



## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification

### General Information

This graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC Administration and Information Technology (GM10 15). Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification.

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology:  
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Graded unit code:** HH9M 34

**Type of Examination:** Closed book

**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 HNC Administration and Information Technology (GM10 15):

- ◆ Demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice.
- ◆ Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding underpinning the technical expertise developed throughout the course.
- ◆ Apply interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role.
- ◆ Demonstrate the knowledge required for progression to employment and higher education.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: General Information (cont)

### Recommended entry to the graded unit

It is recommended that learners should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to these specific aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

F7JA 34	<i>Office Administration</i>
HH84 34	<i>IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications</i>
HH82 34	<i>Digital Technologies for Administrators</i>
F84X 34	<i>IT in Business: Databases</i>
HH83 34	<i>IT in Business: Spreadsheets</i>

### Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in 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 graded unit 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a closed-book examination. The examination should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this graded unit.

The assessment is an examination lasting three hours, comprising two question papers — an objective response paper (Paper 1) of 45 minutes duration, and an extended response paper (Paper 2) of 2 hours 15 minutes duration. The two papers constitute a single assessment event, however a break may be scheduled between them. If a learner does not pass either paper – or wishes to upgrade – they must re-sit both papers.

The examination should be designed to assess the learner's knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the specific aims which this graded unit is designed to cover.

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

Paper 1 will consist of **30** marks and Paper 2 **70** marks.

The questions and corresponding marks should be designed in accordance with the key topics, level of demand and relative mark allocation for each key topic outlined in the following table:

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Paper 1 — objective response questions (45 minutes)		
Key topics	Level of demand	% mark allocation for each key topic
Office Administration	<b>Identify/select</b> — to demonstrate knowledge relating to current administrative occupational competence and practice.	9
Digital Technologies for Administrators	Questions/statements and distractors within MC and MR items must be designed to present a degree of challenge commensurate with SCQF level 7.	6
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	<b>Identify/select</b> — to demonstrate technical knowledge relating to IT software and its application in current administrative practice.  Questions/statements and distractors within MC and MR items must be designed to present a degree of challenge commensurate with SCQF level 7.	15
IT in Business: Databases		
IT in Business: Spreadsheets		
<b>Total marks for Examination</b>		<b>30</b>
<p>Objective response questions will take the form of:</p> <p>Multiple-Choice (MC) — a stem, followed by one correct answer and three distractors.</p> <p>Multiple-Response (MR) — a stem, followed by four statements, with two or more correct answers, together with distractor(s).</p> <p><b>For MR questions, learners must select all the correct answers in order to gain one mark. Partial identification of correct answers cannot earn a mark.</b></p> <p>The balance of MC and MR questions should be MC 66.7% (20 questions) and MR 33.3% (10 questions).</p> <p>The allocation of questions/tasks across key topics should be sufficiently varied in order that learners cannot anticipate the balance of topics covered within the assessment.</p>		

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Paper 2 — extended response questions (2 hours 15 minutes)		
PART A — Mandatory question/task		
Key topics	Level of demand	% mark allocation for each key topic
Office Administration Digital Technologies for Administrators IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications IT in Business: Databases IT in Business: Spreadsheets	<p><b>Explanation/analysis/evaluation</b></p> <p>Learners assume the role of Administrator/Senior Administrator/Supervisor.</p> <p>One or more extended response question(s)/task(s) should be used to illicit responses that demonstrate the ability to evaluate the scenario (identifying and explaining the relevant issues and possible adverse consequences) and propose solutions using knowledge from the key topics.</p> <p>Knowledge and skills should be applied in context, therefore learners should be presented with a business scenario on which questions(s)/task(s) can be based. The scenario should be fairly brief so that it can be read timeously by learners but contain sufficient detail and depth to allow learners to evaluate the main issues and develop recommended solutions (eg circa 500–1,000 words).</p> <p>At least one of the question(s)/task(s) should be based on the Unit <i>Office Administration</i> (F7JA 34) with the potential to involve elements of other Units listed within the key topics.</p>	

