XSQA

Arrangements for:

Professional Development Award in Office Administration

SCQF level 7

Group Award Code: GA11 47

Validation date: September 2010

Date of original publication: December 2010

Version: 04 (August 2017)

Acknowledgement

History of changes

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

Version number	Description	Date
04	Document updated in line with changes to units as a result of the review of HNC and HND Administration and Information Technology.	08/08/17
03	**Revision of Unit:** F7J9 34 Office Technologies has been replaced by HH82 34 and will finish on 31/07/2019.	27/01/17
02	**Revision of Unit:** DE3N 34 'Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication' has been revised by H7TK 34 'Communication: Business Communication' and will finish on 31/07/2016.	29/05/15

Contents

1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the *revised Group Award* of Professional Development Award (PDA) in Office Administration at SCQF level 7 which was *validated in September 2010*. This document includes: background information on the revision of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

This Group Award replaces the PDA Certificate in Office Administration (G8XJ 47) which was introduced April 2008.

This Group Award is one of a suite of PDAs in Administration and Technology, at SCQF levels 7 and 8. This PDA is designed to enable candidates to improve their professional practice in particular their customer care, communication and negotiation skills.

2 Rationale for the revision of the Group Award

In March 2010, the associated HNC/D in Administration and Information Technology and HNC/D Business were re-validated. In August 2010, the PDAs within the Industry and Business sector were reviewed to examine the impact the revisions of these awards might have on linked PDAs. The replacement of the Unit Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness with Personal Development Planning within the HNC/D Administration and IT framework affected a number of the aims within the PDA in Office Administration, and it was agreed that a limited review of this PDA take place.

2.1 Market research, consultation and development processes

Centres were consulted on the proposed changes, professional bodies were contacted and government documents[1] relating to employment skills and competencies were reviewed.

Results of earlier consultation with HNC graduates and employers were deemed still relevant and no further consultation occurred with these two stakeholders.

The proposals were deemed relevant and appropriate by the large majority of respondents.

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[1] Futureskills Scotland, Work Skills Scotland, 2008 [online]
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/labour-market/commissioned-research/work-skills-in-scotland [accessed 11/09/2010]

The following table summarises the consultation methods employed:

Stakeholder	Method of consultation
Centres	Email requesting feedback on SQA findings and proposal.
Council for Administration	Email with attachment outlining proposals and requesting comment were sent to the Council for Administration (CfA) and followed up by telephone calls.
Professional bodies	Email with attachment outlining proposals and requesting comment were sent to Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA) and the Institute of Administrative Management (IAM).

3   Aims of the award

The aims of the PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7 are to provide a continuous professional development route in administration and IT skills. Successful candidates will achieve a good level of technical and IT competence, as well as the opportunity to develop across the broad competences mentioned above.

3.1   General aims of the award

1   To provide candidates with personal and professional development opportunities
2   To provide a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) vehicle for candidates employed in an administrative capacity
3   To develop study and research skills
4   To enable career progression and job mobility
5   To enable progression within SCQF

3.2   Specific aims of the award

6   To develop technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice
7   To develop personal effectiveness
8   To develop customer care skills
9   To develop communication and presentation techniques
10   To develop interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role
11   To develop skills using technology in an administrative role
12   To develop an awareness of issues such as current legal and regulatory requirements relating to an administration environment

3.3 Relationship of the Units to Aims

Unit title	Unit code	Aims
Office Administration	F7JA 34	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Digital Technologies for Administrators	HH82 34	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12
Communication: Business Communication	H7TK 34	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10
Personal Development Planning	DE3R 34	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11,

3.4 Target groups

The PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7 is suitable for a wide range of candidates including:

♦ candidates employed within an administration role who wish to enhance their career prospects
♦ candidates in employment seeking a vehicle for CPD
♦ adult returners to education
♦ candidates undertaking the HNC Administration and Information Technology

3.5 Employment Opportunities

The PDA in Office Administration will prepare candidates for employment in administrative roles within a wide range of public and private sector organisations. The type of positions, which may be taken up by candidates within the business and administrative environments include[2]:

♦ Receptionists
♦ Secretaries
♦ Virtual Assistants
♦ General Administrators

This award will allow candidates to formalise and/or extend their skills, which will allow development in their career.

