National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Unit code: H9PV 43

Superclass: CD

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Version: 02

Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to provide **basic** knowledge and skills in the use of application packages and types of digital storage. The Unit covers: identification and basic use of application packages; an introduction to software for counting, writing and graphics; and digital storage of information (local and cloud). The Unit also covers the safe and responsible use of computer applications.

The Unit is suitable for a wide range of learners who wish to use a variety of computer applications for social, educational or vocational purposes. It is designed to improve their knowledge, skills and confidence in using a range of computer applications.

On completion of this Unit the learner will possess **basic** knowledge and skills in the use of application packages, and be able to store digital information securely. Successful completion of this Unit will allow learners to progress to other qualifications in Digital Literacy such as the National Progression Award in Digital Passport or PC Passport at SCQF level 4.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit within the National Progression Award in Digital Literacy at SCQF level 3.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

1 Identify the types of computer application packages and their common uses.
2 Use application packages to produce simple information for personal, educational and vocational purposes.
3 Use local and cloud storage.

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 3: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 3)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. No previous knowledge or experience of computer application packages is required.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 3
Core Skill component	None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit Specifications for this Course.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website **(http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html)**.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Identify the types of computer application packages and their common uses.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the different types of application packages.
(b) Identify the common uses of application packages.
(c) Identify appropriate application packages for particular purposes.

Outcome 2

Use application packages to produce simple information for personal, educational and vocational purposes.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify basic features of application packages.
(b) Produce simple information using basic features of application packages.
(c) Produce information that is appropriate for different purposes and audiences.
(d) Use application packages safely and responsibly.
(e) Use spelling, grammar, punctuation and format correctly.

Outcome 3

Use local and cloud storage.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify Units of storage.
(b) Define local and cloud storage.
(c) Choose local or cloud storage for particular purposes.
(d) Store files in local and cloud storage.
(e) Retrieve files from local and cloud storage.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. However, sampling may be used in certain circumstances (see below).

The evidence for this Unit may be written or oral or a combination of these. Evidence may be captured, stored and presented in a range of media (including audio and video) and formats (analogue and digital). Particular consideration should be given to digital formats and the use of multimedia.

Given the level of this Unit, the amount of evidence, and corresponding time spent on assessment, should be minimised but sufficient to satisfy the Performance Criteria. Whenever possible, evidence should be a naturally occurring by-product of teaching and learning. However, it must be produced by the learner. Authentication must be used where this is uncertain.

Evidence is required for two types of competence: evidence of **cognitive competence** (knowledge and understanding) and evidence of **practical competence** (practical abilities).

The evidence of cognitive competence for this Unit will relate to Outcome 1 (all Performance Criteria), Outcome 2 (PC (a)) and Outcome 3 (PC (a), (b), (c)).

Evidence for cognitive evidence may be sampled across the knowledge domain defined by this Unit specification, so long as the sample is unknown, and unpredictable, to the learner. Where sampling is used to assess the learner's knowledge and understanding, an appropriate pass mark should be set.

The evidence of practical competence for this Unit will relate to Outcome 2 (PC (b), (c), (d), (e)) and Outcome 3 (PC (d), (e)). The evidence must:

- include at least **three** pieces of simple information, at least **one** for personal purpose, **one** for educational purpose and **one** for vocational purpose;
- use at least **three** application packages and must include at least **one** for textual information, **one** for numeric information and **one** for visual/graphic information.

Both local and cloud storage solutions must be covered when candidates store the information generated.

Evidence of practical competence may be produced over an extended period of time; but where it is generated without supervision some means of authentication must be carried out (such as oral questioning). The Guide to Assessment provides advice on methods of authentication.

The Guidelines on Approaches to Assessment (see the Support Notes section of this specification) provide specific examples of instruments of assessment.

National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

An important aim of this Unit is to provide the learner with experience in the use of different application packages and methods for storing information created with the application packages. For example, a centre could give learners' access to Microsoft Office to create textual and numerical information and Paint to create images.

A key Outcome of this Unit is that learners have an understanding of application packages and digital storage. Learners should realise that there are a variety of application packages and that they have different purposes. Learners should be able to identify which types of application packages should be used for different purposes.

Another important Outcome of this Unit is that learners should also realise that there are different ways in which they can store the information they create through using the application packages. At the time of writing this could include storage on the desktop PC, Dropbox and OneDrive. For example, learners could be shown how to save information to online storage such as OneDrive in order to allow them to access the information from outside of the centre.

Outcome 1 gives the learner basic introduction to application packages and knowledge on how they can be used. Outcome 2 gives the learner the opportunity to become familiar with the application packages. Outcome 3 provides the learners with knowledge on how to store their information either locally or in a cloud service.

Outcome 1

This Outcome covers an introduction to the different types of application packages that can be used. It is possible that learners may have heard of the application packages, however they may not have had experience in using them or know what they should be used for.

