CORE SKILLS
ASSESSMENT SUPPORT PACK

Part 1: Information for tutors

What is involved?

This Unit is about using straight forward ICT to access, process and present information in personal, workplace, social and educational situations. The focus of the Unit is on transferable ICT skills:

- using computer systems
- using applications software
- finding information from digital data sources

At this level, learners are expected to be able to work with a computer system to carry out some straightforward processing tasks. They may need some help with technical terminology but should be able to use the computer with a degree of independence.

Learner motivation can be maximised by making the ICT activities as relevant as possible to the learner's likely uses for ICT. The activities should be drawn from the learner's personal, workplace, social or educational situation. Additionally, integration of the ICT activities with those of other SQA qualifications being undertaken should be explored. For example, when a learner is undertaking other National Qualifications, motivation for ICT can be increased if the activities are related to these National Qualifications and the learner can see the direct relevance of the ICT. If you do decide to adopt this approach, separate records of assessment decisions must be kept for this Unit and evidence for this Unit should be clearly accessible.

Assessment and evidence

Assessment is likely to use a combination of observation and learner-produced supporting evidence (product evidence) such as printouts, screenshots and files.

You should try to identify naturally-occurring opportunities for assessment where possible. For learners who are also working towards vocational Units or subject specific Units, opportunities for assessment of ICT skills could arise while completing tasks which provide evidence for both the vocational/subject specific Unit and this Unit. Some of the exemplars in this pack could be used or contextualised for this purpose.

When you are assessing by observation, it is essential to keep a detailed checklist. When you are assessing by oral questioning, you must keep a copy of the questions asked and the answers given.

All items of evidence should be signed and dated, by you.

Part 3 of this pack supplies exemplar forms which you can use to record successful completion of each of the Unit tasks. You can sign and date these as the learner achieves each task to keep a record of the learner's progress.

Planning

You should work out where opportunities for meeting the standard are likely to arise. Where possible this should be built into the assessment process. You should discuss this assessment process with the learners so that they are quite clear about what is expected from them.

Guidance on the Unit

What learners need to know or be able to do

The Unit states that on completion the learners will know how to:

- select and start up applications software (eg word processing; spreadsheet; database; media packages) which is suitable for the task
- use straightforward tools (eg file manager; print manager; control panels)
- name and organise folders and sub-folders
- enter and edit data, using appropriate applications software
- locate various types of information, for example, text, numerical data, graphics, videos, and audio, from a diverse array of contemporary data sources. These sources encompass online databases, cloud-based storage platforms, internal networks, and personal computing devices. Utilise advanced search engines, streaming services, and software to access and retrieve relevant content
- use of specific keywords, for example, phrase searching with quotes, and search tools such as filters, Boolean operators, and AI-assisted search suggestions. Additionally, utilise voice search capabilities
- select information which matches criteria (eg date of information; UK information; media type)
- present information in an appropriate mode (eg display on screen; print out; play audio file)
- use multi-factor authentication and biometrics to recognise security risks and act accordingly. For example, it is essential to keep your login and password secure and take necessary precautions while online

At SCQF level 4, learners will need help to ensure that they are familiar with four general areas of ICT. These are detailed overleaf.

ICT operations

Here the learners have to show ability in interacting with the operating system. This provides the user interface allowing application software to be run and files to be manipulated. The learners must be able to carry out the following activities:

- selecting and starting up the appropriate software for a given task
- using the various control panels (eg print manager, file manager, display settings)
- setting up and maintaining an organised folder structure
- presenting information in appropriate output modes (eg screen display, print, playing of multimedia files)

Processing information using ICT

This part of the Unit can be based on any applications software, provided that the chosen application allows menu-based operation. The learners must be able to:

- use menus to choose computer operations
- select the appropriate application for the activity
- enter and edit/manipulate data in the application
- present the resulting output (display on screen; print out; play as an audio file)

The learners must produce their tasks within a reasonable timescale, accurately and with results meeting the desired purpose.

Accessing information using ICT

At the SCQF 4 level, the learners have to carry out a number of straightforward searches or one sustained search. If you decide to use straightforward searches, it is reasonable to expect learners to show proficiency in carrying out four searches. Even for the straightforward searches, learners are expected to use techniques to filter their search results with appropriate criteria. This is a level above just typing in one search term to generate the results.

For example, when using search engines, learners might use quotation marks to search for exact phrases or include additional keywords to narrow the search. There must also be an element of inspecting the results, where only appropriate ones should be chosen by the learners. As an example, it may be necessary to choose results applying only to the UK (vital in searches on policy or with legal implications). Although the search terms might include 'UK', the learners still need to inspect the results carefully.

