

## National 5 Administration and IT

<b>Course code:</b>	C801 75
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X801 75
<b>SCQF:</b>	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Valid from:</b>	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

# Contents

<b>Course overview</b>	<b>1</b>
Course rationale	2
Purpose and aims	2
Who is this course for?	2
<b>Course content</b>	<b>3</b>
Skills, knowledge and understanding	3
Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	5
<b>Course assessment</b>	<b>6</b>
Course assessment structure: question paper	6
Course assessment structure: assignment	7
Grading	9
<b>Equality and inclusion</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Further information</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix: course support notes</b>	<b>12</b>
Introduction	12
Developing skills, knowledge and understanding	12
Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment	13
Preparing for course assessment	28
Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	28

# Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	50	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	70	3 hours — see course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 Administration and IT course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Higher Administration and IT course</li><li>◆ other qualifications in administration and IT or related areas</li><li>◆ further study, employment and/or training</li></ul>

## Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Achievement of this course gives automatic certification of the following Core Skill:

- ◆ Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5

## **Course rationale**

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

Administration and IT cuts across all sectors of the economy and offers wide-ranging employment opportunities.

The National 5 Administration and IT course provides candidates with experience of real-life administration tasks and engaging practical activities relevant to the world of work. There is an emphasis on the development of transferable life skills and the application of these skills.

Candidates following the course become aware of the use of technology within the workplace, as they complete organisational tasks.

## **Purpose and aims**

The course helps candidates to develop administrative and IT skills, and an understanding of related theory, enabling them to effectively contribute to and support organisations.

It enables candidates to:

- ◆ develop an understanding of administration theory in the workplace
- ◆ develop IT skills and use them to perform administrative tasks
- ◆ acquire organisational skills in the context of organising and supporting events

## **Who is this course for?**

This course is designed for learners who are interested in administration and the practical uses of IT. It contains a significant practical component, involving experiential learning, which encourages the development of skills, knowledge and understanding.

# Course content

The course comprises two areas of study:

## Theory

Candidates are introduced to the responsibilities of organisations, the skills/qualities and tasks (duties) of the administrative support function, and the impact of these in the workplace.

## IT applications

Candidates develop skills in IT, problem-solving, organising, and managing information. They select IT applications to create and edit business documents, gather and share information, and develop skills to communicate information.

# Skills, knowledge and understanding

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ skills in using spreadsheets, databases, word-processing, desktop publishing and presentations
- ◆ skills in using technology for electronic communication and investigation
- ◆ skills in organising and supporting events
- ◆ problem-solving skills in administrative contexts
- ◆ theory of the tasks (duties) and knowledge associated with the administrative support function in an organisation

## Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment:

Theory	
Administration theory in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ tasks (duties) of administrators</li><li>◆ skills/qualities of administrators</li><li>◆ customer service: features, benefits and consequences</li><li>◆ health and safety: features of current legislation and organisational responsibilities</li><li>◆ security of people, property and information: organisational responsibilities and features of current legislation</li></ul>

Administration theory in the workplace —continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ sources of information from internet: features and benefits of reliable internet sources and consequences of unreliable internet sources</li> <li>◆ file management: features, benefits of good and consequences of poor file management</li> <li>◆ corporate image: features, benefits of having a corporate image and consequences of no/negative corporate image</li> <li>◆ electronic communication: methods, features, uses and benefits</li> </ul>
---	---

