SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Digital Technologies for Administrators (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HP0M 47

Superclass:	CC
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Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to develop the knowledge and skills required to use digital technology effectively to support administrative functions. The unit will be relevant to learners wishing to enhance their knowledge and skills in the use of ICT, social media, collaborative software and web services in a business context, or who are interested in a career as an administrator or digital/IT administrator.

Outcomes

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

1   Investigate and explain the effective use of ICT networks in the modern business environment.
2   Investigate and explain the effective use of social software in the modern business environment.
3   Use web services and collaborative software to inform, plan and organise work.

Credit points and level

1 SQA credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if learners have some familiarity with administrative functions.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill   Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

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.

Opportunities for integration of delivery and assessment with other units in a Group Award may be possible.

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**.

Unit specification: statement of standards

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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.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Investigate and explain the effective use of ICT networks in the modern business environment.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ ICT networks
♦ Mobile devices
♦ Data storage
♦ Network security
♦ Benefits and risks of ICT innovations

Outcome 2

Investigate and explain the effective use of social software in the modern business environment.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Types of social software
♦ Applications of Social Media in a professional context
♦ Professional communication and etiquette
♦ Legislation relating to social media communications
♦ Web analytics

Outcome 3

Use web services and collaborative software to inform, plan and organise work.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Verification and validity of information
♦ Web feeds
♦ E-checklists
♦ Web services
♦ Evaluation of feedback
♦ Collaborative software

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

Investigate and explain the use of ICT networks in the modern business environment.

Assessment may be completed under open-book conditions.

From research undertaken, recommend a solution to a real or hypothetical business scenario involving working remotely from an ICT network. The solution must:

♦ identify and describe the features of an appropriate mobile device that could be used to connect with an ICT network. Justify this selection.
♦ identify and describe two or more services that can be used to communicate with colleagues using the selected mobile device.
♦ describe the advantages and disadvantages of internally hosted and internet-based technologies for data storage and recommend the most appropriate for the organisation identify and describe the potential security issues related to the solution and make recommendations as to how these may be managed.
♦ explain the potential impact of the solution on the organisation in terms of productivity, efficiency, cost and legal implications.

Outcome 2

Investigate and explain the effective use of social software in the modern business environment.

It is recommended that this Outcome is assessed on a practical basis by learners using social software to generate the necessary evidence.

Where barriers exist to accessing the required software or technology, a mixed approach of practical and written/oral evidence may be used.

Assessment may be completed under open-book conditions.

Learners must provide evidence showing that they can:

♦ identify and explain two types of social software which an organisation can use to interact with stakeholders.
♦ select two social software applications and explain and/or demonstrate the ways in which they could be used and their potential benefits to the organisation.
♦ explain and/or demonstrate correct etiquette when interacting in a professional capacity via social software and outline any legal considerations.
♦ explain and/or demonstrate the ways in which web analytics can be used to inform an organisation's social media activity.

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Outcome 3

Use web services and collaborative software to inform, plan and organise work.

Assessment may be completed under open-book conditions.

♦ Explain and/or demonstrate methods to verify the validity of information sourced or received via the internet.
♦ Explain and/or demonstrate the use of a web feed to source relevant information.
♦ Create an e-checklist to identify and prioritise four or more tasks relating to work, identifying any dependencies.
♦ Explain and/or demonstrate the use of a web service or software to organise a meeting or event involving three or more participants.
♦ Use a web service or software to obtain relevant feedback relating to the work completed.
♦ Evaluate and present findings and conclusions derived from the feedback using collaborative software.

For the purpose of assessment, 'work' may take the form of a real or fictitious scenario requiring tasks to be completed to fulfil an overall objective.

Unit specification: support notes

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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

This unit is designed to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively to perform administrative functions. It may form part of a group award or be completed as a free-standing Unit.

As ICT technologies are subject to continuous update and change, it is incumbent on centres to adapt teaching and assessment to ensure content is up to date. The Evidence Requirements within this unit specification have been written as flexibly as possible to avoid unnecessary barriers and to allow assessment to take into account future developments in relevant technology. This flexibility is also designed to allow centres the scope to cover the most relevant software, applications and web services among the multitude available in accordance with their available resources.