If the learners carry out four straightforward searches, they should be from different sources or use different search criteria. The searches could all involve using a search engine but not more than one should be a search to find a postal address. The searches do not need to be related in any way. A sustained search, while still showing some variety in criteria or sources, will consist of searches which are combined together to give a result. The learners will see all the searches as part of a single task.

Searching need not be limited to the Internet. It can be related to information held on the learner's own machine or on a local database. The information sought need not be text-based and could be graphical or multimedia-based.

The resulting information should be presented by the learners in the appropriate manner, eg displayed on screen, as a printout or the playing of an audio file.

Keeping information safe

The learners must demonstrate safe practice with the information which they handle. The most important point is likely to be password security. This can prevent personal identity theft for the learners and keep confidential information safe by preventing unauthorised access to files on the systems they are using. The online world brings additional problems for keeping information safe. The learners should demonstrate safe practice such as looking for the secure padlock on shopping sites and recognising potentially dangerous e-mail attachments.

In some cases the learners will be automatically restricted in the types of information they can access. It is important that they understand what they are allowed to access and what they are permitted to do with the information. For example, they may be allowed to view but not alter certain files. They may only be allowed to use a limited range of software out of what is actually available on the computers. If they perceive a need to step outside these constraints, they must ask permission before proceeding.

Gathering evidence

It may be appropriate for you to gather written evidence produced by the learner while carrying out the practical activities. However, written evidence is not essential for this Unit and is inappropriate if it disadvantages the learner.

You may wish instead to use oral questioning. This requires you to create and complete record sheets comprising a checklist, questions asked and learner responses.

From the learner's point of view, it is useful to have the means of keeping all the work of this Unit together. You can help here by creating and providing a workbook which includes all the evidence-gathering items. An alternative would be to provide worksheets which can be made into a paper-based or e-portfolio.

If you have chosen to integrate the ICT work with that of other Units being undertaken by the learner, it may be possible to assess the ICT as part of a larger single activity. In this case you must keep separate records for this Unit.

The Unit requires learners to carry out ICT tasks which involve accessing and processing information. This may be achieved in many ways. Some typical activities might be:

- create a report with integrated graphics using word processing software
- utilise search engines and online planning tools for organising a community group event
- manage event budgets using spreadsheet software with data integration
- organise digital files using cloud-based storage solutions
- personalise your digital workspace across devices

It may be possible to create a single activity which would provide evidence for the whole Unit. However, this may not be appropriate for your learners. An alternative approach would be to use four tasks. Each would cover one of the sections discussed in the previous section.

These are:

- ICT operations
- processing information using ICT
- accessing information using ICT
- keeping information safe

Part 2: Assessment Guidance

You can use the exemplar assessments given in this section in several ways:

- to help identify the type and amount of evidence which the learner needs to produce
- to help identify the level of complexity in evidence required for the Core Skill at this level
- to help you to create an assessment task related to the learner's own situation

You can use the following information to create task sheets to be used with the learners in assessment sessions. The task sheet will contain the assessment items and you can leave appropriate space for the learners to insert their responses.

Learners must complete all four tasks.

Task 1 is designed to cover ICT operations.

Task 2 is designed to cover processing information using ICT.

Task 3 is designed to cover accessing information using ICT.

Task 4 is designed to cover keeping information safe.

For each of the Tasks, successful completion should be noted on a checklist.

Task 1: ICT operations

This task covers the Unit requirements to:

- select and start up applications software (eg word processing; spreadsheet; database; media packages) which is suitable for the task
- use straightforward tools (eg file manager; print manager; control panels)
- name and organise folders and sub-folders
- present information in an appropriate mode (eg display on screen; print out; play audio file)

You should be able to assess the learners for this task by observation. The activities for the other tasks will normally require the learners to carry out these points. You can create a learner task sheet to remind the learners what is to be assessed. As an example you could use the following as a basis:

Tell the learner that over the next weeks, your tutor will observe your performance in ICT operations. You may be asked questions about what you

are doing and your tutor will ask to see the folders you keep on your computer.

Your tutor will want to make sure that you:

- can select and start up the correct software for the tasks you carry out
- can use control panels correctly, eg print manager, file manager and display settings
- have a well organised folder system with appropriate names used throughout
- are able to present information in the appropriate way, eg printed or displayed on screen and to use multimedia files correctly

Your tutor will make it clear to you the time period over which this assessment is to take place.

You should certainly give warning that you are going to be assessing the four points. For example, you can let learners know that you will be inspecting their personal folder structure during the next week. If any of the points are not observed by you as the learners are carrying out their activities, you can make a point of asking them to demonstrate the point to you, for instance to use the print manager.

