart

The following support materials are available to assist you during the assessment of Skillstart awards.

Assessment Exemplars

D06M 08	Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment (Access 2)
D06N 08	Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment (Access 2)
EF7P 08	Skillstart Enterprise Activity (Access 2)
EF7S08	Catering (Food Service): An Activity Approach (Access 2)
EF7X 08	Catering (Food Preparation): An Activity Approach (Access 2)

Assessment exemplars supplement the support notes of Unit specifications as valid, reliable and practicable examples of assessment. They can be used in a variety of ways such as exemplifying the standard expected of candidates in order to achieve the Unit or helping staff in centres develop their own assessments for the Unit.

National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials

National Assessment Bank packs are available for the following Units:

- D0EL 08 Personal Profiling for Independent Living (Access 2)
- D531 08 Using a Computer (Access 2)
- D364 09 Personal Awareness and Development (Access 3)
- D365 09 Social Awareness and Development (Access 3)
- D366 09 Vocational Awareness and Development (Access 3)
- D094 09 Computer Application Software (Access 3)

NAB materials include information about the instruments of assessment to be used to assess individual Units, the conditions under which assessment takes place and the moderation of Unit assessment.

Integrating assessments may involve a single assessor dealing with a number of Units or it may mean close co-operation between assessors. Organising integrated assessment covering a variety of subject matters or types of skill requires considerable care and depends on developing co-operative assessment methods. It may also require integrated approaches to teaching. Forward planning and setting up a management structure to oversee integrated assessment are also very important.

Senior staff may have to draw on the resources of several departments in the centre or work with other centres to achieve this. Schools in particular may wish to offer Skillstart (Access 2) to their leavers helping them to bridge compulsory education and the world of vocational training and work. These schools may find that they are best placed to offer integrated programmes by forming partnerships with a local college which can offer opportunities for candidates to experience a range of teaching and assessment resources which are not available in schools.

Integrating assessment — how to do it

National Qualification Units indicate the evidence required to prove that a candidate is competent in the area covered by the Unit. The outcomes, performance criteria, evidence requirements and, in some cases, note on range tell the assessor what evidence is required.

What assessment involves:

1. Generating and collecting evidence which meets the requirements of the Unit descriptor using:

- ◆ activities which naturally follow learning in the workplace, laboratory, workshop or classroom
- ◆ activities which are set up specially for assessment
- ◆ products created in these settings which are a normal consequence of learning or are specially created for assessment
- ◆ simulations, competence tests, proficiency tests, projects etc

together with

- ◆ verbal or written responses to verbal or written questions
- ◆ reports or prior achievement (in a portfolio or evidence)

2. Judging whether the evidence is sufficient to satisfy all requirements by:

- ◆ measuring the evidence for each outcome against the performance criteria and range statements (if present)
- ◆ taking account of any conditions stated in the Unit specification
- ◆ deciding whether the candidate can be judged competent or not competent

Single pieces of evidence can be used to make judgements about more than one outcome

Although each Unit provides its own assessment schedule, there is no reason why the outcomes in any Unit have to be assessed separately. They can often be dealt with together. Equally, there is no reason why groups of outcomes from different Units cannot be assessed together. It may, in fact, make much more sense to design an assessment to cover outcomes from different Units at one time.

The next examples illustrate how some centres deliver Skillstart programmes.

Examples of delivering Skillstart Programmes

Further Education College

Our 'Step Course' is full-time for students who have been working at Standard Grade General/Foundation Level. The course encourages personal and social development and the development of work related skills. Students are introduced to vocational work areas through taster options in other college departments and through work experience opportunities.

At present most students work towards Skillstart (Access 2) Group Award, with Activity Approach options in Catering, Auto-Engineering, Construction and Office Practice.

In the past students have progressed to mainstream, work based training programmes or full-time employment.

Youth Training Provider

We deliver Skillstart (Access 2) to our 52 'Get Ready for Work' students.