Outcome 1

Investigate and explain the effective use of ICT networks in the modern business environment.

Learners should be made aware of the features of modern day ICT networks focusing on ways in which they can be used to work flexibly and efficiently. Teaching could begin with an outline of traditional ICT network configurations before moving on to ways in which technology has influenced the way they are now used in today's business environment.

This could lead to use of mobile devices to connect with networks remotely (eg internet-hosted email, instant messaging, internet-based messaging apps (Whatsapp, Viber, etc) video messaging (Skype, Facetime), company intranets, etc) and the advantages and disadvantages of different mobile devices in various scenarios (eg mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc). Instant messaging/web chat apps are now widely used by large organisations to provide customer service functions to the public. The use of intranets could lead to teaching/discussion/research of professional social software applications (see Outcome 2) which are often integrated within a company intranet (eg Yammer with Microsoft Outlook). Data storage may cover traditional PC-based file management systems, which most learners should be familiar with, then move on to more modern technologies, eg removable storage

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devices, internet-based (Cloud) storage, storage on mobile devices, etc including the advantages and disadvantages of each. Cloud technology should be covered and reference can be made to the fact that cloud computing involves more than just data storage, with many web-based services (Outcome 3) based on this platform. Data storage leads naturally to security issues. The risks associated with the various methods of data storage should be covered as well as means of managing these and also discussion of network security more generally.

It is strongly recommended that content is delivered in the context of a business organisation or other scenario to emphasise the application and impact of the various technologies. This should make the experience more meaningful for learners. It should not be an exercise in learning about technology for technology's sake.

Outcome 2

Investigate and explain the effective use of social media in the modern business environment.

A range of social software and web services that may be used by organisations to reach and interact with customers, colleagues and other stakeholders should be covered; including the ways in which these can be utilised. Learners should be made aware that there are different types of social software for different purposes:

♦ **Social media** (eg Facebook, Google+, Twitter) — primarily social/recreational. Can be used by organisations to provide a platform to engage with customers, potential customers and other stakeholders.
♦ **Professional social networking sites** (eg LinkedIn, Ryze, etc) — used by individuals to network for business and career opportunities. Can be used by organisations to promote themselves to groups of professionals for potential recruitment, to network with other organisations or simply to promote their brand. Entrepreneurs may use to promote their ideas/businesses and seek opportunities, support and investment.
♦ **Content sharing** (eg YouTube, Vine, Instagram, Soundcloud, etc) — often used in combination with other forms of social media to share video, audio and other dynamic content. A relatively simple and cost-effective way of sharing media content with large groups as opposed to traditional methods (eg TV advertising).
♦ **Social news** (eg Reddit, Digg, etc) — sites that use the collective intelligence of users to share and 'rank' news stories. Most social news sites tend to relate to a specific or broad topic such as politics, business, culture and entertainment, etc. These sites can be useful sources of information, particularly in areas of specific professional interest, however learners should be made aware of the importance of validating information sources (linked to Outcome 3).
♦ **Blogs** — the potential subject matter of blogs is virtually unlimited, however those relevant in a professional context tend to provide commentary on a particular subject or topic (eg Practically Perfect PA, Small Business Blog, etc). The most popular blogs usually have an interactive element via a comments facility allowing readers to share information and opinions. In this way blogs can also be used as a form of collaborative software (link to Outcome 3), or by allocating authoring privileges to more than one individual. Again, learners should be aware of evaluating the validity of such information sources (link to Outcome 3).

> **Internet Forums** — provide a platform for online discussion where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. The subject matter is usually a specific or broad area of professional, social or cultural interest and the messages posted can be brief or very detailed and can involve sharing of documents, multi-media and/or links to other websites. Again, this type of social media could be used as a form of collaborative software and validity of information is also relevant here (link to Outcome 3).

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other relevant types of social media that could be covered, particularly as technology develops.

