



Group Award Specification for:

**Professional Development Award in Dental
Radiography (Operator) for Dental Care
Professionals at SCQF level 9**

Group Award Code: GJ6F 49

Validation date: 25 June 2014

Date of original publication: 30 June 2014

Version: 02 (December 2022)

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1 Introduction

This document was previously known as the Arrangements document. The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the qualification
- ◆ provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- ◆ inform course managers teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- ◆ provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities

This award is an occupationally-specific, sector-led qualification that has been developed under the Design Principles for Professional Development Awards. It has been produced in collaboration with key stakeholders from the NHS.

The new qualifications will form part of a suite of occupationally-specific awards for the oral health care domain. Pre-registration qualifications include:

- ◆ SVQ3 in Dental Nursing at SCQF level 7*
- ◆ PDA in Dental Nursing at SCQF level 7*
- ◆ HNC in Oral Health Care: Dental Nursing at SCQF level 7
- ◆ PDA in Oral Health Care: Dental Administrators at SCQF level 6

*Note — Achievement of the SVQ and PDA are required to become eligible for GDC registration

This PDA has been produced in response to a need for clear progression and articulation routes for registered dental nurses who seek to extend their clinical duties within their professional scope of practice, as defined by their regulatory body, The General Dental Council (GDC) and to contribute towards their continued professional development.

There are a range of post-registration qualifications available covering topics such as sedation, special care provision and facilitating learning and training. Further details can be found on the SQA website.

The GDC Scope of Practice 2013 can be accessed here:

[http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Standards/Documents/Scope%20of%20Practice%20September%202013%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Standards/Documents/Scope%20of%20Practice%20September%202013%20(3).pdf)

2 Qualification structure

The design principles for Professional Development Awards at SCQF level 7–12 stipulate that the qualification:

- ◆ will be made up of a minimum credit value of 16 SCQF credit points
- ◆ will be made up of at least 2 Units
- ◆ will have at least half the SCQF credit points at the level of the Group Award

This Group Award meets the design principles as follows:

- ◆ It is made up of 2 HN Unit credits
- ◆ It comprises 16 SCQF credit points which are at SCQF level 9

2.1 Structure

4 code	2 code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
H0AH	36	Dental Radiography: Operator	2	16	9

3 Aims of the qualification

The principal aim of this award is to provide registered dental nurses with the opportunity to achieve an award that meets the legislative requirements associated with Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000, (IR(ME)R 2000), (and updated Regulations of 2006).

NOTE: The supervising dentist (or other appropriately qualified person) must hold legal responsibility in terms of IR(ME)R when the learner is undertaking the exposure of patients to ionising radiation. The learner may not be named 'operator' in the Employers IR(ME)R Procedures until training is complete and competence is achieved.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

- ◆ enable progression within the SCQF
- ◆ provide opportunities for career planning and enhance learners' future employment prospects
- ◆ develop transferable skills, eg organising/planning/personal effectiveness/team working/time management/record keeping
- ◆ develop the Core Skills, ie *ICT/Communication/Problem Solving/Working with Others and Numeracy*
- ◆ develop upon the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, ie
 - successful learners
 - confident individuals
 - responsible citizens
 - effective contributors
- ◆ address aspects of the GDC Scope of practice and continued professional development requirements

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

To enable learners to develop essential knowledge and skills, namely:

- 1 knowledge of the fundamentals of radiation physics, the production of ionising radiation and the properties and interaction of X-rays.
- 2 detailed knowledge of the principles of radiation protection.
- 3 practical skills in the production of intra and extra oral radiographs using traditional and/or digital systems.
- 4 knowledge and ability to carry out non-clinical audit in relation to film-handling, imaging and quality assurance.
- 5 to offer a route for registered dental nurses to extend their clinical duties within their professional scope of practice, as defined by their regulatory body, The General Dental Council (GDC) and to contribute towards their continued professional development.
- 6 to enable progression to the HND in *Dental Nursing*.
- 7 to develop advanced professional attitudes and practice in relation to patient treatment and support.

4 Recommended entry to the qualification

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. Learners should be registered with the General Dental Council (GDC). It is essential that learners undertaking this award have the support (and direct supervision) of a registered dental practitioner, or depending on their workplace an appropriately qualified person to validate workplace evidence.