The students all have additional support needs. We use workbooks, practical tasks, individual and group exercises to achieve this.

We tailor our assessment to suit the individual's needs.

Our candidates are aiming for a wide variety of vocational areas and many of them progress from Skillstart (Access 2) to level 1, level 2 or indeed eventually to level 3 SVQs.

Mainstream Secondary School

A group of six Access 2 Units leading to Skillstart (Access 2) Group Award is undertaken by a small group of pupils who do not take modern languages in S3/S4. Pupils are selected for their suitability for the course which is taught for three periods per week by Support for Learning Staff. The course plan is deliberately kept flexible. Communication, Numeracy and Profiling Units run as a thread through the two years, with individual learning outcomes being covered as they become relevant. The Support for Learning staff have constructed the assessments used, tailoring them to meet SQA requirements and the needs of the pupils.

The Enterprise Activity is one of the highlights of the course and has included marketing pot plants, ornamental candles and Christmas stationery.

More examples of integrating assessment

Candidates may have an opportunity to achieve one outcome while in the process of achieving another, for instance where candidates demonstrate Core Skills while achieving other outcomes. Core Skills like Communication or Working with Others might be assessed along with independent living or vocational skills during the following activities: (*see also examples on page 17*).

- ◆ shopping for a residential stay
- ◆ participating in games and sports in an educational environment
- ◆ serving a meal to customers in a training restaurant
- ◆ participating in play activities with children in a supported work environment
- ◆ operating a telephone service in a simulated work environment

In theory, there is no limit to the number of outcomes that can be combined in one assessment. In practice, of course, staff time and other resources, and the need to gather sufficient evidence for each outcome will set limits.

The integrated approach benefits candidates and staff. Designing an assessment to cover more than one Unit outcome avoids the danger of unnecessarily heavy and repetitive workloads. Bringing together outcomes which naturally form a coherent ‘package’ can be more practical and vocationally relevant than outcome-by-outcome assessment. Integrated assessment can also help candidates to appreciate that their skills can be useful in more than one situation whether it relates to daily living or the world of work. In many cases it will be more cost-effective in terms of physical resources and staff time to gather the required evidence in this way.

Managing the process

An integrated approach to assessment can be very rewarding for candidates and staff. It may, however, require changes in the way courses are managed. It needs to be co-ordinated, often across different departments. Planning is very important in order to co-ordinate the process, and to provide an internal structure for ensuring the quality of assessment design and assessment standards.

Cross-departmental liaison

Co-operation across departments is a fundamental part of an integrated approach to assessment. Establishing teams of staff drawn from several departments or sections to design integrated assessments can provide an interesting and effective way of delivering Skillstart, particularly when staff are involved both in identifying suitable Units to deliver and in timing assessment to make the best use of candidates’ cross-departmental learning.

It will still be possible for individual staff to undertake aspects of assessment design on their own and to share these with other staff.

It may be possible for some centres to arrange for groups of staff involved in designing integrated assessments for a particular programme to report to a Skillstart course team. Smaller centres may prefer to identify a Skillstart co-ordinator to do this.

Assessing and recording

For many centres, cross-departmental design of assessments may lead naturally to cross-department delivery of assessment. Again, this may require a degree of co-ordination and planning. You will need to ensure that each assessor is familiar with the requirements of the Unit outcomes, and is competent to make assessments in the subject or occupational area covered.

You will also need a rigorous approach to assessment record-keeping, especially where more than one member of staff, perhaps from different departments, is involved in assessing candidates.

Approaches to learning, teaching and training

Although each Unit includes guidelines on teaching content and context, centres can devise their own teaching strategies. A co-operative cross-departmental approach to developing assessments may lead naturally to a similar approach to teaching and training. An applied, practical approach to teaching and training should help candidates to see the point of Skillstart course work, and encourage them to understand its applicability to real-life situations.

Extra support may also be necessary for staff unaccustomed to the forms of delivery and assessment required by the activity approach Units. Contacts for more help and information are provided at the end of this Guide.