4 Access to award

Access to the award will be at the discretion of the centre. In general, entry should be open to any candidate who can demonstrate, by formal qualification or experience, a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the award. It would be beneficial for candidates to be competent in communication and IT skills to SCQF level 5 and possess good personal and interpersonal skills.

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[2] All the following are terms used by the Institute of Professional Administrators

4.1 Formal Qualifications

The following are examples of formal qualifications, which could be recommended as suitable entry criteria:

♦ Communication skills at SCQF level 5 or equivalent, examples of relevant Units would include: EE3T 11 Communication Intermediate 2; F3GB 11 Communication: Core Skill Intermediate 2
♦ Core Skill of Working with Others at SCQF level 5: F3GE 11 Working With Others Core Skill Intermediate 2
♦ ICT Core Skills at SCQF level 4: F3GC 10 Information and Communication Technology at Intermediate 1
♦ NQ/SVQ in Administration level 2

4.2 Work Experience

Mature candidates with suitable experience of working in an administration environment.

4.3 Speakers of other languages

Overseas students whose first language is not English should have IELTS 5.0 or 5.5 as a minimum.

4.4 Progression to HNC

As all Units are mandatory within the HNC Administration and Information Technology framework and mandatory/optional within the HNC Business framework, candidates could progress to the full HNC. Thereafter, as previously agreed with universities, there are articulation routes into degree programmes.

4.5 Recommended Core Skills Entry Profile

It is recommended that candidates possess the following Core Skills, or equivalent:

Core Skill or component	SCQF level
Communication	5
Working with Others	5
ICT	4
Problem Solving	4

5 Group Award structure

Candidates will be awarded a PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7 on successful completion of all the Units listed. This PDA comprises 4 mandatory Units, totalling 32 SCQF credit points/4 SQA credits at SCQF level 7.

5.1   Framework of Units

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Office Administration	F7JA 34	8	7	1
Digital Technologies for Administrators	HH82 34*	8	7	1
Personal Development Planning	DE3R 34	8	7	1
Communication: Business Communication	H7TK 34*	8	7	1

*Refers to History of Changes

5.2   Core Skills

Successful candidates will exit this award with the following Core Skills profile:

♦   Communication at SCQF 6
♦   ICT at SCQF 5
♦   Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF 5

Opportunities to develop further Core Skills include:

♦   Numeracy signposted but unlevelled
♦   Problem Solving at SCQF 6

The table below shows where these Core Skills/Core Skill components are located.

Unit title	Unit code	Core Skills
Office Administration	F7JA 34	♦ Communication: **signposted** at SCQF 6
Digital Technologies for Administrators	HH82 34	♦ Communication: Written **signposted** at SCQF 6, ♦ Problem Solving: **embedded** at SCQF 5
Communication: Business Communication	H7TK 34	♦ Communication **embedded** at SCQF 6
Personal Development Planning	DE3R 34	

It is important however to remember that the Personal Development Planning Unit will contribute to the candidates' awareness of their Core Skills profile and help them to identify and pursue opportunities for their development. Even though the programme has not provided specific detail, Core Skills are being developed in every HN Unit.

The context for the Personal Development Planning Unit is stated as:

♦ *'- to develop the core skills required by their HN programme in an integrated manner OR*
♦ *- to prepare for progression to employment OR*
♦ *- to prepare for progression to a degree or professional qualification OR*
♦ *- to develop other skills in preparation for the next stage of their careers'*

5.3 Signposting to National Occupational Standards

In April 2010, the Council for Administration (CfA) produced their revised National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Business and Administration. They now have a suite of 94 NOS - increased from 51. The SVQs derived from these NOS are still under review; however, it is believed that this award retains an appropriate range of underpinning knowledge and skills relevant to the revised NOS. CfA confirmed that the content of this award remains relevant and appropriate to the field of business and administration.

5.4 Credit Transfer

Where candidates have completed individual Units from the predecessor framework, they can be given credit transfer on a Unit by Unit basis. Credit transfer can be given where there is broad equivalence between the subject-related content of the Units, ie the Knowledge and/or Skills have not changed significantly, or where they are covered in the Unit for which credit is being awarded.

5.5 Transition arrangements

Where candidates have partially completed the predecessor PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7, transition arrangements will need to be agreed on a unit-by-unit basis. (see section 5.4 Credit Transfer)

5.6 Articulation and professional recognition

5.6.1 Other SQA qualifications

There are progression opportunities to the HNC in Administration and Information Technology and to the HNC in Business.

