



**Arrangements for:  
Professional Development Award in  
Office Management and Information  
Technology**

**SCQF level 8**

**Group Award Code: GA10 48**

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## **Acknowledgement**

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



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## 1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the *revised Group Award Professional Development Award (PDA) in Office Management and Information Technology at SCQF level 8 which was validated in September 2010*. This document includes: background information on the revision of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

This group award replaces the PDA in Office Management and Information Technology at SCQF level 8 (G8L7 48) which was introduced in June 2007.

## 2 Rationale for the revision of the Group Award

This award has been revised to ensure it meets the needs of continuing professional development in the area of office management and advanced use of computer application software. The rapid growth of information and communications technology and the increased emphasis given to information processing and management has led to the demand for new and greater flexibility with regard to workplace skills. There is also greater emphasis on continuing personal and professional development, problem solving and 'employability' or 'inter-personal' skills.

The framework of Units not only offers depth and breadth but flexibility. Depth is provided by the level of the Units that make up the PDA. All Units, with the exception of the Unit, Developing the Individual within a Team, are at SCQF level 8. Flexibility has been incorporated by enabling candidates to achieve the Unit Developing the Individual within a Team, at SCQF level 7 or 8. In addition, the PDA is not only valuable as a whole award but the individual Units also offer opportunities for those whose needs may be only to specialise in certain areas and there is a breadth of Units to choose from.

The framework of the PDA has been designed to build on the knowledge and skills contained in the HNC in Administration and Information Technology but will allow candidates the flexibility of taking only some core Units included in the HND and still formally recognise their achievements.

This Group Award is one of a suite of PDAs in Administration and Technology, at SCQF levels 7 and 8 and has been designed in accordance with the PDA Design Principles for level 8 awards.

In March 2010, the associated HNC/D in Administration and Information Technology and HNC/D Business were re-validated. In August 2010, the PDAs within the Industry and Business sector were reviewed to examine the impact the revisions of the HN awards might have on linked PDAs. The replacement of the one-credit Unit Project Management with a two-credit Unit Information and Communication Technology in Business within the HND Administration and IT and HND Business frameworks affected a number of the aims within the PDA in Office Management and Information Technology, and it was agreed that a limited review take place.

## 2.1 Market research, consultation and development processes

Centres were consulted on the proposed changes, professional bodies were contacted and government documents<sup>1</sup> relating to employment skills and competencies were reviewed.

Results of earlier consultation with HNC graduates and employers were deemed still relevant and no further consultation occurred with these two stakeholders.

The proposals were deemed relevant and appropriate by the large majority of respondents.

The following table summarises the consultation methods employed:

Stakeholder	Method of consultation
Centres	◆ Email requesting feedback on SQA findings and proposal.
Council for Administration	◆ Email with attachment outlining proposals and requesting comment were sent to the Council for Administration (CfA) followed up by telephone calls.
Professional bodies	◆ Email with attachment outlining proposals and requesting comment were sent to Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA) and the Institute of Administrative Management (IAM).

## 3 Aims of the Group Award

The aims of the PDA in Office Information Management at SCQF level 8 are to provide a continuous professional development route in advancing management and IT skills to a more senior or professional level and to have more in-depth technical skills and knowledge. Successful people need more than just technical competence, they need the ability to analyse and use resources to develop appropriate solutions to problems.

### 3.1 General aims of the Group Award

- 1 To develop transferable skills.
- 2 To develop study and research skills.
- 3 To develop employment skills and enhance candidates' employment prospects.
- 4 To enable progression within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- 5 To provide academic stimulus and challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> Futureskills Scotland, Work Skills Scotland, 2008 [online] <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/labour-market/commissioned-research/work-skills-in-scotland> [accessed 11/09/2010]

### 3.2 Specific aims of the Group Award

- 6 To develop a range of specialist IT skills.
- 7 To develop project management, research and planning skills.
- 8 To develop an awareness of professional issues such as legal, data management and ethical considerations.
- 9 To develop the ability to work flexibly and co-operatively with others.
- 10 To develop critical and evaluative thinking.

### 3.3 Relationship of the Units to Aims

Unit title	Unit code	Aims
IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing	F84A 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets	F849 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
IT in Business — Advanced Databases	F848 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
Information and Communication Technology in Business	F84W 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
Office Management	F84D 35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10
Developing the Individual within a Team	F86Y 35 OR F870 34	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10

### 3.4 Target groups

This PDA is to enable candidates in the working environment, who may not be able to commit to long term part-time study, the opportunity to undertake a programme of study over the period of approximately one year.