Partnerships

Many centres, especially schools, may find it helpful to set up partnerships with other centres in order to run their Skillstart programmes. A partnership between a school and the local college can help with providing resources.

Some centres may even be able to forge links with local employers who may be able to provide work placements.

Once a partnership has been set up, managing the links and co-ordinating timetables will be an important role for centre management.

Resource implications

One of the main reasons for integrating assessment is that it can reduce the amount of assessment and encourage the efficient use of resources.

Managing Skillstart assessment effectively will almost certainly require some extra resources — this means that at least some of the time saved by adopting a co-operative approach may need to be spent on liaison and planning. Additional factors like the time and cost of travelling between partnership centres will also come into play here. The benefits should outweigh the disadvantages, but to ensure this, centres should consider carefully the resource implications of an integrated approach.

6 Advice on whether to offer Skillstart Group Awards

The final decision about whether a centre should offer Skillstart will, of course, be taken by the centre's managers. The course of action will be influenced by the following considerations:

- ◆ whether a Skillstart award is suitable for a reasonable number of candidates at the centre
- ◆ whether a Skillstart award is appropriate for individual candidates
- ◆ the staff time and resources required

Once management has decided that a Skillstart programme is likely to meet the needs of a sufficient number of candidates, they should then consider in more detail whether you can offer a wide enough range of Units for candidates who may want to take single Units or a full programme. If they decide that they cannot offer a full Skillstart programme, then co-operation with another centre or with a local employer may provide the answer. This may, of course, have funding implications.

Credit accumulation

In deciding on the needs of individual candidates, you should remember that the Scottish Qualifications Authority policy on credit accumulation and transfer means the following:

- ◆ where candidates have already gained a relevant Unit, this counts towards the total number of credits required for a Skillstart award
- ◆ a candidate who has gained a Unit in Core Skills at a more advanced stage than that specified in the qualification, for example, D01B 09 Communication (Access 3) rather than D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment, will be given credit in that area. Where this happens, though, the more advanced Unit will only give your candidate the same number of credits as the Unit listed in the specification for Skillstart.

Single Units and Skillstart

Some centres may wish to allow candidates to take Skillstart Units individually, and we would not wish to discourage this approach where it is appropriate.

7 Introducing a Skillstart Programme: Checklist for Centres

Centres may find the following checklist helpful in deciding whether and how to introduce a Skillstart programme:

Introducing a Skillstart programme

1. Do we have the necessary time, staff, and materials to offer a complete range of Units?
2. Can we organise an internal system (internal moderation) to make sure we maintain consistent standards?
3. If the answer to either of these questions is 'no', can we set up a partnership with another centre to make up the shortfall?
4. Can we organise the assessment of Units effectively, either singly or through integrated assessment?
5. Can we organise/do we have a staff team suitable to co-ordinate teaching and assessment, how often should it meet, who should sit on it, and who should be in charge?
6. Can we arrange flexible timetabling so that staff are free for team meetings?
7. Can we set up a mechanism to ensure that our candidates will be assessed on the basis of consistent standards?
8. Have we already undertaken integrated assessments? Could these be further extended? What impact will this have on teaching methods?
9. Have we already delivered and assessed Access level Units? How can we use this experience to facilitate delivery of a Skillstart programme?

Appendix 1: Skillstart (Access 2)

Group Award Specification

Skillstart (Access 2) Group Award Specifications

G5BK 08 Skillstart (Access 2) — 6 credits required

Mandatory Section (4 credits) all four Units required

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
D06M 08	Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	1
D06N 08	Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment	1
D0EL 08	Personal Awareness and Development — Personal Profiling for Independent Living	1
D531 08	Using a Computer	1

Optional Section (2 credits) Two Units required

Two credits can be taken from the activity-approach Units or one credit from the activity approach Units and one credit from the generic work-related Units.