IT applications	
Word-processing and/or desktop publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating and editing a range of documents, complying consistently with house style, eg letter, form, itinerary, business report, minutes, poster, leaflet, booklet, and newsletter</li> <li>◆ using a variety of word-processing skills, eg text formatting and page formatting</li> <li>◆ creating and enhancing a table, eg borders, shading, alignment and sort</li> <li>◆ importing data from IT applications into a document</li> <li>◆ merging appropriate data from spreadsheet and database applications into a business document, eg labels, letters, and certificates</li> <li>◆ using comments</li> <li>◆ printing documents and extracts of documents</li> </ul>
Spreadsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating, editing and formatting a workbook</li> <li>◆ applying advanced functions and formulae to a workbook</li> <li>◆ using comments</li> <li>◆ creating a chart using data from adjacent and non-adjacent columns and rows</li> <li>◆ labelling charts meaningfully</li> <li>◆ printing worksheets, extracts of worksheets and charts (embedded on worksheets or separately)</li> <li>◆ merging appropriate data with word-processing/DTP documents</li> </ul>
Databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating forms, reports and labels</li> <li>◆ editing a relational database using tables and forms</li> <li>◆ searching information in a relational database</li> <li>◆ sorting information in a relational database</li> <li>◆ printing</li> <li>◆ merging appropriate data with word-processing/DTP documents</li> </ul>

Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ using functions of multimedia applications to create and edit presentations</li> <li>◆ printing presentation in different formats</li> </ul>
Electronic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ searching for, extracting and downloading relevant information from the internet and intranet</li> <li>◆ using e-mail</li> <li>◆ using an e-diary</li> <li>◆ using tasks/to-do list</li> <li>◆ setting reminders</li> </ul>

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level ([www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)).

## Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

### 2 Numeracy

#### 2.3 Information handling

### 4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

#### 4.1 Employability

#### 4.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

### 5 Thinking skills

#### 5.1 Remembering

#### 5.2 Understanding

#### 5.3 Applying

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

# Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to apply:

- ◆ skills in using spreadsheets, databases, presentations, word-processing, and desktop publishing to prepare documents related to an event or business
- ◆ skills in using technology for electronic communication and sourcing information related to an event or business
- ◆ skills in problem-solving
- ◆ theory of administration in the workplace

## Course assessment structure: question paper

### Question paper

**50 marks**

The question paper gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate:

- ◆ using IT functions in spreadsheet and database applications to produce and process information
- ◆ problem-solving
- ◆ administration theory

Marks are awarded for demonstrating the use of different IT applications and theory of administration in the workplace. Of the marks allocated, between 14–26% are awarded for administration theory.

All questions are mandatory and candidates must work through them in the order presented. Questions are sampled from the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' detailed in this document.

A to-do list is provided to help candidates submit the correct printouts.



## Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA.

It is conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete the paper in 2 hours, excluding printing time.

This means that candidates must not have access to the internet, or any previously used files. Candidates must only have access to the files issued by SQA for the relevant year's question paper. Candidates should have access to spellcheck.

The SQA co-ordinator must provide written confirmation to the invigilator that access to all external network facilities or other digital storage has been disabled on the equipment to be used by candidates.

A designated teacher/technician must be available for assistance during the examination should any technical difficulties arise. The designated teacher/technician must not be permitted to enter the examination room unless any technical difficulties arise.

The following table shows the distribution and variances that are applied to each question when allocating marks:

Area of course	Mark allocation
Spreadsheet	20 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
Database	20 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
Theory	10 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 marks</b>

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

## Course assessment structure: assignment

### Assignment

**70 marks**

Candidates work through a series of planning, support and follow-up tasks related to an event or business.

The assignment gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate:

- ◆ skills in using IT functions in word-processing, desktop publishing, and presentations to produce and process information
- ◆ skills in using technology for investigation

- ◆ skills in using technology for electronic communication
- ◆ skills in problem-solving
- ◆ administration theory

Marks are awarded for demonstrating the use of different IT applications and theory of administration in the workplace. Of the marks allocated, between 10–18% are awarded for administration theory, which is integrated within the tasks.

All tasks are mandatory and candidates must work through them in the order presented.

A to-do list is provided to help candidates submit the correct printouts.

### **Setting, conducting and marking the assignment**

The assignment is:

- ◆ set by SQA on an annual basis
- ◆ conducted in centres under a high degree of supervision and control

Candidates are required to access the internet for some communication tasks.

Evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking and all marking is quality assured by SQA.

