SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

This graded unit has been validated as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma Administration and Information Technology (GM68 48). Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

Graded unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 3 (SCQF level 8)

Graded unit code: HP6K 48

Type of Project: Case Study

Publication date: July 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the SQA Advanced Diploma Administration and Information Technology (GM68 48):

♦ Develop a range of specialist IT skills.
♦ Develop project management, research and planning skills.
♦ Develop an awareness of professional issues such as legal, data management and ethical considerations.
♦ Develop the ability to work flexibly and co-operatively with others.
♦ Develop critical and evaluative thinking.
♦ Prepare learners for employment in an administrative role.
♦ Prepare learners for progression to degree courses.

Credit points and level

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

Recommended entry to the graded unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

HP6A 48	*Office Management*
HP7A 48	*Information and Communication Technology in Business*
HP79 48	*Presentation Skills*
HP0N 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Word Processing*
HP0H 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Spreadsheets*
HP0H 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Databases*
HR13 47 **or** HP3C 48	*Developing the Individual within a Team*

Core Skills

Achievement of this graded unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Core Skill component(s)   *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of this graded unit specification.

Assessment support pack

The assessment support pack for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment support pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment support packs are available on SQA's secure website.

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

Graded unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 3 (SCQF level 8)

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based case study developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this graded unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

♦ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
♦ relationships which need to be clarified
♦ a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner to:

♦ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
♦ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
♦ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
♦ produce evidence of meeting the aims which this graded unit has been designed to cover.

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project — including case study — should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project. During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance.

Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing learners with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support, which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes. In relation to the assessment of Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, assessors may provide advice, clarification, and guidance during the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, ie at each stage of the project.

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learner responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, such instances must be formally noted by the assessor, either in writing or recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier. In relation to Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, learners must be given the opportunity for remediation at each stage of the project.

Where a learner submits a stage of the project for assessment and one or more areas within that stage are assessed as having a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements that stage of the project may be returned for remediation in these areas

only. Parts of the project that gain the minimum marks on the first submission should not be remediated.

The evidence for an Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded unit is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks *across all* sections, and should reflect the ability of the learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required.

In relation to Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, learners who have failed any stage of the project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for re-assessment of that stage.

At SCQF level 8 learners should work independently. Discussions should take place between the learner and lecturer to establish the suitability of the learner's chosen issue from the outset of the investigation. It is the responsibility of the centre to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the learner. For example, centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure, where research etc is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others, that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

Evidence requirements for this graded unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	Mark allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	In order to achieve a pass in the Planning stage, the learner must include the following **minimum evidence**, and achieve a **minimum of 15 marks**: **Analysis of scenario** Analysis of the issues within the outlined scenario: ♦ identification of the key factors requiring action ♦ how these issues impact the scenario ♦ the relative importance of each factor	**6**

	Set objectives ♦ Set appropriate objectives to address the factors identified	**4**
	Develop plan Produce a plan to achieve the objectives identified including the following pursuant to each objective: ♦ timescale ♦ generic resource needs ♦ potential barriers ♦ any processes/procedures/legislation to be complied with	**10**
	Rationale for plan Justification of plan content linked to: ♦ factors identified ♦ resources available (including time) ♦ comparison with possible alternatives	**5**
	Resources Identification of specific resource needs, including: ♦ information resources ♦ physical resources ♦ human resources ♦ time ♦ evidence of resource acquisition ♦ evidence of developing an approach to deal with the project ♦ justification for selecting this approach by referring to the key factors, the resources and time available, comparison with other possible approaches	**5**
Total marks for Planning stage		**30**

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	Mark allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	In order to achieve a pass in the Developing stage, the learner must include the following minimum evidence, **and achieve a minimum of 25 marks**: ♦ research notes ♦ referencing of sources ♦ action log ♦ updated plan	**10**

	Completing the project A report which explores the factors identified and illustrates how the project was carried out to reach solutions, including:	**24**
	♦ Evaluation, selection and analysis of information	
	♦ research and evaluation of identified factors ♦ consultation of relevant individuals, organisations and agencies to develop the outlined scenario ♦ actions taken to meet the requirements of the plan and to manage the project ♦ research, consultation and actions demonstrate integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills	
	Conclusions and recommendations ♦ appropriate and logical conclusions and recommendations supported by the evidence gathered and included within the report. ♦ conclusions and recommendations are consistent with, and demonstrate knowledge of industry standards and relevant legislation	**10**
	Effective presentation skills ♦ use of formatting, document design and graphical features for appropriate presentation	**6**
Total marks for Developing stage		**50**

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	Mark allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	In order to achieve a pass in the Evaluation stage, the learner must include the following_**minimum evidence**, and achieve **a minimum of 10 marks**: An evaluation of the learner's own performance in planning and executing the project, in relation to: **Planning** ♦ analysis of scenario ♦ developing the plan ♦ identification of resources	6
	Developing ♦ research ♦ collating information ♦ conclusions and recommendations ♦ time management ♦ presentation of information	10
	Personal Development ♦ Conclusions re own performance ♦ Recommendations for future performance	4
Total marks for Evaluating stage		20

Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of **100**. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **evidence requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum *evidence requirements* for the *Planning* stage before progressing to the *Developing* stage and the same again applies before progressing to the *Evaluating* stage. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum *evidence requirements* and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the grade related criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

Learners are required to work independently to meet the *evidence requirements* of the graded unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support. SQA uses the term reasonable assistance to describe the balance between supporting learners in their project and not providing too much assistance.