Web Analytics
Social media is normally used by organisations to provide a platform to engage with potential and existing customers and to promote their brand. Web analytics are a relatively simple and cost effective means of tracking engagement with customers and therefore optimising web usage. For example, Facebook pages can be created for businesses, sports teams, musicians, charities, historical interests, etc. When these interest pages are created (as distinct from *personal* Facebook account pages), they automatically include web analytics functionality in the form of 'Insights' which allow page administrators to view such information as number of page views, where visitors are coming from (both geographically and from which websites/searches), age/gender profile of visitors, post engagements, most popular posts, etc. Web analytics can also be applied to blogs, wikis, internet forums and other social media, via free to use services (eg StatCounter, Google Analytics) which are simple to install and use. Most of these services have a base level of free provision with increased functionality available for a fee. The free to use services are more than adequate for the purposes of this unit. Emphasis should be placed on basic working knowledge of the potential business applications of these services rather than detailed technical knowledge of the IT underpinning them.

Communication/Etiquette
Learners should be made aware of the appropriate standards of communication and etiquette when engaging on social media in a professional context (this could be linked to HP75 47 *Communication: Business Communication*). Professional standards may vary from organisation to organisation, however there are generally recognised principles surrounding when and when not to engage with others, when to take discussion offline, engaging in a respectful manner, favouring factual statements over opinion, and refraining from emotive and negative comment. Standards of behaviour and etiquette on social media can be linked to legislation relating to social media communications. It is also useful to discuss the potential negative impact of inappropriate/careless sharing of information on social media which may not constitute breach of legislation but may have undesirable consequences for the user, organisation and/or others.

Outcome 3

Use web services and collaborative software to inform, plan and organise work.

It is essential that learners understand the importance of verifying the validity of information, particularly from online sources. Sharing of spurious information is widespread across social media, where users often share posts without verifying their accuracy; either through naiveté or because the information supports their existing preconceptions. This can lead to confirmation bias and the proliferation of inaccurate information which can impact negatively on an organisation, group or individual. Methods of verifying information should be covered, such as cross-checking with alternative sources and investigating the validity of the sources themselves in terms of credibility, potential bias and vested interest in promoting an agenda.

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Web feeds are a useful means of sourcing information from reliable sources. Feeds can be aggregated so that multiple feeds are available in one place. Web feeds have the advantage that the user does not have to disclose any information, such as their email address, thereby reducing potential security threats (link to Outcome 1) and can unsubscribe by simply removing the feed from their browser or aggregator. Web feeds may be used to solicit updates from sites of professional interest, such as traffic and travel information, or government, competitor websites, etc.

Learners can be introduced to the benefits of planning and prioritising workload by using tools such as e-checklists. There are downloadable e-checklist apps available that can be used with mobile devices (link to Outcome 1).The opportunity exists to integrate teaching with time management and planning in Outcome 2 of HP69 47 *Office Administration* as it also an effective stress coping strategy.

There are a multitude of web services that can support the work of an administrator. For the purposes of this unit, assessment focuses on the use of internet-based services and/or collaborative software that can be used to organise tasks such as meetings or events, however it would be useful to cover other potentially relevant areas such as internet-based storage linked to Outcome 1 (eg Dropbox); e-commerce (eg PayPal) and the possibilities for crowd-funding of ventures (eg Social Enterprises, charitable fund-raising, etc).

In terms of assessment, learners will be required to use a web service or collaborative software to organise a meeting or event — or explain how this could be done. The most relevant services are likely to be online meeting planners (eg Meet-o-matic, Doodle, etc) or collaborative software such as Google Documents. One advantage of internet-based (Cloud) software over e-diaries embedded within email packages (eg MS Outlook, IBM Notes) is that they are not reliant on participants using the same software. Knowledge and skills in using such software provides learners with the tools to come up with customised solutions to situations where there may be compatibility problems between different e-diaries, or where one or more participants does not have access to an e-diary at all.

The unit also requires learners to acquire and evaluate feedback on the task completed using a web service and/or collaborative software. The most obvious way to solicit feedback in this way would be via the use of an online survey service (eg Survey Monkey, Survey Gizmo, Smart Survey, etc). Most of these services charge a fee for complex functionality, however; as with most web-analytic software; the free-to-use versions are generally more than adequate for the needs of learners completing this Unit.