The following table shows the distribution and variances that are applied within the task when allocating marks:

<b>Area of course</b>	<b>Mark allocation</b>
Word-processing/desktop publishing	30 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
Communication (presentation, e-mail, e-diary, internet)	30 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
Theory	10 marks — with a variance of +/-3 marks
<b>Total</b>	<b>70 marks</b>

### **Assessment conditions**

#### **Time**

The assessment must be carried out:

- ◆ within 3 hours (excluding printing time)
- ◆ in a maximum of two sittings — where additional printing time is required, this should be completed immediately after each sitting
- ◆ in time to meet the submission date set by SQA

## **Supervision, control and authentication**

The assignment is conducted in centres under a high degree of supervision and control. This means that candidates must be in direct sight of the assessor (or other responsible person) during the period of the assessment and must not communicate with each other.

Candidates must carry out the assignment:

- ◆ on an individual basis
- ◆ without the use of any reference materials (ie closed-book assessment)
- ◆ without any teacher or lecturer support

## **Resources**

During the assignment, candidates can access the following resources:

- ◆ electronic files supplied by SQA to support the assignment
- ◆ a personal computer or laptop with internet access
- ◆ e-mail and e-diary facilities
- ◆ software to allow word-processing (including spellcheck), desktop publishing and presentation functions

## **Reasonable assistance**

Teachers and lecturers must not assist candidates with the assignment.

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The following evidence is required for this assignment:

- ◆ original printouts of all IT tasks, clearly displaying the candidate's name and task number on each printout

## **Volume**

There is no word count.

## **Grading**

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

### **Grade description for C**

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

### **Grade description for A**

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

# Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

# Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [National 5 Administration and IT subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
- ◆ [Educational Research Reports](#)
- ◆ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
- ◆ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

# **Appendix: course support notes**

## **Introduction**

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. They should be read in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and coursework.

## **Developing skills, knowledge and understanding**

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment. Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

The following tables also provide suggested experiences and activities that teachers and lecturers could use to deliver the course.

## Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Learning and teaching approaches should be candidate centred, participative and practical in nature. The underpinning knowledge should be combined with practical activities and placed in the context of those activities. The list of examples below is not exhaustive.

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Administration theory in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ tasks (duties) of administrators, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— creating and updating spreadsheets, databases, presentations, word-processing and desktop publishing documents</li> <li>— booking meeting rooms and venues</li> <li>— organising travel and accommodation arrangements</li> <li>— organising and storing files in the correct order</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ skills/qualities of administrators, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— organised</li> <li>— good communicator</li> <li>— team player</li> <li>— co-operative</li> <li>— willing to learn or develop</li> <li>— ability to multitask</li> <li>— ability to follow instructions</li> <li>— good IT skills</li> <li>— patient</li> <li>— tactful/discreet</li> <li>— approachable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ researching, using the internet and newspapers, to find job descriptions and person specifications</li> <li>◆ creating a job advert, job description and person specification for an administrative assistant position</li> <li>◆ creating an interview checklist for an administrative assistant position</li> <li>◆ conducting mock interviews for administrative positions</li> <li>◆ having administrative personnel within the centre or a guest speaker assess the quality of candidates' IT work</li> <li>◆ visiting administrative departments within or outwith the centre</li> <li>◆ watching clips and/or films illustrating the good qualities and bad qualities of administrative assistants</li> <li>◆ creating a training video showing what makes a good administrator</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ key features of good customer service, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— using customer feedback forms</li> <li>— providing all staff with a customer service policy statement</li> <li>— ensuring all staff know the products and services offered to customers</li> <li>— ensuring all customer queries and problems are dealt with quickly and politely</li> <li>— monitoring staff performance</li> <li>— hiring suitable, friendly and helpful staff</li> <li>— setting and evaluating staff targets</li> <li>— ensuring staff follow complaints procedures</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ benefits of good customer service, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— customer loyalty</li> <li>— reduced complaints</li> <li>— increased profits/sales/decreased costs</li> <li>— good publicity</li> <li>— lower staff turnover/less absenteeism</li> <li>— competitive edge, therefore increased market share</li> <li>— improved efficiency/increased productivity</li> <li>— reduced waste</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ consequences of poor customer service, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— increased customer complaints</li> <li>— decreased profits/sales/increased costs</li> <li>— negative publicity</li> <li>— higher staff turnover/higher absenteeism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ using the internet to look at the customer service statements of well-known organisations</li> <li>◆ interviewing family members or friends about their customer service experiences</li> <li>◆ researching organisations that are well known for good customer service to identify the reasons why</li> <li>◆ mystery shopping — giving candidates a list of quality checks and asking them to pretend to be a mystery shopper in an organisation of their choice, and to present their findings back to the class</li> <li>◆ acting out different scenarios based on different types of customers</li> <li>◆ inviting guest speakers — customer service managers, store managers, etc to share their customer service policy and the benefits of looking after customers</li> <li>◆ designing customer feedback tools</li> <li>◆ creating a presentation on the features of good customer service</li> </ul>



Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— decreased market share/fewer customers</li> <li>— lower efficiency/decreased productivity</li> <li>— increased waste</li> </ul>	
Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ features of current legislation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— features of current health and safety regulations/legislation — The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA), fire safety, Display Screen Equipment (DSE), first aid and workplace regulations</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ key organisational responsibilities in terms of health and safety, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— use of induction training to cover health and safety issues</li> <li>— understanding what employers must do to observe health and safety rules, in accordance with current legislation</li> <li>— identification of hazards in the workplace and measures to ensure safe practice, eg completing an accident report form</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ touring the centre or using an outside business to identify health and safety measures</li> <li>◆ using ‘spot the hazard’ workplace pictures</li> <li>◆ using multimedia resources exemplifying good and bad health and safety procedures by organisations</li> <li>◆ using the section on health and safety in an organisation’s induction training video</li> <li>◆ designing and displaying posters to remind staff of health and safety matters and responsibilities</li> <li>◆ using Health and Safety Executive (HSE) resources and website</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Security of people, property and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ key organisational responsibilities in terms of security of people, eg installing secure entry systems</li> <li>◆ key organisational responsibilities in terms of security of property, eg applying security marking</li> <li>◆ key organisational responsibilities in terms of security of information, eg issuing usernames and passwords</li> <li>◆ features of current legislation, eg data protection, computer misuse and copyright</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ using case studies highlighting good and bad organisational practices</li> <li>◆ listening to guest speakers, eg reception staff speaking about security of people, building designers speaking about security of buildings and IT technicians speaking about security of information</li> <li>◆ creating a security checklist and assessing the security of people and property of a chosen organisation</li> <li>◆ visiting an organisation or asking a family member or friend about security in their workplace</li> <li>◆ studying the centre's policies and procedures for security</li> <li>◆ password protecting electronic files</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Sources of information from internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ features of reliable sources of internet information, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— non-biased</li> <li>— complete/sufficient</li> <li>— accurate</li> <li>— regularly updated site</li> <li>— reputation of author</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ benefits of using reliable internet sources of information, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— good decisions can be made</li> <li>— organisation gets a good reputation</li> <li>— organisation gains opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ consequences of using unreliable internet sources of information, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— missed meetings</li> <li>— wrong decisions are made</li> <li>— organisation gets a bad reputation</li> <li>— organisation loses money</li> <li>— organisation loses opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ providing practical examples of reliable/unreliable sources of information</li> <li>◆ creating a list of reputable websites that could be used for specific tasks (eg sites for flights, directions, and hotels)</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
File management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ features of file management, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— appropriately named files and folders</li> <li>— archiving/dead filing</li> <li>— regular backup</li> <li>— regular antivirus updates</li> <li>— security on files</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ benefits of good file management, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— saves time finding files</li> <li>— saves space on network</li> <li>— less stress for employees looking for files</li> <li>— improved efficiency leads to a good reputation</li> <li>— no duplication means that files are more likely to be up to date</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ consequences of poor file management, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— wastes time finding files</li> <li>— wastes space on network</li> <li>— more stress for employees looking for files</li> <li>— lower efficiency, leading to a poor reputation</li> <li>— duplication, meaning files are less likely to be up to date</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ encouraging good file management practices for candidates' work</li> <li>◆ demonstrating good file management which shows the centre's folder and file management</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Corporate image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ features of corporate image, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— standardised colours, fonts, graphics</li> <li>— logo</li> <li>— slogan</li> <li>— staff uniform</li> <li>— store layout</li> <li>— standardised responses to frequently asked questions (FAQ)</li> <li>— standardised customer service</li> <li>— consistent presentation of IT documents using a house style</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ benefits of having a corporate image, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— instantly recognisable brand</li> <li>— more professional reputation</li> <li>— staff are more consistent, so that customers are dealt with fairly</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ consequences of no/negative corporate image:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— no recognisable brand</li> <li>— less professional reputation</li> <li>— staff are less consistent, so that customers are not dealt with fairly</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ researching different organisations to identify ways they promote their corporate image</li> <li>◆ encouraging candidates to show consistency in documents across a series of tasks or questions</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