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Paper 2 (cont)		
PART A (cont)		
Key topics	Level of demand	% mark allocation for each key topic
	<p><b>Marks</b> should be allocated as follows:</p> <p>Accurate identification and explanation of issues/problems and potential consequences.</p> <p>Appropriateness/relevance/practicality of recommended actions/solutions.</p>	<b>25</b>
	<p>Creativity and innovation in solutions and strategies recommended.</p> <p>Evidence of prior reading/research.</p>	<b>10</b>
	<p>Structure of response — arguments are introduced, developed and concluded clearly and concisely with logical flow/sequence.</p>	<b>5</b>
<b>Marks for Part A</b>		<b>40</b>

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

<b>PART B — two from three questions/tasks to be selected</b>		
<b>Key topics</b>	<b>Level of demand</b>	<b>% mark allocation for each key topic</b>
Office Administration Digital Technologies for Administrators	<b>Explanation/description/evaluation</b>  One or more extended response question(s)/task(s) relating to the application of Digital Technologies in business organisations.	<b>15</b>
Office Administration Digital Technologies for Administrators IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications IT in Business: Databases IT in Business: Spreadsheets	<b>Explanation/description/evaluation</b>  One or more extended response question(s)/task(s) relating to the application of software to support/develop/improve working practices within the administrative function.	<b>15</b>
Office Administration Digital Technologies for Administrators IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications IT in Business: Databases IT in Business: Spreadsheets	<b>Explanation/description/evaluation</b>  One or more extended response question(s)/task(s) relating to the application of ICT to the role of the Senior Administrator/Office Supervisor.	<b>15</b>
<p>Questions/tasks should sample across the units listed in the key topics.</p> <p>The allocation of questions/tasks across key topics should be sufficiently varied in order that learners cannot anticipate the topics covered within the assessment.</p>		
<b>Marks for Part B (two key Topics from three)</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Marks for Part A and Part B</b>		<b>70</b>
<b>Total marks for Paper 1 and Paper 2</b>		<b>100</b>

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

To pass this graded unit, learners must achieve a minimum mark in each paper, as illustrated in the following table:

Paper	Marks available	Minimum mark
1	30	12
2	70	28

### Conditions of assessment

The examination is closed book.

The examination should be unseen and the assessment should be conducted in controlled and invigilated conditions.

The total duration of the graded unit assessment is 3 hours; this consists of two papers — Paper 1 (45 minutes) and Paper 2 (2 hours 15 minutes).

Paper 1 and Paper 2 may be delivered separately or in a single assessment event.

At all times, the security, integrity and confidentiality of the examination must be ensured.

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 Higher National Examination-based Graded Units, assessors may provide advice and guidance on examination technique and clarification on the meaning of command words which may appear within an examination paper, prior to the formal examination.

**Learners must not be permitted to remove any assessment materials from the assessment venue. All materials (examination papers/learner responses) must be retained by the centre prior to and following the assessment.**



## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Assessing and grading learners

Learners who meet the minimum evidence requirements will have their achievement graded as an A, B or C. The grade related criteria to be used to judge learner performance for this graded unit is specified in the following table.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work or exam script which consistently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ interprets and understands the question in a way that demonstrates insight and clear understanding of issues and relationships</li> <li>◆ demonstrates a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of relevant information</li> <li>◆ offers logically structured and coherently expressed responses, demonstrating consistent use of correct terminology</li> <li>◆ is clear and well-structured throughout, with language and terminology used of a consistently high standard in terms of level, accuracy, and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills, linking concepts and ideas, and relating answers explicitly to the question</li> <li>◆ provides evidence of possible alternative approaches and arguments as well as understanding of different interpretations</li> <li>◆ convincingly argues and shows links between discussions and conclusions, demonstrating comprehensive knowledge and understanding as well as analysis and evaluation skills</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work or exam script which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ interprets and understands the question in a way that enables the learner to meet the basic criteria required</li> <li>◆ demonstrates limited analysis, evaluation, and explanation of the question and other relevant information</li> <li>◆ offers uneven responses that convey limited understanding although some relevant points are made</li> <li>◆ is satisfactorily structured, with language and terminology used adequate, although not always consistent, in terms of level, accuracy, and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but may lack continuity and consistency and fail to show clear links to concepts and ideas</li> <li>◆ is likely to show only one approach and limited understanding of different interpretations</li> <li>◆ argues and justifies conclusions in an acceptable way but these conclusions may lack reasoned understanding, may not link well to discussions, and may show limited knowledge</li> </ul>

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the examination and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

The marks achieved by the learner in the examination should be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the examination. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this Graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

A = 70%–100%  
B = 60%–69%  
C = 50%–59%

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

Remediation is not allowed in Examination-based Graded Unit assessments.