Learners are required to carry out an evaluation of the data acquired. Many online survey packages are capable of presenting data in charts and tables at the click of a mouse, so it is important that learners are made aware of the difference between findings and conclusions ie they must interpret the findings (the chart/table, etc) to arrive at conclusions that are justifiable by the evidence. It is not sufficient simply to present a chart or table, there must be some meaningful comment demonstrating evaluation of the findings. This can be related to validity of information in Outcome 2.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

Although knowledge and skills relating to the technology itself should be developed, the focus of the unit is the application of the technology for business purposes; therefore teaching and learning should encapsulate the context in which the technology is used to make it more meaningful for learners. Discrete learning of technological criteria and features in isolation from their business use is not recommended.

It is recommended that delivery encourages realistic workplace practices involving use of industry standard devices and software. Particular emphasis should be placed upon flexible working practices and the importance of mobile technology in today's working environment.

Tutors may direct formative exercises and/or class discussion to ascertain learners' existing knowledge and familiarity with the technologies covered within the unit. However, any means to provide practical demonstrations and 'hands-on' learning of technology are to be encouraged; for example video-chat for video-conferencing (Skype, Facetime, etc), web analytics within a Facebook page, embedding of multi-media across social media platforms (eg embedding YouTube clips on a blog post), etc exploring the possibilities for integrative use of social media, collaborative software and web services. It may be possible to incorporate such experiences with the delivery of other units and therefore provide an integrated learning experience which is likely to be more meaningful for learners.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

A holistic approach to assessment across all Outcomes is encouraged. This unit lends itself well to a portfolio approach. Evidence generated through the use of software is likely to feature prominently and may be captured via screenshots, saved in a hard/removable drive or in an e-portfolio. The aforementioned are a few suggestions but there are many ways evidence could be captured and stored. As with any other SQA Advanced Unit, evidence must be retained for External Verification as per centre and SQA policies and procedures.

The collaborative software selected for Outcome 3 could be used to communicate, and to record the investigative and/or research activities undertaken in Outcomes 1 and 2 Assessment could take the form of a research project whereby learners record their research findings, decisions and actions taken via blog, wiki or other collaborative software. A combination of collaborative software applications may be used. In this way the collaborative software can be retained as evidence that the relevant knowledge, skills and Evidence Requirements have been met,

A practical approach to this unit is strongly encouraged, however, depending on the nature of the research and tasks undertaken it may be necessary to supplement evidence with written or verbal questions, or even a brief summary report to ensure all of the Evidence Requirements have been met. If verbal questions are used a written record of questions and responses should be recorded rather than a standard checklist. Such questioning could be recorded on video or audio.

It is recommended that assessment is linked to research of a topic, organisation, case study or other issue. Research methods are not assessed but it allows learners to explore the issue of validity of information and sources in Outcome 3. Research led tasks should result in learners producing a variety of evidence that can strengthen authenticity as it should be readily distinguishable from the work of other learners.

Problem-solving skills should be developed by learners devising solutions and/or processes to meet the requirements of a business problem/scenario. Outcomes 2 and 3 in particular, lend themselves to a group approach, whereby groups of learners working together use software to develop a project and web services to interact, facilitate meetings, organise tasks and evaluate the Outcome. Where learners are assessed on the basis of a group task, evidence must be retained that demonstrates each individual learner has met the Evidence Requirements.

The opportunity exists to holistically assess this unit with other units where learners have the opportunity to perform similar functions which can contribute to the Evidence Requirements above.

Where learners are in appropriate employment, they may be able to draw on examples from their own workplace. Learners should obtain permission from their employer to use such examples, but where this opportunity exists, learners will benefit from applying their knowledge and skills to a real work situation.

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 higher education.

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**.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The Core Skill component 'Critical Thinking' at SCQF level 6
The general skill for this component is *Analyse a complex situation or issue*. The Evidence Requirements for Outcome 1 require learners to identify and explain solutions to a scenario where devices are to be linked to an ICT network to support flexible working practices. This involves dealing with variables which may be complex, evaluating the relationships between them and creating solutions. There are opportunities in Outcome 2 to explore the ways in which social media can be used to benefit organisations and provide solutions to potential problems in that context also.