Electronic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ methods, features, uses and benefits, eg:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— blog</li> <li>— e-diary</li> <li>— e-mail</li> <li>— podcasts/vodcasts</li> <li>— presentation</li> <li>— social media</li> <li>— video and audio conferencing</li> <li>— webinar</li> <li>— website</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ research how businesses use different methods of electronic communication</li> <li>◆ watch webinars online</li> <li>◆ creating a blog of a learning journey</li> <li>◆ download podcasts/vodcasts and listen to/view them</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Word-processing and/or desktop publishing (DTP)</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating and editing a range of documents, complying consistently with house style which may contain multiple pages, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— letters (eg application, thank you and enquiry)</li> <li>— business reports</li> <li>— forms (eg travel forms and booking forms)</li> <li>— minutes</li> <li>— agendas</li> <li>— itineraries</li> <li>— posters</li> <li>— booklets</li> <li>— newsletters</li> <li>— name badges</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ using a variety of word-processing and desktop publishing skills, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— text formatting</li> <li>— page formatting</li> <li>— using templates</li> <li>— select and/or change font and font size</li> <li>— set and change margins and line spacing</li> <li>— insert, delete and move text</li> <li>— find and replace text</li> <li>— cut and/or copy and paste</li> <li>— carry out manuscript corrections</li> <li>— enhance text, eg bold, italics and underline</li> <li>— align text</li> <li>— insert graphics</li> <li>— bullets and numbering</li> <li>— insert headers and footers, both manual and custom</li> <li>— borders and shading</li> <li>— page numbering</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ maintaining a professional image when preparing documents to communicate information — this could be a corporate image (using logos and consistent styles), using appropriate language and taking account of the target audience</li> <li>◆ theory — features and benefits of word-processing and/or desktop publishing</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Word-processing and/or desktop publishing (DTP) — continued</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating and enhancing a table, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— insert, delete or amend data</li> <li>— add or delete row(s) and column(s)</li> <li>— borders and shading</li> <li>— merge cells</li> <li>— alignment of data, eg centre within cell, text direction</li> <li>— formulae (sum only)</li> <li>— sort data on one or two columns</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ importing data from IT applications into a document, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— data and/or chart from a spreadsheet file</li> <li>— data from a database file</li> <li>— data from a word-processing/DTP file</li> <li>— information from the internet</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ merging appropriate data from spreadsheet and database applications into a business document, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— labels</li> <li>— letters</li> <li>— reports</li> <li>— name badges</li> <li>— forms</li> <li>— certificates</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ using comments, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— add</li> <li>— action</li> <li>— delete</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ printing documents and extracts of documents, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— completed document in different layouts (such as, A4 and A5)</li> <li>— document showing merge fields</li> <li>— specific pages</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Spreadsheets</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating, editing and formatting a workbook, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— inserting and deleting rows/columns</li> <li>— hiding rows/columns</li> <li>— alignment of data, eg centre within cell, text direction</li> <li>— different fonts, styles, and sizes</li> <li>— currency, number, percentage to specified decimal places</li> <li>— date format</li> <li>— borders and shading</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ applying advanced functions and formulae to a workbook, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— +/–/÷/× individually or combined</li> <li>— sum</li> <li>— average</li> <li>— maximum</li> <li>— minimum</li> <li>— count and counta</li> <li>— if</li> <li>— link cells within worksheets</li> <li>— use named cells</li> <li>— relative and absolute cell references</li> <li>— sort data vertically on one or two columns</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ using comments, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— add</li> <li>— action</li> <li>— delete</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ preparing costings and budgets for real or simulated events</li> <li>◆ presenting results from surveys in chart format</li> <li>◆ theory — features and benefits of spreadsheets</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Spreadsheets — continued</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating a chart and labelling it independently, using data from adjacent and non-adjacent columns and rows, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— pie chart</li> <li>— bar or column chart</li> <li>— line graph</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ labelling charts meaningfully, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— chart title</li> <li>— axis labels</li> <li>— data labels</li> <li>— legend</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ printing worksheets and extracts of worksheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— showing value view</li> <li>— showing formulae view</li> <li>— with and without gridlines</li> <li>— with and without row and column headings</li> <li>— in portrait and landscape orientation</li> <li>— with headers and/or footers, both manual and custom</li> <li>— to fit on one page</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ printing charts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— embedded in worksheets or presented separately</li> <li>— with identifiable labels either by colour labelling or patterns (when using black and white charts)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>See word-processing and/or desktop publishing section for mail merge information.</p>	