5.6.2 Links to Industry Standard Qualifications

This PDA provides a range of underpinning knowledge and skills relevant to the following qualifications from SQA and other awarding bodies:

♦ PC Passport (SQA)
♦ European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
♦ Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)

5.6.3 Higher Education

There are no agreed articulation routes directly into degree programmes, however, successful candidates who progress onto one of the above mentioned HNCs may then continue into Higher Education.

5.6.4 Professional Bodies

Successful graduates may apply for membership to the Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA) but may be required to sit extra examinations.

For candidates interested in pursuing such membership further, this qualification provides underpinning skills and knowledge for the following Institute of Administrative Management qualifications (IAM):

♦ Level 4 Diploma in Administration Management

This would lead to Student membership of the Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA)

6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 General

The evidence requirements focus on the knowledge/skills that candidates should perform/use and the assessment methods are not prescribed. This means that there is much more flexibility in when and how the evidence is gathered. Rather than delivering and assessing units as individual components and thereby increasing the possibility of assessing similar evidence on more than one occasion, the table below gives suggestions on how delivery and assessment may be reduced by integrating Units.

The suggestions below are not mandatory and there may well be alternative approaches but they are designed to prompt explicit integration opportunities for centres and candidates.

It is hoped that by doing this candidates will be able to appreciate that all units are relevant to their chosen course/vocation and they constitute a coherent, attractive and very relevant programme, which will equip candidates with the knowledge and/or skills needed for today's working environment.

There is no single approach to the delivery and assessment of the units listed. Centres may use a range of teaching and learning approaches including self-study, workshops, regular classes and group tasks.

Each unit provides details of the Evidence Requirements and any assessment conditions that apply. However, centres remain responsible for ensuring the authenticity of work produced by candidates.

ACROSS 1 AND 2 SEMESTERS	
Communication: Business Communication	H7TK 34

• Outcome 1 could be taught/assessed alongside Office Administration and/or Office Technologies – helping candidates to determine good quality source materials for their assessments • Outcome 2 could be taught/assessed alongside Office Administration, particularly when considering 02 and/or 03 • Outcome 3 could be taught/assessed alongside Office Technologies, particularly for 01 recommending new technologies for an existing office.	
Personal Development Planning	DE3R 34
SEMESTER 1	
Office Administration	F7JA 34
SEMESTER 2	
Digital Technologies for Administrators	HH82 34

6.2 Open Learning

All Units may be delivered through Open Learning. Centres could develop resources that include hard copy booklets, use a virtual learning environment and/or e-assessment technologies. If centres can offer the use of mentored discussion forums, wikis and other developing technologies to reduce the feelings of isolation and encourage collaboration even from a distance, this will help Open Learning candidates remain motivated and on track.

Each Unit provides details of the Evidence Requirements and any assessment conditions that apply. Every effort has been made to ensure there are no artificial barriers to achievement for Open Learning candidates, however, it remains the responsibility of the centre to ensure authenticity of work produced.

6.3 E-learning

Centres are encouraged to use new technologies to support and enhance the delivery and assessment of this group award. Formative E-assessment materials may be developed over the next few years. More information about online resources available via SQA's SOLAR project can be found at the website – www.sqasolar.org.uk

6.4 Resources

Centres should keep up-to-date with developments in legislation and business practices relevant to the knowledge and skills within this group award.

7 General information for centres

Disabled candidates 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 moderation

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

External moderation 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 moderation 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 Professional Development Award in Office Administration at SCQF Level 7 offers you an opportunity to enhance your knowledge and skills in administration. The award will provide you with the skills, in particular the soft skills of customer care, communication and negotiation skills, required to carry out administration functions effectively and efficiently within an organisation. You will have the opportunity to develop IT knowledge and skills, in relation to using modern office technologies for administration purposes.

You will learn about the practical approaches needed for successful communication in the workplace. You will also develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, which improve your personal effectiveness.

This PDA will provide you with a vehicle to formalise your skills or as a CPD tool. On completion of the PDA you may continue study towards another PDA or the full HNC Administration and Information Technology.

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification 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 credits: One HN credit is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points. This applies to all HN Units, irrespective of their level.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HN Units will normally be at levels 6–9. Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8.

Subject Unit: Subject Units contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

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 related Core Skill/Core Skill component.

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

Qualification Design Team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the HNC/D 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 HNCs and HNDs are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.