The Core Skill component Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

The general skill is *Plan, organise and complete a complex task*. Outcome 3 requires learners to plan a meeting or event. If this can be linked holistically across the unit as recommended, it may be possible to develop a task complex enough to meet the requirements for this component at SCQF level 6.

The Core Skill component Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 6

The general skill is *Review and Evaluate a Problem Solving Activity*. Learners are required to undertake problem solving activities in Outcomes 1 and 2, either holistically or separately, and then evaluate their performance by using a web service to obtain feedback from others. Learners need to evaluate their findings, draw conclusions and present them using collaborative software.

The Core Skill component Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 6

The general skills is *Use ICT independently to carry out a range of processing tasks*. Outcome 3 requires learners to organise a meeting or event using a web service and then to evaluate feedback/Outcomes using appropriate software applications. Outcome 2 requires learners to investigate the use of social media and present ways in which it can be used by an organisation to interact with stakeholders.

The Core Skill component Accessing Information at SCQF level 6

The general skills is *Use ICT independently to carry out complex searches across a range of tasks*. In Outcome 1, learners are required to investigate the options for linking mobile devices to an ICT network. Such activity may involve complex searches for devices meeting certain technical criteria. In Outcome 3, learners need to explore the issue of validity of information sourced via the internet and create a web feed. If these activities are sufficiently complex the Core Skill component could be met.

The Core Skill component Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6

The general skill is *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics*. Learners have the opportunity to develop this component by recording their research findings, conclusions and actions taken, either via collaborative software or in writing. If the research task is sufficiently complex this Core Skill may be achieved.

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The Core Skill component Using Graphical Information *at SCQF level 6*

The general skill is *Apply a wide range of graphical skills to interpret and present complex information in everyday situation'*. If the tasks undertaken in Outcome 2, in relation to web analytics, and the analysis of feedback in Outcome 3 was sufficiently complex and wide ranging, it would be possible to meet this Core Skills component.

The Core Skill component Work Co-operatively With Others at SCQF level 6

The general skill is *In complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities*. Outcome 3 in particular, offers the opportunity for learners to work together on arranging a meeting or event. Groups of learners could work together using collaborative software holistically across all Outcomes which may involve interactions that are complex enough to meet the requirements of this component.

Administrative information

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our Centre Feedback Form.

General information for candidates

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 will develop your knowledge on ICT networks and allow you to develop the knowledge and skills required to use social media, collaborative software and a range of web services effectively with an administrative environment.

In Outcome 1 you will learn about ICT networks and security, with particular emphasis on the use of mobile devices and data storage to facilitate flexible working. In the modern world, remote working and internet-based (Cloud) technologies are increasingly prevalent, therefore the ability to use these safely and efficiently is becoming more and more important. In the assessment you will be required to make recommendations as to how these technologies can be best used in a particular scenario.

In Outcome 2 you will investigate the various types of social software available, and how these are used by modern organisations to engage with stakeholders. This includes etiquette and legal considerations when communicating online. In the assessment, you will be required to investigate the use of social media and explain or demonstrate how it can be used by organisations to interact with stakeholders online. This may be through a project, investigation, case study, questions or a combination of these.

In Outcome 3 you will learn the importance of verifying the validity of online information and about the various web services and e-technologies that can be used to help you plan, prioritise and execute the administrative job role. This will include the use of collaborative software to work with and share information with others. For the assessment you will be required to verify the validity (or otherwise) of online information sources; or explain how this can be done; and organise an event or meeting using an appropriate web services or software. You will also be required to use a web service to obtain feedback on a task you have carried out, evaluate this feedback and present your evaluation via collaborative software.

There may be assessments for each Outcome; two Outcomes may be combined together; or assessment may be combined into one overall task, investigation, project or case study covering all Outcomes. Whichever of these forms of assessment you are asked to complete, the overall amount of assessment should be the same.

The Core Skill component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 is embedded within this unit.