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Databases</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creating forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— using selected fields from one or both tables, or a search</li> <li>— with a header and/or footer using text and/or graphics</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ creating and presenting information in reports to a professional standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— using selected fields from one or both tables, or a search</li> <li>— with a header and/or footer using text and/or graphics</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ creating labels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— from a table or search</li> <li>— with header and/or footer</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ editing a relational database: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— inputting and editing data in tables or making using of forms</li> <li>— altering date format and decimal places</li> <li>— adding and deleting field(s) and record(s)</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ searching information in a relational database using the following operators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— equals</li> <li>— greater than</li> <li>— less than</li> <li>— greater than or equal to</li> <li>— less than or equal to</li> <li>— or</li> <li>— not</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ sorting information in a relational database on one or two fields</li> <li>◆ printing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— tables, search results, specified fields, forms, reports and labels, to fit on one page</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>See word-processing and/or desktop publishing section for mail merge information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ working with database files, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— address book</li> <li>— supplier list</li> <li>— customer list</li> <li>— list of attendees for an event</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ theory — features and benefits of databases</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Presentations</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ using functions of multimedia applications to create and edit presentations, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— insert, delete and edit text</li> <li>— format text</li> <li>— insert and delete a graphic</li> <li>— bullets and numbers</li> <li>— create charts and/or tables</li> <li>— add and delete a slide</li> <li>— animate text and/or objects</li> <li>— import data</li> <li>— change slide layout</li> <li>— apply slide transitions</li> <li>— change slide order</li> <li>— apply and change background, colour scheme and/or apply design templates</li> <li>— insert footer on slides and handout</li> <li>— insert and delete action buttons</li> <li>— insert slide and page numbers</li> <li>— insert both specific and automatic date</li> <li>— use slide master</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ printing presentations in different formats, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— slide</li> <li>— handout</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ assessing presentations created by peers, teachers and others to provide feedback (which would encourage further improvement)</li> <li>◆ creating presentations to be used for real events</li> <li>◆ exploring opportunities for cross-curricular links to improve the aesthetics of presentations</li> <li>◆ maintaining a professional image when preparing to communicate information — this could be a corporate image (using logos and consistent styles), appropriate language and taking account of the target audience</li> <li>◆ theory — features and benefits of presentations</li> </ul>