Task 2: Processing information using ICT

This task covers the Unit requirements to:

- enter and edit data, using appropriate applications software

The learners should be familiar with at least one software application with which they must carry out a processing exercise. In some cases the choice of application will arise naturally from the learners' personal, workplace, social or educational situations.

For each context below, three examples are given. Learners need complete successfully only one of the examples for this task.

Personal/Social Context

1   Using spreadsheet software to record household costs on a weekly basis for one month. Utilise cloud storage to share it with your tutor or print out a copy of the spreadsheet.

2   Using image manipulation software to process a photograph taken with a digital camera. The picture has come out too light. The result is to be displayed on a computer monitor.

3   Using desktop publishing software to create an A4 poster. Copies of the poster must be printed out as they are to be placed in local shop windows to publicise a fundraising event.

Educational Context

1   Using word processing software to create a report for a history investigation. Utilise cloud storage to share it with your tutor or print out a copy of the report.

2   Using spreadsheet software to create a table of results from readings taken during a physics experiment. Five sets of six pressures have to be recorded and averaged. The completed table is to be saved to cloud storage to share it with your tutor or print out a copy of the spreadsheet.

3   Using presentation software to create a set of slides to be used in a final presentation for a group project. The result will be displayed on a screen using a digital projector.

Workplace Context

1 Using desktop publishing software to create an A3 poster. This is to be used in an advertising campaign publicising safety in the workplace. Utilise cloud storage to share it with your tutor or print out a copy of the poster.

2 Using spreadsheet software recording the unit cost, number used and line cost of six giveaway items used in an advertising campaign to promote a new product. The result should be displayed on a computer monitor or utilise cloud storage to share it with your tutor.

3 Using word processing software to type a letter informing a client that one of the items ordered is no longer produced and that your company is able to offer a similar alternative which is ten percent more expensive. Use cloud storage to share it with your tutor or print out a copy of the letter.

Here are some suggestions on the complexity and quantity of information to be processed:

- Word processed documents should be of a minimum length of half an A4 page and consist of more than one paragraph. Workplace documents should be to the standard of the particular workplace
- Spreadsheets should consist of at least two columns and three rows of data. The use of at least one formula should be evident
- Presentation software should consist of a minimum of three slides. Varying text sizes should be used
- Desktop publishing of posters should include formatted text with some graphical content

You can create a learner task sheet using the above information to give to the learners and then observe their performance.

Task 3: Accessing information using ICT

This task covers the Unit requirements to:

- locate information (for example, text, numbers, graphics, video, audio) from a range of local or remote data sources (for example, the internet, , intranet, your own computer or device)
- use of specific keywords, for example, phrase searching with quotes, and search tools such as filters, Boolean operators, and AI-assisted search suggestions. Additionally, utilise voice search capabilities
- select information which matches criteria (eg date of information; UK information; media type)

This area of the Unit can be covered in many different ways, ranging from a purely search engine information task to the use of a workplace database. There can either be four straightforward searches or one sustained search.

Here are some examples:

Personal/Social Context

In organising a trip for the young people of a local youth group, four aspects need to be researched. Use the internet to find:

- a local coach operator to transport the youths to the chosen location
- a supplier who can provide a picnic at the chosen location for the number of youths involved
- a website that provides a weather forecast for the chosen location
- outdoor games suitable for a group of young people of the appropriate age

Educational Context

Use the internet to find:

- a description of a historical figure, eg King James I of Scotland
- the volume in litres of a US gallon
- the molecular structure of a hydrocarbon, eg toluene
- a sound file to play a given tune, eg the national anthem of your choice

Workplace Context

Here a local database could be used to select particular types of clients in order to target them more effectively with advertising literature. In a pilot study the learners might use the client database to select ten clients from groups such as:

- clients based in the local town
- long standing clients who placed orders in the current year
- distant clients outwith the UK
- clients who have ordered during last month

You can create a learner task sheet using the above information to give to the learners and then observe their performance.

Task 4: Keeping information safe

This task covers the Unit requirements to:

- recognise security risks and act accordingly (eg keeping own log-in and password secure; taking precautions when on-line or use multi-factor authentication and biometrics to recognise security risks and act accordingly)

This area of the Unit can be assessed by discussion with the learner or by the learner answering questions under test conditions. You are looking for suitable responses to questions about login security and on-line precautions.