Performance Criterion (a) states the learner should be able to 'Identify the different types of application packages'. The learner should be able to distinguish the different application packages such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Paint.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Performance Criterion (b) states the learner should be able to'"Identify the common uses of application packages'. Once the learners are familiar with the different types of application packages they should then be able to identify what the package is used for. For example, Excel Spreadsheets can be used to create budgets and do calculations on, and Paint can be used to create images.

Performance Criterion (c) states the learner should be able to 'Identify appropriate application packages for particular purposes'. As discussed in the above paragraph, once learners are familiar with the application packages they should then be able to identify what type of package should be used given a certain scenario. For example, PowerPoint would be used if someone wanted to present information.

Outcome 2

This Outcome covers the practical abilities of using application packages to produce simple information for different purposes. Learners may be aware of these packages, however they may not realise what can be created from using them.

Performance Criterion (a) states the learner should be able to 'Identify basic features of application packages'. Once the learner becomes familiar with the application packages, they should be able to identify its basic features. For example, Word can be used to present textual information and it can be formatted using features of the package (fonts, text & background colours, paragraphs) to suit the learners' requirements.

Performance Criterion (b) states the learner should produce simple information using basic features of application packages and (c) states that the leaner should 'Produce information that is appropriate for different purposes and audiences'. By getting experience in using the different types of application packages the learner should be able to then produce their own information and ensure it is appropriate for the purpose intended, whether is it for educational, vocational and personal purposes. For example, learners could create a budget using Excel or create a short report on a topic of their choice using Word.

Performance Criterion (d) states that the learner should 'Use application packages safely and responsibly' and (e) states that the learner should 'Use spelling, grammar, punctuation and format correctly'. By using the application packages the learners should be aware of simple features and be able to create simple information that is suitable for the purpose intended. Learners should be aware that they should be using the application packages responsibly. For example, Paint can be used to create and edit images that the learner may have produced, however these images should be edited to suit the situation given and not for purposes other than that. Learners should also be able to check over information they have created and format using the features of the package as well as checking over their spelling and grammar where necessary. For example, if the learner has created information in Word then they should use the spelling and grammar check as well as then formatting the document appropriately.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Outcome 3

This Outcome covers an introduction to the different types of storage that are available. While the learner may be familiar with terms megabytes and gigabytes, they may not know how this affects the amount of space they have available to store information they create. Learners may have come across the terms 'local storage' and 'cloud storage' before, however they may not fully understand how storing information in these places works.

Performance Criterion (a) states that the learner should be able to 'Identify Units of storage'. The learner should be able to identify how much storage space their device has and how much free space they have to save more information that they create. For example, if a centre allocates the learner space to store information, the learner should know how much space on the network they have used and how much they have left to store their information. Performance Criterion (b) states that the learner should be able to 'Define local and cloud storage'. The learner should know the difference between the two storage options and be able to explain what is meant by both options.

Performance Criterion (c) states that the learner should 'Choose local or cloud storage for particular purposes' and performance Criterion (d) states that the learner should be able to "Store files in local and cloud storage". Learners should be able to store their information either locally or in a cloud service. For example, if a learner is creating information that they would then like to work on at home they should be able to store it in the cloud to access later and know that if they stored it locally they would not be able to do so.

Performance Criterion (e) states that the learner should be able to 'Retrieve files from local and cloud storage'. Once the learner has created information they should be able to retrieve it whether they have stored it in the cloud or locally and know how to retrieve their information from the centre or outside the centre.

A key objective of this Unit is to ensure learners understand that application packages can benefit the user in a variety of ways. Using these application packages can help develop their skills in creating documents for social, educational and vocational use.

This Unit provides basic knowledge for learners to build upon. Learners will have the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally as a result of their greater knowledge of application packages. Successful completion of this Unit will allow learners to progress to other qualifications in Digital Literacy such as the National Progression Award in Digital Passport or PC Passport at SCQF level 4.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

A practical hands-on approach to learning should be adopted to engage learners and exemplify key concepts. However, all practical activities should be underpinned with appropriate knowledge before learners commence these activities.

It is recommended that learners gain practical experience with application packages and different types of digital storage.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

The actual distribution of time between Outcomes is at the discretion of the centre. However, one possible approach is to distribute the available time as follows:

- Outcome 1: 10 hours
- Outcome 2: 20 hours
- Outcome 3: 10 hours

Throughout this Unit, learner activities should relate to their personal or vocational interests. For example, learners can use different application packages to create information which reflect their own interests.

This Unit may be delivered stand-alone or in conjunction with other Units. Where it is delivered alongside other Units, there is an opportunity to contextualise this Unit in terms of the contents of the other Unit(s) since this Unit's contents are generic.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

These Outcomes can be assessed in a variety of ways. A traditional approach would involve the testing of knowledge through a selected response instrument (such as a multiple choice text). The test will sample the knowledge in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. The sample must be sufficiently random and robust to clearly infer competence in the whole knowledge domain. Every performance must be covered in the test; the relative weighting of each one is left to the discretion of the assessor. An appropriate pass mark must be set. The pass mark will be influenced by the instrument of assessment. All of the associated Performance Criteria must be satisfied. For example, multiple-choice test, comprising 25 questions, each with four options (A–D), could have a pass mark of 15.

