



National 4  
Course  
Specification



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# National 4 Business Course Specification (C708 74)

**Valid from August 2015**

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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# Course outline

**Course title:** National 4 Business

**SCQF:** level 4 (24 SCQF credit points)

**Course code:** C708 74

## Mandatory Units

The Course consists of three mandatory Units including the Added Value Unit:

**H280 74 Business in Action (National 4) 9 SCQF credit points**

or

**H6N6 74 Business in Action 9 SCQF credit points**  
**with a Scottish Context (National 4)\***

and

**H281 74 Influences on Business (National 4) 9 SCQF credit points**

and

## Added Value Unit

**H282 74 Business Assignment (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for the assessment of added value in the Added Value Unit. Further information on this Unit is provided in the Assessment section.

\*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#)

## Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by the following or by equivalent experience and/or qualifications:

- ◆ National 3 Business Course

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in Business or related areas
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This Course 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. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

## **Rationale**

All new and revised 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.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The National 4 Business Course consolidates and further develops knowledge and understanding gained through studying relevant experiences and outcomes from the social studies and technologies curriculum areas.

The Course introduces learners to the dynamic, competitive, financial and economic environment of business. It develops skills in presenting business related information, in a variety of formats, to the various stakeholders of an organisation.

The development of skills explicit to the Course will enable learners to think logically and be more flexible and resourceful in their attitudes. This will prepare them to seek success in their lives.

These skills will also support learners in becoming more confident, particularly regarding their own future education and place in the world of work.

Understanding the economic and financial environment in which businesses operate will enable learners to contribute responsibly to society.

By encouraging working with others, in practical contexts, the Course will help learners to participate effectively in our continuously changing business environment.

The Course covers a broad spectrum of learning that allows for further progression and depth of study at a later date. It provides opportunities that allow learning to develop in a challenging and enjoyable way as it relates the study of business to real-life contexts.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

Business plays an important role in society. We all rely on businesses and entrepreneurs to create wealth, prosperity, jobs and choices.

The purpose of the Course is to develop learners' understanding of the way in which businesses operate in the current dynamic, changing, competitive and economic environments, and to encourage enterprising attitudes.

The Course aims to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of business concepts in a range of contexts
- ◆ awareness of the processes and procedures businesses use to ensure customers' needs are met
- ◆ enterprising skills, and adopt enterprising attributes, by participating in practical activities in realistic business situations
- ◆ financial awareness through a business context
- ◆ an insight into the impact of the economy on businesses and our daily lives, thus gaining economic awareness

The use of practical activities and theoretical concepts, in real-life contexts, will offer learners opportunities to be involved in learning that is designed to inspire, challenge and motivate them, as well as giving them an insight into the steps businesses take to become and remain competitive and successful.

A main feature of this Course is the development of enterprise and employability skills; learners will gain a better understanding of the personal qualities and attributes required of people involved in business. This will be facilitated through activities which demonstrate understanding of risk taking and decision making, thereby enabling learners to cope more easily in our rapidly changing business environments.

The knowledge gained of financial and economic situations, through a business context, can be applied to personal living so that learners can manage their own personal financial affairs with confidence, and gain a better understanding of the impact of economic issues on their lives.

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

The Course is designed for all learners, but may be of greatest appeal to those with an interest in business, whether that be in developing an understanding of the modern business environment or finding out how and why people set up in business.

The combination of practical aspects and ICT-based learning will enable learners to apply their skills and knowledge to real-life business contexts.

By developing many transferable skills, the Course prepares learners for everyday life, the world of work, or further study of business and other business-related disciplines. It deepens understanding of business, develops an understanding of the relationship between a business and its customers, and highlights a range of business-based career opportunities that are available within all business sectors.

The Course fosters an understanding of how people contribute to business success. As a consequence, learners will be better informed about business and able to make effective contributions to society as consumers, employees, employers or self-employed people.

The Course develops the skills of enterprise, employability, numeracy, ICT and citizenship, which are so essential in today's society. It supports literacy and takes into

account the needs of all learners by providing sufficient flexibility to enable them to achieve in different ways and at different paces.