Here are two suitable types of question:

1 What should you look out for which may make you suspicious about received email?

2 What sort of precautions should you be taking if you use the Internet for commercial transactions?

In the first question, you are looking for answers referring to:

- unknown correspondents
- unexpected email from known persons
- attachments especially executables

In the second question, you are looking for answers referring to:

- choosing user IDs and passwords to include some complexity, eg using upper case letters and symbols
- checking for a padlock sign showing a secure connection

You can create a learner task sheet using the above information. If you choose to have a discussion with the learner, introduce each of the topics and make a note of the responses on the sheet.

Part 3: Exemplar recording documentation

This section provides sample forms which can be used by the learners and tutors to gather evidence and record assessment decisions.

If you have created task sheets, as described in Part 2, they can be used as an assessment record sheet to be completed by the learner directly or used by you to note the result of the discussions with the learner.

There is an assessment checklist for each of the tasks to be completed, signed and dated by you.

The final form is a summary checklist recording Unit progress to be completed, signed and dated by you.

Assessment checklists

Learner:
Task 1: ICT operations
• select and start up applications software (eg word processing; spreadsheet; database; media packages) which is suitable for the task • use straightforward tools (eg file manager; print manager; control panels) • name and organise folders and sub-folders • present information in an appropriate mode (eg display on screen; print out; play audio file)

Activity	Achieved (Yes/No)	Tutor initials and date	Comments
1 Selects and starts up the correct software			
2 Uses control panels and other tools correctly			
3 Organises folder system with appropriate names			
4 Presents information in the appropriate way			

Date of completion:

Tutor signature:

Learner:
Task 2: Processing information using ICT
• enter and edit data, using appropriate applications software

Activity	Achieved (Yes/No)	Tutor initials and date	Comments

Date of completion:

Tutor signature:

Learner:

Task 3: Accessing information using ICT

- locate various types of information, for example, text, numerical data, graphics, videos, and audio, from a diverse array of contemporary data sources. These sources encompass online databases, cloud-based storage platforms, internal networks, and personal computing devices
- use of specific keywords, for example, phrase searching with quotes, and search tools such as filters, Boolean operators, and AI-assisted search suggestions. Additionally, utilise voice search capabilities

Activity	Achieved (Yes/No)	Tutor initials and date	Comments
1 Four simple searches completed successfully			
2 One sustained search completed successfully			

Date of completion:

Tutor signature:

Learner:

Task 4: Keeping information safe

• recognise security risks and act accordingly (eg keeping own log-in and password secure; taking precautions when on-line or use multi-factor authentication and biometrics to recognise security risks and act accordingly)

Activity	Achieved (tick)	Tutor initials and date	Comments
1 E-mail security			
2 Online security			

Date of completion:

Tutor signature:

Summary checklist

Learner:	
Learner number:	
Centre:	

Task	Date achieved	Tutor signature
1: ICT operations		
2: Processing information using ICT		
3: Accessing information using ICT		
4: Keeping information safe		

Part 4: Information for learners

As you work through this Unit, your tutor will need to gather evidence to prove that you have demonstrated all the ICT skills.

This can be done by:

- your tutor asking you questions
- you producing printouts or screenshots
- you filling in a work book, worksheet or paper/digital portfolio

By the end of the Unit you must show that you can:

- select and start up applications software (eg word processing; spreadsheet; database; media packages) which is suitable for the task you are doing
- use straightforward tools (eg file manager; print manager; control panels)
- name and organise folders and sub-folders
- enter and edit data, using appropriate applications software
- locate various types of information, for example, text, numerical data, graphics, videos, and audio, from a diverse array of contemporary data sources. These sources encompass online databases, cloud-based storage platforms, internal networks, and personal computing devices
- use of specific keywords, for example, phrase searching with quotes, and search tools such as filters, Boolean operators, and AI-assisted search suggestions. Additionally, utilise voice search capabilities
- select information which matches criteria (eg date of information; UK information; media type)
- present information in an appropriate mode (eg display on screen; print out; play audio file)
- recognise security risks and act accordingly (eg keeping your own log-in and password secure; taking precautions when on-line or use multi-factor authentication and biometrics to recognise security risks and act accordingly)

These are some of the things you might do to provide the evidence:

- producing a short report with graphics using word processing software and e-mailing this to a friend/colleague as an attachment
- using search engines to find information on the Internet to plan a community group trip and printing this off as hard copy
- calculating the cost of a children's party using spreadsheet software
- setting up folders and sub-folders to store your course assessments
- customising your PC desktop to suit your own needs at home or at work
- keep data secure (eg keeping your own log-in and password secure; virus protection; backing up data; maintaining personal file area)

Learners with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting the most appropriate assessment activity and considering any reasonable steps which might be necessary to allow the learner to meet the assessment standard.

Further advice can be found in SQA's Assessment Arrangements' web pages (www.sqa.org.uk)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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