The remaining practical competencies could be assessed through observation of candidate activity throughout the duration of the Unit (and recorded on an observation checklist). The observation checklist, in addition to specifying the prescribed Performance Criteria, should also include brief details of the candidate's practical task carried out (Outcomes 2 and 3).

The application packages in this Unit are not limited to Word, PowerPoint or Spreadsheet, and it will be at the centre's discretion. However, at least **one** for textual information, **one** for numeric information and **one** for visual/graphic information must be covered in the evidence produced. This will prepare candidates to progress to the NPA PC Passport level 4.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Candidates do not have to use each of the chosen application packages to produce 3 pieces of information for personal, educational and vocational purposes. The **minimum** Evidence Requirements will be three application packages and three pieces of simple information to cover all the purposes. Again, candidates do not have to store each piece of the information generated in both local and cloud storage, as long as both storage solutions are covered in the overall evidence.

Another approach to assessment would be the creation and maintenance of a web log, which would record candidate activity throughout the Unit. This would log, on a daily or weekly basis, what candidates learn and what they do. The log would record all of the learning and practical activities carried out by the candidate. However, their posts would have to satisfy the relevant Performance Criteria. Practical activities could also be recorded via the blog. When practical activity is recorded on a blog (narratively), authentication could involve a photograph or video of candidate activity (this could be included as part of their post). Sampling is not appropriate when this approach is used. While all of the Performance Criteria must be satisfied, the evidence may be distributed across the entire journal. It is not necessary for a specific Performance Criterion to be satisfied entirely within a specific journal entry.

Given that the journal will be completed over an extended period of time, perhaps in a number of locations, the completed log must be authenticated. Professional judgement should be exercised when a Performance Criterion is evidenced across several entries. Not every practical task would require authentication; at this level it is acceptable for some posts to be a simple description of appropriate practical activities. When necessary, separate authentication (such as oral questioning) could be used for verification purposes. Authentication may take various forms including, but not limited to, oral questioning and plagiarism checks. A statement of authenticity should be provided by the candidate to verify the work as their own, and also state any necessary sources and permissions (if any).

The critical aspect is that the blog is an overall accurate reflection of the practical activities (and, therefore, the associated skills) carried out by the learner during the life of the Unit.

Another approach would involve the creation and maintenance of an e-portfolio. The e-portfolio would include all of the statements, identifications, descriptions and selections necessary to satisfy the criteria relating to cognitive competencies, together with digital artefacts that provide evidence of their practical abilities. Digital artefacts would include screenshots, digital photographs, audio and video recordings, etc that collectively evidence candidates' competencies. Some form of authentication would be required. This could be as simple as a statement of originality, signed by the candidate and the assessor.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at

www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities within this Unit to develop learners' Core Skills in:

Communication (SCQF level 3)
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (SCQF level 3)
Numeracy (SCQF level 3)

For example, use of software application packages in Outcome 2 will contribute towards some of the *Communication* skills defined within the Core Skill specification. Awareness and use of computing devices and software packages in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 will contribute towards some of the *ICT* skills defined within the Core Skill specification. Use of simple formulae in Outcome 2 (spreadsheets), and basic awareness of storage limits in Outcome 3 will contribute towards some of the *Numeracy* skills defined within the Core Skill specification.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Information and Communication Technology embedded in it, so when candidates achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Information and Communication Technology at SCQF Level 3.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 3 embedded.	24/11/2015

General information for learners

Unit title: Computer Applications (SCQF level 3)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is to provide basic knowledge and skills to help you use a range of application packages and digital storage. A key goal is to improve your confidence in using application packages to create simple information.

This Unit covers practical skills and key knowledge about application packages and digital storage. You will learn about the different types of application packages and how they can be used for your own use at home, work or in education. You will also learn about the different types of digital storage available to you and how to use both local and cloud storage to save the information you create.

The key skills that you will learn include:

- what application packages are
- how they are used for social, educational and employment purposes
- what digital storage is
- how to store your information locally or in a cloud service

The Unit can be used for personal or business purposes. You could use your knowledge and skills to help you use a range of application packages to improve your knowledge and career prospects.

The assessment of this Unit may take different forms. You might, for example, sit a short test and carry out some practical tasks. Alternatively, you might keep a diary of your work. The assessment will be straight forward and will not take much time.

The Unit is for the beginner. No previous knowledge or experience of computer application packages is required.

By undertaking the Unit you will develop the Core Skills in *Communication*, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 3.

Successful completion of this Unit you may progress to other qualifications in Digital Literacy such as the National Progression Award in Digital Passport or PC Passport at SCQF level 4.