4.1 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification. The information should be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	5	Report writing, supporting patients, case study development
Numeracy	5	Completing patient charts, examining quantitative data
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	Use of specialist software, search engines, word processing packages
Problem Solving	5	Overcoming barriers
Working with Others	5	Patient contact, working with colleagues

5 Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

This qualification was designed to meet a specific purpose and what follows are details on how that purpose has been met through mapping of the Units to the aims of the qualification. Through meeting the aims, additional value has been achieved by linking the Unit standards with those defined in National Occupational Standards and/or trade/professional body requirements. In addition, significant opportunities exist for learners to develop the more generic skill, known as Core Skills through doing this qualification.

5.1 Mapping of specific qualification aims to Unit

Code	Unit title	Aims						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H0AH 36	Dental Radiography: Operator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

To enable learners to develop essential knowledge and skills, namely:

- 1 knowledge of the fundamentals of radiation physics, the production of ionising radiation and the properties and interaction of X-rays.
- 2 detailed knowledge of the principles of radiation protection.
- 3 practical skills in the production of intra and extra oral radiographs using traditional and/or digital systems.
- 4 knowledge and ability to carry out non-clinical audit in relation to film-handling, imaging and quality assurance.
- 5 to offer a route for registered dental nurses to extend their clinical duties within their professional scope of practice, as defined by their regulatory body, The General Dental Council (GDC) and to contribute towards their continued professional development.
- 6 to enable progression to the HND in *Dental Nursing*.
- 7 to develop advanced professional attitudes and practice in relation to patient treatment and support.

5.2 National Occupational Standards (NOS) and/or trade body standards

The Sector Skills Council for Dental Nursing National Occupational Standards is Skills for Health.

A full listing of NOS can be downloaded from www.ukstandards.co.uk

The General Dental Council (GDC) is the statutory body that regulates dentistry in the United Kingdom. Its stated aims are to regulate the profession and protect the public and to that end it restricts who can legitimately work in any capacity in the provision of dental care. The GDC sets out the standards of conduct, performance and ethics that govern all dental professionals. It specifies the principles, standards and guidance which apply to all members of the dental team.

A full explanation of *Standards for the Dental Team* and the *Scope of Practice* for all Dental Care Professionals (DCP) can be downloaded from: www.gdc-uk.org

The Evidence Requirements contained within the Unit specification focus on the core curriculum of Dental Radiography as outlined in the, ***British Society of Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology Core Curriculum in Dental Radiography for Dental Care Professionals***

5.3 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Core Skill signposting: learners will have the opportunity to develop aspects of the following Core Skills.

Unit code	Unit title	Communication		Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
H0AH 36	Dental Radiography: Operator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.4 Assessment Strategy for the qualification

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

Centres are reminded the 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 transferrable to work situations or higher education.

Given the health and safety and quality assurance implications of the Evidence Requirements, it is mandatory that approved centres comply with 100% internal and external verification procedures.

The 'appropriately qualified person' referred to in Section 4 of this document could include a specialist dental radiographer or radiography manager who has IR(ME)R responsibilities.

Unit	Assessment			
	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Dental Radiography: Operator	Tube — head diagram to be labelled Short answer/multiple choice question sheet (closed-book).	Short answer/multiple choice question sheet (closed-book).	Learner log-book containing 40 (forty) patient log-sheets (range is detailed in the Unit specification).	Report — detailing the process and Outcomes from the non-clinical audit of the 40 radiographs produced for O3.

Please refer to the Assessment Guidelines section of the Unit specification for further detailed information on assessment.

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 Sequencing/integration of Units

This Unit has been designed to be delivered and assessed as a single programme of learning. Centres may wish to deliver the Unit to learners for reasons of CPD or to meet an identified gap where learners have presented with RPL.

Opportunities for integration of assessment within the Unit have been identified and are explained within the Unit specifications.

6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full Group Award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full Group Award.

The recognition of prior learning may **not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of Units and assessments:

- ◆ HN Graded Units
- ◆ Course and/or external assessments
- ◆ Other integrative assessment Units (which may or not be graded)
- ◆ Certain types of assessment instruments where the standard may be compromised by not using the same assessment method outlined in the Unit
- ◆ Where there is an existing requirement for a licence to practice
- ◆ Where there are specific health and safety requirements
- ◆ Where there are regulatory, professional or other statutory requirements
- ◆ Where otherwise specified in an Assessment Strategy

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk

The following sub-sections outline how this Group Award may be recognised for professional and articulation purposes.