Topic	Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding	Suggested experiences and activities
<p>Electronic communication</p> <p>Note: this can also be assessed as theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ searching for, extracting and downloading relevant information from the internet and intranet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— opening browser</li> <li>— using search engines</li> <li>— navigating hyperlinks</li> <li>— copying information from a web page to a word-processing/DTP document and presentation</li> <li>— using favourites/bookmarks</li> <li>— printing information and/or an extract of information</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ using e-mail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— composing e-mail by entering text and sending to one or more recipients</li> <li>— using the address book facility</li> <li>— marking urgent</li> <li>— using cc</li> <li>— using reply</li> <li>— using forward</li> <li>— adding attachment(s)</li> <li>— creating signature</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ using an e-diary, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— schedule appointment</li> <li>— set reminder</li> <li>— print calendar: daily, weekly and monthly view</li> <li>— schedule recurring appointments</li> <li>— accessing other users' calendars</li> <li>— schedule tasks</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The specifics of this may depend on the set-up of the e-mail and e-diary application used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ using internet for research, eg travel information, maps, venues, and accommodation</li> <li>◆ using shared areas on the centre's network/intranet</li> <li>◆ using other online networks and virtual-learning environments</li> <li>◆ theory — features and benefits of electronic communication</li> </ul>

## Preparing for course assessment

The course assessment focuses on breadth, challenge and application. Candidates should apply the skills they have learned during the course.

In preparation, candidates should be given opportunities to practise activities similar to those expected in the course assessment. For example, centres could develop tasks and questions similar to those exemplified in the specimen and past papers.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Course planners should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Skill	How it is developed
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ listening to and following instructions</li><li>◆ making presentations</li><li>◆ participating in group discussions</li><li>◆ asking and answering questions</li><li>◆ interviewing administration personnel in the centre</li><li>◆ collaborating with others when organising and supporting events</li><li>◆ listening to guest speakers</li><li>◆ carrying out mystery shopping</li></ul>
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ extracting information from graphical formats in a variety of media</li><li>◆ understanding and interpreting research data, eg tables, charts, graphs and written information</li><li>◆ using the information and/or data from the internet and intranet to produce documents and presentations</li></ul>

Skill	How it is developed
Employability, enterprise and citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ researching duties (tasks) and skills/qualities of administrators</li> <li>◆ planning tasks</li> <li>◆ working with others</li> <li>◆ maintaining appropriate personal appearance and dressing appropriately</li> <li>◆ being punctual and managing time</li> <li>◆ showing flexibility, resilience, initiative, and responsibility</li> <li>◆ using a range of software packages for research and accurate presentation of information</li> <li>◆ using a range of digital media</li> <li>◆ using ICT responsibly and safely</li> </ul>
Thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ memorising and recalling administration and IT-related facts</li> <li>◆ understanding and explaining the role of administration in the workplace</li> <li>◆ understanding and explaining the importance of observing health and safety and security of people, property and information</li> <li>◆ using knowledge of health, safety and security by applying it in different contexts</li> <li>◆ understanding and describing the key features of good customer service</li> <li>◆ applying administration and IT-related skills and understanding in the context of organising and supporting events</li> <li>◆ understanding and explaining the functions of spreadsheets, databases and word-processing software or emerging equivalent technologies</li> <li>◆ applying administration and IT-related skills, knowledge and understanding in the context of creating, editing and updating business documents</li> </ul>

The development of both administration and IT specific, and also generic skills is central to this course. Teachers and lecturers should make candidates aware of the skills they are developing, including the transferability of the generic skills. It is this transferability that helps candidates with further study and enhances their personal effectiveness and employability in a range of sectors.

# Administrative information

---

**Published:** August 2018 (version 2.2)

---

## History of changes to course support notes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as appendix.	June 17
2.1	The 'Course assessment structure: question paper' section has been updated to provide further guidance regarding conditions of assessment in the question paper. The 'Course assessment structure: assignment' section has also been updated to provide further guidance regarding conditions of assessment in the assignment.	June 18
2.2	In the 'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section, clarified that all IT applications can also be assessed as theory.	August 2019

These course support notes may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of these course support notes can be downloaded from SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the course support notes.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012, 2019