At the end of *each* stage there should be opportunities for remediation and re-assessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final *Evaluation* stage. Any re-assessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

Where a learner submits a stage of the project for assessment and one, or more, areas within that stage are assessed as having a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements, that stage of the project may be returned for remediation in these areas **only.** Parts of the project that gain the minimum marks on the first submission should not be remediated.

If a learner fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project. The learner's grade will be the highest achieved of the two projects.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	**Grade C**
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:
♦ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related	♦ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard
♦ demonstrates an accurate and insightful interpretation of the project brief	♦ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief
♦ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief	♦ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief
♦ is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content	♦ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content
♦ effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills	♦ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency
♦ demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously	♦ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

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A = 70%–100%
B = 60%–69%
C = 50%–59%

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.

Any learner who has failed their graded unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. In the case of project-based graded units, this must be done using a substantially different project.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any re-assessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.

Unit specification: support notes

Graded unit title: Administration and Information Technology:
Graded Unit 3

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

This unit is designed to develop the skills and competencies required of an office manager or equivalent role. The unit should build skills and competencies which meet the criteria of SCQF level 8 — the ability to present and critically analyse, evaluate and/or synthesise ideas, concepts, information and issues which are within the common understanding of the subject discipline.

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. The instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment task. During the time between the distribution of the assessment task instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions; provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion date.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Critical Thinking SCQF level 6
During the planning stage, learners will analyse a case study, identifying key factors involved and the relationship between them. Learners will identify a strategy for tackling the case study tasks; the resources needed and then justify the identified approach.

Planning and Organising SCQF level 6
The complexity of the case study will require learners to plan and follow concurrent strands of inquiry. They will be able to draw on skills acquired during their studies, refining and further developing their planning and organising skills. Once learners have agreed the plan, they will follow the agreed plan. Where changes are required, these will be recorded and considered during the evaluation stage.

Reviewing and Evaluating SCQF level 6
During the evaluation stage, learners will consider their effectiveness throughout each phase of the case study. Where modifications to the plan were required, the learner will provide information about what the issues were, the possible options to resolve the issue and justification for the final selection.

Learners will draw on evidence to support their evaluation, considering all major aspects of the case study. They will reflect on the way they have tackled the project and will make recommendations for any future project tasks. Learners will produce a brief report in which they will draw conclusions and make recommendations for future actions.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when learners achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6.

Administrative information

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Update of Conditions of Assessment	20/07/18

General information for candidates

Graded unit title: Administration and Information Technology:
                            Graded Unit 3

This graded unit is designed to allow you to integrate knowledge and skills across a range of mandatory units within the SQA Advanced Diploma in Administration and Information Technology (GM68 48) and apply it in context. The SQA Advanced Diploma is designed to develop skills and knowledge that underpin and support the role of office manager or equivalent, including a range of IT skills, project management, research and planning, being able to work flexibly and co-operatively with others, problem solving and critical and evaluative thinking.

There is no new content, rather the unit draws on content from other mandatory units within the SQA Advanced Diploma and requires you to apply it to scenarios based on real or hypothetical situations. This often requires knowledge from more than one unit to be applied to a question/task and is designed to enhance your ability to apply what you have learned to broader, more dynamic real-life situations.

The assessment for this graded unit is likely to take place towards the end of your course to allow you to become familiar with the relevant topics. This will take the form of a project based on a case study requiring you to analyse a scenario and then research and develop solutions to the issues you identify within it.

The case study will sample content from the following units:

HP6A 48	*Office Management*
HP7A 48	*Information and Communication Technology in Business*
HP79 48	*Presentation Skills*
HP0N 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Word Processing*
HP0H 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Spreadsheets*
HP0H 48	*IT in Business: Advanced Databases*
HR13 47 **or** HP3C 48	*Developing the Individual within a Team*

You will need to work independently but there is scope for limited guidance and support from your tutor. You will also agree a timeline with milestone submission dates for your project. The project consists of three distinct stages — Planning (preparation, identifying resources, creating a plan, etc), Developing (managing and carrying out the necessary tasks) and Evaluating (evaluating your plan and actions and making recommendations for future project work/personal development). Each stage has a minimum pass mark which must be achieved before progressing to the next.

Successful achievement of the unit will be graded based on the final mark attained as follows:

Grade A: 70–100%
Grade B: 60–69%
Grade C: 50–59%

This grade applies only to the graded unit and not the group awards as a whole

If you fail the project overall or wish to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project. In this case you will be entitled to the higher of the grades achieved.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when you achieve this unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6.