Any learner who has failed their Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. This must be done by using a substantially different examination.

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 sitting or through any re-assessment.

## Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Support Notes

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

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

This unit is designed to assess the learner's ability to integrate knowledge across a range of mandatory Units within the HNC Administration and Information Technology, focusing on the following objectives:

- ◆ Demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice.
- ◆ Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding underpinning the technical expertise developed throughout the group award.
- ◆ Apply interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role.
- ◆ Demonstrate the knowledge required for progression to employment and higher education.

This unit will give centres the opportunity to show learners how the knowledge and skills within the identified mandatory units in the group award are integrated. The time allocated for delivery of this Unit could be used to extend the learner's ability to present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are key to the subject discipline. Learners should be encouraged to explore contemporary issues relating to new and emerging administrative practice. This could be achieved by case studies, reading, research and discussion.

As part of the preparation for the graded unit examination, centres could consider examination technique and terminology and the structure and presentation of written responses. Preparation for the graded unit should feature in the delivery of the mandatory units noted in this unit specification.

The key topics and level of demand

Paper 1 (Objective Response) — Learners are asked to respond to multiple-choice and multiple-response questions designed to allow them to demonstrate the technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice.

## **Higher National Examination-based Graded Unit Support Notes (cont)**

**Graded unit title:** Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Paper 2 (Extended Response) — Learners will assume the role of Administrator/Office Supervisor and will be presented with:

- ◆ Mandatory question, with brief scenario, to enable the learner to demonstrate integration and application of skills and knowledge acquired throughout the group award. Credit for innovation, extended reading, and practical examples will be given in this question.
- ◆ Choice of two questions from three. Each of the three questions will have a theme but should only sample from the units listed in the Instructions for Designing the Assessment Task, therefore there is flexibility in the design of assessment instruments.

Refer to the key topics and level of demand within the 'Instructions for Designing the Assessment Task' section of this unit for an indication of the content that may be covered.

### **Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills**

There are no Core Skills embedded in this graded unit specification.

## History of changes to graded unit

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

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0345 279 1000.

## General information for learners

### Graded unit title: Administration and Information Technology: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

This graded unit is designed to allow you to integrate knowledge across a range of mandatory units within the HNC Administration and Information Technology (GM10 15) and apply it in context. The HNC is designed to develop skills and knowledge that underpin and support the role of Senior Administrator/Administrative Supervisor or equivalent.

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

The content of the HNC — and hence this graded unit — reflects modern business practice and the prominence of *Information and Communication Technology* and *Digital Skills* in relation to the modern administrative function.

The first question paper (45 minutes) requires you to answer a combination of 30 multiple-choice and multiple-response questions with content drawn from the following units:

F7JA 34	<i>Office Administration</i>
HH84 34	<i>IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications</i>
HH82 34	<i>Digital Technologies for Administrators</i>
F84X 34	<i>IT in Business: Databases</i>
HH83 34	<i>IT in Business: Spreadsheets</i>

The second question paper (2 hours 15 minutes) requires you to provide extended responses to three questions/tasks drawn from the same Units, based on one or more scenarios.

Prior to the assessment, you will be encouraged to research and read widely. In the assessment, you will be expected to reference any sources/authors/articles/academics, etc you quote to support your responses. As this is a closed-book examination, you will not be expected to use a formal referencing convention but should give a clear indication of the sources you draw from to support your responses. Marks will be awarded for evidence of extended research, innovative solutions and creativity in recommendations made to address issues/problems identified within the assessment scenarios.

To ensure a balance of knowledge across the unit, you will be required to achieve a minimum mark in each paper to pass the graded unit. This constitutes at least 12 marks from an available 30 in Paper 1, and at least 28 marks from a possible 70 in Paper 2. The overall pass mark is 50 out of 100, therefore achieving the minimum acceptable pass mark in each paper is not sufficient for achievement of the unit as a whole.

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 will apply only to the graded unit and not to the group award as a whole.