Activity approach Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
EF7Y 08	The Building Industry: An Activity Approach	1
EF80 08	Warehouse Practice: An Activity Approach	1
EF7F 08	The Manufacturing Industry: An Activity Approach	1
EF7G 08	Land Industries: An Activity Approach	1
EF7W 08	Auto Engineering: An Activity Approach	1
EF7X 08	Catering (Food Preparation): An Activity Approach	1
EF7S 08	Catering (Food Service): An Activity Approach	1
EF7L 09	Office Practice: An Activity Approach	1
EF7J 08	An Appreciation of Retail: An Activity Approach	1
EF7H 08	Working with Children: An Activity Approach	1
EF75 08	Working with the Elderly: An Activity Approach	1

Generic work-related Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
EF7K 08	Finding and Keeping a Job	1
EF7P 08	Skillstart Enterprise Activity	1
EF7R 08	Introduction to Working with People	1
EF7V 08	Introduction to Working with Tools	1
EF7M 08	Skillstart Investigation: The World of Work	1

Core Skills

Mandatory Section provides automatic certification of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication (Access 2)
- ◆ Numeracy (Access 2)
- ◆ Problem Solving (Access 2)
- ◆ Information Technology (Access 2)

Skillstart (Access 2)

In some cases, Units specified in Skillstart (Access 2) can be replaced by Units in a **hierarchical sequence**. Candidates can only use one Unit from a particular sequence to count as credit towards the Group Award.

Refer to SQA for further information.

The hierarchical sequences in Skillstart (Access 2) are as follows.

Unit specified in Skillstart (Access 2)	Replacement Unit(s)
D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	D01B 09 Communication (Acc 3) D01B 10 Communication (Int 1) D01B 11 Communication (Int 2) D01B 12 Communication (H)
D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	EE3R 09 Communication 1: Spoken Communication (Acc 3) and EE3S 09 Communication 1: Written Communication (Acc 3) EE3T 10 Communication (NC) (Int 1) EE3T 11 Communication (NC) (Int 2) EE3T 12 Communication (NC) (H)
D06N 09 Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment	D01C 09 Numeracy (Acc 3) D01C 10 Numeracy (Int 1) D01C 11 Numeracy (Int 2) D01C 12 Numeracy (H)
D0EL 08 Personal Awareness and Development — Personal Profiling for Independent Living	D364 09 Personal Awareness and Development (Acc 3) D364 10 Personal Awareness and Development (Int 1) D364 11 Personal Awareness and Development (Int 2) D364 12 Personal Awareness and Development (H)
D0EL 08 Personal Awareness and Development— Personal Profiling for Independent Living	D01E 09 Problem Solving (Acc 3) D01E 10 Problem Solving (Int 1) D01E 11 Problem Solving (Int 2) D01E 12 Problem Solving (H)
D531 Using a Computer	D01D 09 Information Technology (Acc 3) D01D 10 Information Technology (Int 1) D01D 11 Information Technology (Int 2) D01D 12 Information Technology (H)
EF7P 08 Skillstart Enterprise Activity	D36N 09 Enterprise Activity (Acc 3) D36N 10 Enterprise Activity (Int 1) D36N 11 Enterprise Activity (Int 2)

Appendix 2: Skillstart (Access 3)

Group Award Specification

Skillstart (Access 3) Group Award Specifications

G5BL 09 Skillstart (Access 3) — 9 credits required

Mandatory Section (6 credits)

Four credits must be taken from the core Units and two credits must be taken from the selected Units.

Core Units **all four Units required which gives four credits**

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
D06M 08	Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	1
D06N 08	Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment	1
D366 09	Vocational Awareness and Development	1
D094 09	Computer Application Software	1

Selected Units **Two Units required which gives two credits**

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
D364 09	Personal Awareness and Development	1
D365 09	Social Awareness and Development	1
EF7M 08	Skillstart Investigation: The World of Work	1
EF7R 08	Introduction to Working with People	1
EF7V 08	Introduction to Working with Tools	1
EF19 04 together with EF9F5 11	Organisation of Practical Skills 1 Personal and Social Development: Accident and Emergency Procedures	0.5 0.5

Optional Section (3 credits)

Any three credits must be achieved from the optional section containing Units in Office Practice, Retail, Land-based Skills, Technological Skills, Catering (Food Preparation) and Construction *see below*.