6.2.1 Articulation and/or progression

Successful completion of this PDA will offer learners the opportunity to progress within the HND in Dental Nursing.

6.2.2 Professional recognition

There is no professional recognition attached to achievement of this qualification.

6.2.3 Credit transfer

It may be possible for learners to request full or partial credit transfer for the PDA by means of previous achievement of equivalent qualifications from other awarding bodies, eg The NEBDN Certificate in Dental Radiography, however such credit transfer is at the discretion of the delivering centre and will be subject to SQA's external verification quality assurance process.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

There may be opportunities to use e-assessment in this Unit perhaps in the form of an e-portfolio or online question papers. A centre-devised supervision agreement should detail controlled conditions to ensure authenticity of evidence.

6.4 Support materials

There is no Assessment Support Pack for this Unit. Example log-sheets are available to download from both the Dental Nursing HND and PDA in *Dental Radiography: Operator* web-pages of the SQA website.

6.5 Resource requirements

It is recommended that teaching and assessment staff are experienced dental practitioners who hold relevant academic qualifications in this area at this SCQF level or above.

The 'appropriately qualified person' referred to within the Unit specification may be a registered dental practitioner, specialist dental radiographer or radiography manager who has IRRMER responsibilities.

7 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The Unit specification making up this Group Award has been designed as far as is practicable to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will 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.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this qualification should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

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

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* (www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment).

8 Glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills: is where the assessment evidence for the Unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner successfully completing the Unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the Unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Finish date: The end of a Group Award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the Group Award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- ◆ learners may not be entered for the Group Award
- ◆ the Group Award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS)

Graded Unit: Graded Units assess learners' ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Their purpose is to add value to the Group Award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage learners to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

Lapsing date: When a Group Award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- ◆ the Group Award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue
- ◆ the Group Award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived
- ◆ no new centres may be approved to offer the Group Award
- ◆ centres should only enter learners whom they expect to complete the Group Award during the defined lapsing period

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk.

SCQF credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6–9 and Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

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

Signposted Core Skills: refers to opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.

General Dental Council (GDC) is the statutory body that regulates dentistry in the United Kingdom

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up to date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a Unit is revised by another Unit:

- ◆ No new centres may be approved to offer the Unit which has been revised.
- ◆ Centres should only enter learners for the Unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the Unit before its finish date.

Version Number	Description	Date
02	Revision of Outcome 3 evidence requirements to remove unnecessary Occlusal and Bisecting Angle techniques and reduce replication of evidence.	19/12/22

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution of NHS Education for Scotland to the development of this qualification.

9 General information for learners

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

This qualification is a Professional Development Award in *Dental Radiography: Operator* at SCQF level 9. PDAs are principally designed for those already in a career or vocation who wish to extend or broaden their skills base. Successful completion of the PDA may allow you the opportunity to extend your clinical duties within your professional scope of practice, as defined by the General Dental Council and will contribute to your continued professional development (CPD).

PDAs are often embedded within another qualification such as HNC/HND to provide learners with progression opportunities. This PDA is embedded within the HND in Dental Nursing.

To undertake the PDA you should be registered with the General Dental Council as a dental care professional and have the support and direct supervision of a registered dental practitioner or specialist dental radiographer or radiography manager, each of whom must have IR(ME)R responsibilities.

The PDA has been designed to provide you with the opportunity to achieve an award that meets the legislative requirements associated with Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017, (IR(ME)R 2017).

The PDA in *Dental Radiography: Operator* at SCQF level 9 contains one double-credit Unit.

To achieve the Unit you will complete evidence for four Outcomes:

- ◆ Explain the production, properties and interactions of x-rays.
- ◆ Explain the principles of radiation protection.
- ◆ Produce intra and extra oral radiographs using traditional and/or digital systems.
- ◆ Demonstrate the principles of film handling, imaging and quality assurance.

Assessment for Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 will be closed-book question papers. Assessment for Outcomes 3 and 4 will be based around the production and quality assurance process relating to 40 radiographs, produced by you in practice. All evidence for these two Outcomes can be stored in a log-book.

Throughout the Unit you will also have the opportunity to develop your Core Skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6, *Numeracy* at SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5.

You will also develop transferable skills in Evaluation, Report Writing and Reflective Practice.

