NPA in Cyber Security

SCQF level 4 Group Award Code: GK7W 44
SCQF level 5 Group Award Code: GK7X 45
SCQF level 6 Group Award Code: GK7Y 46

The National Progression Award (NPA) in Cyber Security provides foundation knowledge and skills in data security, digital forensics and ethical hacking – providing a skills pipeline into the Cyber Security industry.

These awards are designed to raise awareness of **Cyber Security** and fill the current skills gap in this field. They will encourage learners to improve their cyber hygiene and resilience, and enable them to identify security vulnerabilities safely, legally and ethically. They will also help learners to contribute more safely to virtual communities.

They are the first school-based national qualifications in Cyber Security to be developed and will prepare learners for further studies and future employment in this area.

The aim of the awards is to produce knowledgeable and skilled individuals who are aware of the potential misuses of, and unauthorised access to, computer systems but who use these competences for legal and ethical purposes.

Why deliver this qualification?

There is a current skills shortage in the field of Cyber Security to defend against cyber-attacks. It is believed that education is key to addressing the skills gap. The NPA Cyber Security awards have stemmed from the need to address the growing rise in easily preventable cybercrime.

The National Progression Awards in Cyber Security at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 represent an additional, essential, vocational qualification at each level providing a clear progressive context and structure for the development of key contemporary knowledge and skills.

The NPA could be offered in one of the following modes:

• Full-time (eg as a fast-track into full a NC or HN programme)

• Part-time (eg day-release)

• Open and distance learning

• Infill into existing classes

• Evening provision

Who does the qualification suit?

This NPA may appeal to a wide range of candidates of varying age and ability, including:

• Learners wishing to develop and enhance cyber skills to support their learning across a wide range of curricular areas

• S4 to S6 school pupils who will undertake the qualification as a broadening of the Computing Science curriculum

• College students who will be using the NPAs within full or part-time college programmes such as part of a NC Computing qualification

• Adults returning to education with an interest in developing fundamental skills relevant to accessing a career in Cyber Security

• Employees in the industry wishing to gain knowledge in Cyber Security and expand their range of specialisms

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Access

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Learners would benefit from having attained Basic IT Skills before beginning the SCQF level 4 Units. This may be evidenced by possession of:

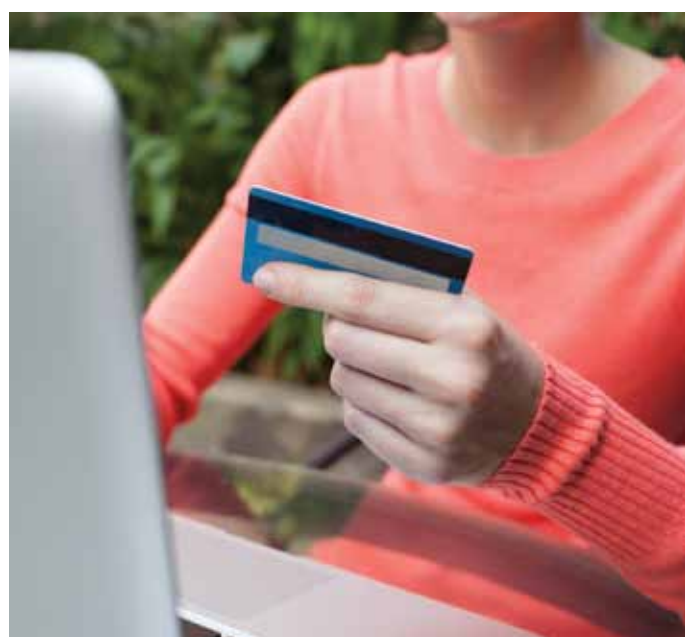- H3LJ 09 *Computer Basics (SCQF level 3)* or equivalent qualifications or experience

For SCQF level 5 and 6 Units, it would be advantageous for learners to have completed the Units at levels 4 and 5 respectively.

Progression

These NPAs cover SCQF levels 4–6, allowing clear progression and development routes to higher level education and employment. The qualification is available at three levels in a hierarchy structure and learners may progress to the next level if they wish to continue their studies.

Learners can also progress to a number of other qualifications in this area, or a related area, for example, NC Digital Media Computing.

This award may also lead to employment in a computer security role.

Approval

The qualifications are auto-approved to all Scottish schools and colleges, so there will be no need to seek approval. Other types of centres will need to come forward for approval and should contact SQA's Business Development Team for guidance.

Qualification content and delivery tools

NPA in Cyber Security at SCQF level 4
(18 SCQF credit points)
Group Award code: GK7W 44

NPA in Cyber Security at SCQF level 5
(18 SCQF credit points)
Group Award code: GK7X 45

NPA in Cyber Security at SCQF level 6
(18 SCQF credit points)
Group Award code: GK7Y 46

The NPAs in Cyber Security at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 consists of three mandatory Units (18 SCQF credit points)

Assessment

Assessment of this award will be a combination of practical and knowledge assessments under closed- and open-book assessment conditions. It is recommended that centres refer to the assessment and Evidence Requirements for each Unit.

Assessment support packs will be available on SQA's secure website. E-assessment materials will be available on SOLAR website.

SQA