By studying this Course, learners will develop skills which include an enterprising attitude and an appreciation of taking risks in a business context; a customer focus in business contexts; numeracy skills through improving knowledge of financial awareness, in a business context, which supports and further develops personal financial management; and decision making, by interpreting, analysing and evaluating a range of information to make responsible and effective business decisions.

Other skills developed by learners will include the ability to use ICT to gather, analyse and communicate business information efficiently and effectively, and being able to communicate effectively in a business context by working co-operatively with others and to work independently or to lead activities when appropriate.

Successful completion of this Course opens up a range of vertical and lateral progression routes for learners. These include other National Qualifications, Skills for Work Courses, National Progression Awards and National Certificates. The Course may also lead to employment and/or training in various industries.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

The Course consists of three mandatory Units including the Added Value Unit. Within each Unit there is a degree of flexibility in how study is undertaken.

The Course is practical and experiential in nature and develops a wide range of skills for learning, life and work. These include: employability skills and attributes, including flexibility and adaptability, independence, reliability and working with others; numeracy, by being able to interpret data, tables, charts and other graphical displays to draw conclusions, and understanding money; and effective use of ICT in a business context.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways. However, there is scope in the design of the Units to allow the Course to be taught in an integrated, experiential way.

### **Business in Action (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will carry out activities that will give them an appreciation of how and why businesses develop and operate in today's society. Learners will develop skills and knowledge and understanding relating to the role of business and entrepreneurship within society, and of the actions taken by business to meet customers' needs. Learners will discover how businesses are organised by exploring the functional activities, such as marketing, finance, operations and human resources, and applying their understanding of these areas to support business planning and decision making.

### **Influences on Business (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will carry out activities that will give them an appreciation of the impact that a range of internal and external influences has on business decision making. Learners will investigate stakeholders' influence on businesses and will acquire skills and knowledge and understanding relating to the financial, economic, competitive and social environment in which businesses have to operate. This will provide learners with a growing understanding of how these influences can affect business survival and success.

### **Added Value Unit: Business Assignment (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will draw on and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have gained from across the other Units of the Course. This will be demonstrated by an assignment. The criteria for the assignment will be sufficiently flexible and open to allow for a degree of personalisation and choice as to the aspect of business to be investigated and how the findings may be presented.

## Conditions of award

To achieve the National 4 Business Course, learners must pass all of the Units, including the Added Value Unit. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

National 4 Courses are not graded.

## Skills and knowledge and understanding

Full skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course are given in the *Added Value Unit Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. This includes:

- ◆ a basic knowledge and understanding of the ways in which business operates to meet customers' needs
- ◆ a basic knowledge and understanding of the role of business and its impact of business on our daily lives
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of straightforward planning techniques used by business to ensure success
- ◆ a straightforward knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurial attributes in the context of business start-up
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding of the key functional areas of business
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of the effects of straightforward internal and external influences on business activity
- ◆ interpreting and drawing elementary conclusions from straightforward business information
- ◆ demonstrating independence and communication skills, including the ability to use ICT and work with others, through applying straightforward knowledge of business-related concepts

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be 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.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)).

# Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes* and the *Added Value Unit Specification*.

## Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

### Business in Action (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ knowledge of business start-up and the ability to demonstrate straightforward business planning and decision-making
- ◆ understanding of facts and characteristics of the key functional areas of business
- ◆ basic understanding of the straightforward actions taken by business to meet customers' needs

### Influences on Business (National 4)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ awareness of the effects of straightforward internal and external influences on business activity and development
- ◆ understanding of straightforward actions taken by business to remain successful and competitive

## Added Value Unit

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)<sup>1</sup>. At National 4, added value will be assessed in an Added Value Unit. The Added Value Unit will address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge and application.

In this Course, the added value will focus on challenge and application.

The learner will be assessed by an [assignment](#)<sup>2</sup> which requires the learner to draw on and extend business skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in the component

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

<sup>2</sup> See link above for definition.

Units of the Course. Learners will research and communicate findings on a business-related assignment, drawn from the Course.

The business-related assignment will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow personalisation and choice as to how the findings may be presented.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

1.3 Listening and talking

## **2 Numeracy**

2.3 Information handling

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

4.1 Employability

4.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

4.4 Enterprise

## **5 Thinking skills**

5.1 Remembering

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Administrative information

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### History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

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