### 3.5 Employment opportunities

As the award provides the skills and knowledge demanded in a modern work environment it is anticipated that more opportunities for using these skills will become available within a diverse range of organisations.

The role of a Personal Assistant/Executive Administrator/Office Professional<sup>2</sup> normally includes duties such as:

- ◆ assisting with the selection and recruitment of new staff
- ◆ providing support to training managers
- ◆ production of monthly statistics
- ◆ secretarial duties
- ◆ keeping computerised records up to date
- ◆ assisting clients and customers of the organisation

This PDA will equip candidates with the necessary knowledge, skills and competence to fulfil such a role.

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<sup>2</sup> All of these are terms used by the Institute of Professional Administrators

## 4 Access to the Group Award

This qualification has been developed to enhance administration training. Candidates will need previous experience of office administration and competence in the use of ICT.

### 4.1 Formal Qualifications

As with all SQA qualifications, access will be at the discretion of the centre and the following recommendations are for guidance.

- ◆ HNC in Administration and Information Management or HNC in Administration and Information Technology
- ◆ HNC in Business or equivalent
- ◆ Two NQ passes at Higher to include Administration or Business Management and English
- ◆ SVQ in Business and Administration at level 3
- ◆ NC in Business at SCQF level 5

Different combinations of relevant National Qualifications, Vocational Qualifications and equivalent qualifications from other awarding bodies may also be acceptable, as would suitable industry standard qualifications at an appropriate level.

### 4.2 Work Experience

Mature candidates with suitable work experience may be accepted for entry provided the enrolling centre believes that the candidate is likely to benefit from undertaking the award.

### 4.3 Speakers of other languages

Overseas students whose first language is not English should have IELTS 5.5 or above

### 4.4 Minimum entry requirements — IT Skills

The PDA makes no provision for advancing basic IT skills. The level of competence required is stated in the Unit specifications and it is expected that candidates will have achieved an intermediate standard of competence in the use of computer applications. Where a candidate has not achieved an HNC in Business or Administration and IT, they should be competent to the same standard as the relevant IT Units within these awards, for example:

IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	F84C 34
IT in Business: Spreadsheets	F84V 34
IT in Business: Databases	F84X 34



## 4.5 Recommended Core Skills Entry Profile

It is recommended that candidates possess the following Core Skills, or equivalent:

Core Skill or component	SCQF level
Communication	6
Working with Others	4
ICT	6
Problem Solving	6
Numeracy	5

## 4.6 Progression to HND

As all Units are mandatory within the HND Administration and Information Technology framework and mandatory/optional within the HND Business framework, candidates could progress to the full HND. Thereafter, as previously agreed with universities, there are articulation routes into degree programmes.

## 5 Award structure

This award has been designed to be delivered on a part-time basis over one year. All Units in the award are mandatory.

Candidates will be awarded a PDA in Office Management and Information Technology at SCQF level 8 on successful completion of all of the Units. This award is made up of 6 mandatory Units, comprising 64 SCQF/8 SQA credit points at SCQF level 8. However, the Unit 'Developing the Individual within a Team' may be achieved at SCQF level 7 or 8.

### 5.1 Framework of Units

Unit Description	Code no	Credit value	SCQF level
IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing	HH86 35*	1	8
IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets	F849 35	1	8
IT in Business — Advanced Databases	F848 35	1	8
Information and Communication Technology in Business	HH87 35*	2	8
Office Management	F84D 35	2	8
Developing the Individual within a Team	F870 34 or F86Y 35	1	Either 7 or 8

\*Refer to the History of Changes

## 5.2 Core Skills

The Core Skills embedded within this award are:

- ◆ ICT at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Numeracy at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Problem Solving component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Working with Others at SCQF level 6

Opportunities to develop further Core Skills include:

- ◆ Communication at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Problem Solving components Planning and Organising and Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 6

The table below shows where these Core Skills/Core Skill components are located.