Office Practice Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
EA5K 10	Working in a Reception Area	1
EE4Y 04	Word Processing 1 or	1
EE4T 10	Typewriting 1	1
EE4L 10	Information Technology: Office Applications	1
EE4J 10	Administrative Support 1	1

Retail Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
D0SK 11	Basic Retail Skills	1
D0SN 10	Introduction to Display	1
D0SD 10	either Customer Contact <i>plus</i>	0.5
D04F 10	Selling Skills: An Introduction	0.5
D0SF 11	or Selling Skills	1

Land-based Skills Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
EE8E 11	Use of Hand Tools in Horticulture	0.5
EE91 10	Introduction to Gardening Skills	1
D879 11	Plant Identification	1
D0PV 10	Introduction to Soft Landscaping	0.5
D0LS 10	Introduction to Crops and Soils	0.5
E9JR 11	Basic Care of Mammals	1
D900 10	Tractor Operations 1	1
EE90 10	Introduction to Estate Maintenance	0.5
EE8Y 10	Introduction to Farm Building Maintenance	0.5
EE8F 09	Basic Introduction to Land Based Industries	1
EE85 10	Introduction to Land Based Industries	1

Technological Skills Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
D0JF 10	Design and Make	1
E9CW 04	General Engineering Workshop Practice	1
E7RH 11	Assembly Skills	0.5
E7TA 11	Machinery Maintenance	0.5
ED8F 04	Introduction to Marking Out Procedures	0.5
D0N7 11	Introduction to Graphical Engineering Communication	0.5
E9GS 04	Use and Care of Hand Tools in Motor Vehicle Engineering	0.5
E9GT 04	Use and Care of Workshop Equipment in Motor Vehicle Engineering	0.5
E9GW 04	Craft Practices for Vehicle Trades	0.5
EA0S 04	Introduction to Vehicle Layout	0.5

Catering (Food Preparation) Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
EF0H 10	Introduction to Cookery Processes	1
EG2G 04	Basic Meal Production in Design	1
EF0J 10	Introduction to Food Preparation Techniques	1

Construction Units

Unit no	Unit title	Credits
E973 11	Introduction to Building Craft Science	0.5
E8N0 10	Construction Craft Appreciation	2
D986 11	Introduction to Construction Procedures	0.5
D997 11	Graphical Communication: An Introduction	1
E9D4 10	Construction Drawing 1: Introduction	0.5
E9EP 11	Construction Drawing 2: Orthographic, Isometric and Oblique Projection	0.5
E9D0 10	Power Tools	0.5
E865 11	Introductory Trowel Skills: Walling	1
E862 10	General Appreciation of Trowel Applied Finishes	1
E97H 10	Working with Wood 1	0.5
E99N 10	Working with Wood: Garden Furniture and Fitments	1
E99P 10	Working with Wood: Household Accessories	1
E99R 10	Working with Wood: Hobbies	1
E99S 10	Working with Wood: Wooden Toys	1
E863 09	General Appreciation of Interior Finishes	1

Core Skills

Mandatory Section provides automatic certification of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication (Access 2)
- ◆ Numeracy (Access 2)
- ◆ Problem Solving (Access 3)
- ◆ Information Technology (Access 3)
- ◆ Working with Others (Access 3)

achieved by successful completion of D365 09 Social Awareness and Development.

Skillstart (Access 3)

In some cases, Units specified in Skillstart (Access 3) can be replaced by Units in a **hierarchical sequence**. Candidates can only use one Unit from a particular sequence to count as credit towards the Group Award.

Refer to SQA for further information.

Information on hierarchical sequences of Units

Hierarchical sequences of Units are used in two ways for Skillstart (Access 3).