Unit title	Unit code	Core Skills
IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing	F84A 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communication: Written signposted at SCQF 5</li> <li>◆ ICT: Accessing Information signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking embedded at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Planning and Organising signposted at SCQF 6</li> </ul>
IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets	F849 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ ICT: Processing Information signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Numeracy embedded at SCQF 6,</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking embedded at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Planning and Organising signposted at SCQF 6</li> </ul>
IT in Business — Advanced Databases	F848 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communication: Written signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ ICT embedded at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking signposted at SCQF 6</li> </ul>
Information and Communication Technology in Business	F84W 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communication: Written signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ ICT: Processing Information signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Planning and Organising signposted at SCQF 6</li> </ul>

Unit title	Unit code	Core Skills
Office Management	F84D 35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communication signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking embedded at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Planning and Organising signposted at SCQF 6</li> <li>◆ Problem Solving: Reviewing and Evaluating signposted at SCQF 6</li> </ul>
Developing the Individual within a Team	F8 6Y 35 <i>or</i> F8 70 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Working with Others embedded at SCQF 6</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Signposting to National Occupational Standards

In April 2010, the Council for Administration (CfA) produced their revised National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Business and Administration. There is now a suite of 94 NOS - increased from 51. The SVQs derived from these NOS are still under review; however, it is believed that this award retains an appropriate range of underpinning knowledge and skills relevant to the revised NOS. CfA confirmed that the content of this award remains relevant and appropriate to the field of business and administration.

### 5.4 Credit Transfer

Where candidates have completed individual Units from the predecessor framework, they can be given credit transfer on a Unit by Unit basis. Credit transfer can be given where there is broad equivalence between the subject-related content of the Units, ie the Knowledge and/or Skills have not changed significantly, or where they are covered in the Unit for which credit is being awarded.

The table on the next page sets out the credit transfer guidance for the PDA in Office Management and Information Technology at SCQF level 8. However, it remains the responsibility of the centre to check these arrangements.

Unit title	Unit code	Predecessor Unit title	Predecessor code	Credit transfer
IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing	F84A 35	IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing	DE2G 35	Full
IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets	F849 35	IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets	DE1V 35	Full
IT in Business — Advanced Databases	F848 35	IT in Business — Advanced Databases	DE1W 35	Full
Information Communication and Technology in Business	F84W 35	Project Management	D76J 35	Outcomes 2 and 4 achieved. Outcomes 1, 2 and 5 to complete
Office Management	F84D 35	Office Management	DE1X 35	Full
Developing the Individual within a Team	F86Y 35 OR F870 34	Developing the Individual within a Team	DF45 34 OR DF46 35	Full

## 5.5 Transition arrangements

Where candidates have partially completed the predecessor PDA in Office Management and Information Technology at SCQF level 8, transition arrangements will need to be agreed on a unit-by-unit basis. (see section 5.4 Credit Transfer)

## 5.6 Articulation and professional recognition

### 5.6.1 Other SQA qualifications

There are progression opportunities to the HND in Administration and Information Technology and to the HND in Business.

### 5.6.2 Links to Industry Standard Qualifications

This PDA provides a range of underpinning knowledge and skills relevant to the following qualifications from SQA and other awarding bodies:

- ◆ PC Passport (SQA)
- ◆ European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)
- ◆ Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)

### 5.6.3 Higher Education

There are no agreed articulation routes directly into degree programmes, however, successful candidates who already possess the related HNC in addition to this award may progress onto one of the above mentioned HNDs and thereafter may continue into Higher Education.

### 5.6.4 Professional Bodies

Successful graduates may apply for membership to the Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA) but may be required to sit extra examinations.

For candidates interested in pursuing such membership further, this qualification provides underpinning skills and knowledge for the following Institute of Administrative Management qualifications (IAM):

- ◆ Level 5 Diploma in Administration Management

This would lead to Student membership of the Institute of Professional Administrators (IPA)

## 6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

### 6.1 General

The evidence requirements focus on the knowledge/skills that candidates should perform/use and the assessment methods are not prescribed. This means that there is much more flexibility in when and how the evidence is gathered. Rather than delivering and assessing Units as individual components and thereby increasing the possibility of assessing similar evidence on more than one occasion, the table below gives suggestions on how delivery and assessment may be reduced by integrating Units.

The suggestions below are not mandatory and there may well be alternative approaches but they are designed to prompt explicit integration opportunities for centres and candidates. It is hoped that by doing this candidates will be able to appreciate that all Units are relevant to their chosen course/vocation and they constitute a coherent, attractive and very relevant programme, which will equip candidates with the knowledge and/or skills needed for today's working environment.

There is no single approach to the delivery and assessment of the Units listed. Centres may use a range of teaching and learning approaches including self-study, workshops, regular classes and group tasks.

Each Unit provides details of the Evidence Requirements and any assessment conditions that apply. However, centres remain responsible for ensuring the authenticity of work produced by candidates.

<b>DELIVERED AND ASSESSED ACROSS 2 SEMESTERS:</b>	
F84A 35	<b>IT in Business — Advanced Word Processing</b> Short workshop with self-study activities
F84W 35	<b>Information and Communication Technology in Business</b> Classes/workshops/self study activities/materials – Outcomes 3 and 4 could be linked to the planning phase of the DIWAT project. Outcomes 1 and 2 could be linked to Advanced Spreadsheets and/or Advanced Databases. Outcome 5 could be linked to Office Management.
F84D 35	<b>Office Management</b> Classes/workshops/self study activities/materials including independent research etc
F870 34 Or F86Y 35	<b>Developing the Individual within a Team</b> Short workshops with activities linked to planning and reflective log records and evaluation tasks. Candidates complete group activities outside workshop/class time
<b>DELIVER AND ASSESS IN SEMESTER ONE</b>	
F849 35	<b>IT in Business — Advanced Spreadsheets</b> Classes/workshops/self study activities/materials
<b>DELIVERED AND ASSESSED IN SEMESTER TWO</b>	
F848 35	<b>IT in Business — Advanced Databases</b> Classes/workshops/self study activities/materials

## 6.2 Open Learning

In terms of Open Learning, the one Unit that may require additional support is the Developing the Individual within a Team. This Unit requires candidates to work with others to achieve a common goal. In most situations, it is likely that candidates will work with other candidates who are studying the same programme, however, where appropriate candidates may work cooperatively with others from their work place. In such situations, the candidate and assessor will need to ensure all evidence requirements are covered with sufficient detail for the assessor to make reliable assessment decisions.

Having said this, all Units may be delivered through Open Learning. Centres could develop resources that include hard copy booklets, use a virtual learning environment and/or e-assessment technologies. If centres can offer the use of mentored discussion forums, wikis and other developing technologies to reduce the feelings of isolation and encourage collaboration even from a distance, this will help Open Learning candidates remain motivated and on track.

Each Unit provides details of the Evidence Requirements and any assessment conditions that apply. Every effort has been made to ensure there are no artificial barriers to achievement for Open Learning candidates. However, it remains the responsibility of the centre to ensure authenticity of work produced.

### 6.3 E-learning

Centres are encouraged to use new technologies to support and enhance the delivery and assessment of this group award. Formative E-assessment materials may be developed over the next few years. More information about online resources available via SQA's SOLAR project can be found at the website – [www.sqasolar.org.uk](http://www.sqasolar.org.uk)

### 6.4 Resources

Centres should keep up-to-date with developments in legislation and business practices relevant to the knowledge and skills within this group award.

## 7 General information for centres

### **Disabled candidates and/or additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

### **Internal and external moderation**

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(s) should be internally moderated, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External moderation will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external moderation can be found in SQA's Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## 8 General information for candidates

This award has been designed in consultation with practitioners and colleges. It will give you the specialist knowledge and advanced IT skills required for employment within administrative and business environments. The framework consists of 8 SQA credits.

As you progress through this award you will experience a range of assessments, evidence for which may be drawn from personal employment experiences.

You may have the opportunity to experience learning and assessment in a flexible way ranging from taught sessions, e-learning to self study, thus developing a wide range of study skills that can be applied to most new situations.

This PDA will provide you with a vehicle to formalise your skills or as a CPD tool. On completion of the PDA you may continue study towards another PDA or onto an appropriate HN programme within Administration and Information Technology or Business.

## 9 Glossary of terms

**SCQF:** This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

**SCQF credits:** One HN credit is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points. This applies to all HN Units, irrespective of their level.

**SCQF levels:** The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HN Units will normally be at levels 6–9. Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8.

**Subject Unit:** Subject Units contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

**Embedded Core Skills:** This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the related Core Skill/Core Skill component.

**Signposted Core Skills:** This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie out with automatic certification.

**Qualification Design Team:** The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the HNC/D from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

**Consortium-devised HNCs and HNDs** are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.