1. As with Skillstart (Access 2), a Unit specified in the Skillstart award may be replaced by a Unit in a hierarchy of similar Units for example:

D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment can be replaced by one of the following:

- ◆ D01B 09 Communication (Access 3)
- ◆ D01B 10 Communication (Intermediate 1)
- ◆ D01B 11 Communication (Intermediate 2)
- ◆ D01B 12 Communication (Higher)

2. Other Units specified in Skillstart (Access 3) are themselves part of a hierarchy, such a Unit can be replaced by a Unit higher in the same hierarchical sequence for example:

D366 09 Vocational Awareness and Development can be replaced by:

- ◆ D366 10 Vocational Awareness and Development (Int 1)
- ◆ D366 11 Vocational Awareness and Development (Int 2)
- ◆ D366 12 Vocational Awareness and Development (Higher)

Qualifications in a hierarchical sequence are identified by their reference code having the same first four digits:

eg D01B in the 'Communication' example above.

The last two digits are unique to each class of qualification:

09 equates to Access 3
10 equates to Intermediate 1
11 equates to Intermediate 2
12 equates to Higher.

The qualifications may also have the same title as in the examples above.

The hierarchical sequences in Skillstart (Access 3) are as follows.

Unit specified in Skillstart (Access 3)	Replacement Unit(s)
D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	D01B 09 Communication (Acc 3) D01B 10 Communication (Int 1) D01B 11 Communication (Int 2) D01B 12 Communication (H)
D06M 08 Skillstart: Communication in a Work-Related Environment	EE3R 09 Communication 1: Spoken Communication (Acc 3) and EE3S 09 Communication 1: Written Communication (Acc 3) EE3T 10 Communication (NC) (Int 1) EE3T 11 Communication (NC) (Int 2) EE3T 12 Communication (NC) (H)
D06N 09 Skillstart: Numeracy in a Work-Related Environment	D01C 09 Numeracy (Acc 3) D01C 10 Numeracy (Int 1) D01C 11 Numeracy (Int 2) D01C 12 Numeracy (H)
D366 09 Vocational Awareness and Development	D366 10 Vocational Awareness and Development (Int 1) D366 11 Vocational Awareness and Development (Int 2) D366 12 Vocational Awareness and Development (H)
D094 09 Computer Application Software	D01D 10 Information Technology (Int 1) D01D 11 Information Technology (Int 2) D01D 12 Information Technology (H)
D364 09 Personal Awareness and Development	D364 10 Personal Awareness and Development (Int 1) D364 11 Personal Awareness and Development (Int 2) D364 12 Personal Awareness and Development (H)
D365 09 Social Awareness and Development	D365 10 Social Awareness and Development (Int 1) D365 11 Social Awareness and Development (Int 2) D365 12 Social Awareness and Development (H)
EF7M 08 Skillstart Investigation: The World of Work	D01E 09 Problem Solving (Acc 3) D01E 10 Problem Solving (Int 1) D01E 11 Problem Solving (Int 2) D01E 12 Problem Solving (H)
EF19 04 Organisation of Practical Skills 1	D0TJ 10 Organisation of Practical Skills 2 D0TJ 11 Organisation of Practical Skills 3 D0TJ 12 Organisation of Practical Skills 4 EF1X 04 Organisation of Practical Skills 5 EF1B 04 Organisation of Practical Skills 6 EF1C 04 Organisation of Practical Skills 7

Appendix 3: further information

For more information about Skillstart, or to order SQA publications please telephone SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000 or e-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk.

SQA publications:

- ◆ *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (BA2399, September 2004)
- ◆ *Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Schools, Colleges and ETPs* (AA0841/3, AA0840/3, AA0842/3)
- ◆ *Guide to Internal Moderation for SQA centres* (AA1453, December 2001)

The following publication also contains useful information:

- ◆ *Supporting candidate assessment of National Qualifications Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS)* publication code 9090.

For more information on Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) materials contact LTS, Gardyne Road, Dundee DD5 1NY, telephone 01382 443600.