

NextGen: HN educator guide

HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies

Qualification code: GH5Z 47

Valid from: August 2026

This guide provides information about the Higher National Certificate (HNC) to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the HNC.

You must read it alongside the grading pack.

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Purpose of the qualification

HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies gives learners the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in senior administrative and/or junior leadership roles.

The qualification gives learners a broad foundation of knowledge and skills in business administration, planning and organising themselves and their work, organisational structures, and current and emerging digital technologies.

Structure

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) are at SCQF level 7 and are made up of 120 SCQF credit points (15 Qualifications Scotland credits). HNCs must incorporate at least 80 credit points (10 Qualifications Scotland credits) at SCQF level 7.

Framework

The HNC is made up of mandatory and optional units. Learners must complete all the mandatory units and five Qualifications Scotland credits from the optional units.

Mandatory units

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J99X 47 | Administration Applications in Practice | 3 | 24 | 7 |
| J9A0 47 | Digital Technologies in Practice | 4 | 32 | 7 |
| J99Y 47 | Administration Fundamentals | 3 | 24 | 7 |

Optional units

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J7BN 47 | Bookkeeping and Payroll Transactions | 2 | 16 | 7 |
| J9GD 47 | Creating a Culture of Customer Care | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J89E 47 | Law for Business: An Introduction | 1 | 8 | 7 |

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| J7N3 47 | Work-based Learning | 3 | 24 | 7 |
| J75E 47 | Communication: Practical Skills | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J691 47 | Emerging Technologies and Experiences | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J68W 47 | Big Data | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9K4 47 | Generative AI | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9KJ 47 | Medical Terminology | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9KK 47 | GP Medical Administration | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9KL 47 | Hospital Patient Administration | 1 | 8 | 7 |

Aims of the qualification

General aims

1. Develop knowledge and skills in planning, implementing, analysing and evaluating.
2. Develop vocational skills aligned with National Occupational Standards (NOS) and other professional body requirements to enhance learners' employment prospects.
3. Enable progression within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).
4. Develop study and research skills.
5. Provide academic stimulus and challenge and foster an enjoyment of the subject.
6. Develop meta-skills that complement technical and professional knowledge and skills.
7. Develop Learning for Sustainability skills, knowledge, understanding and values.

Specific aims

1. Develop technical and administrative knowledge of current administrative practice.
2. Develop the knowledge that underpins the technical expertise developed throughout the course.
3. Provide progression to HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies.
4. Provide progression to degree qualifications.
5. Provide optional routes to facilitate local industry needs and specialisation.
6. Develop interpersonal skills relevant to an administrative role.
7. Develop personal effectiveness, communication and presentation skills.
8. Prepare for employment.
9. Develop problem-solving skills within a range of time constraints.
10. Promote values of sustainability and corporate and social responsibility.

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is suitable for learners interested in:

- a career in professional administration in a business environment, for example as a senior administrator or in a junior leadership role
- continuing professional development to help them progress from basic administrative roles to positions with a greater range of complexity, and possibly some leadership responsibility
- starting a related university degree at year 1 or year 2

Learners are likely to be:

- school leavers
- adult returners to education
- looking to change career or get a promotion

Entry to this qualification is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

- two relevant Highers at C or above and three National 5s
- National Certificate (NC) Administration at SCQF level 5
- National Progression Award (NPA) in administration at SCQF level 5:
 - Administration: Office Skills and Services
 - Administration: Information Technology and Audio
 - Administration: Medical (Administrative Secretary)
 - Administration: Medical Receptionist
- Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Business and Administration at SCQF level 5 or SCQF level 6
- other relevant qualifications and/or relevant work experience

Recognising prior learning

Qualifications Scotland recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. Formal learning is learning certificated by a recognised awarding or professional body. Non-formal learning includes learning such as employers' in-house training courses. Informal learning is learning based on experience from a variety of environments that is not formally assessed.

It is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full HNC.

You can find more information and guidance about the [recognition of prior learning on our website](#).

Articulation and progression

Learners who complete this qualification could go on to:

- further study, employment and/or training
- study HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies
- study a business-related degree
- employment at senior administrative or junior leadership level
- get a promotion to senior administrative or junior leadership roles

Articulation is subject to local agreements between centres and universities.

Credit transfer arrangements

Centres can make decisions about transferring credit. They can transfer credit if the subject-related content of the units is broadly equivalent. Centres should consider the currency of a learner's achievement before transferring credit.

Recommended Core Skills entry profile

Learners should have the following Core Skills at the stated SCQF levels before starting this qualification. This information can help identify learners who may need additional support.

| Core Skill | Recommended SCQF entry profile |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Communication | Level 6 |
| Numeracy | Level 5 |
| Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 6 |
| Problem Solving | Level 5 |
| Working with Others | Level 5 |

How the qualification meets employer and higher education institution needs

This qualification is designed in collaboration with employers, higher education institutions (HEIs), practitioners and professional bodies to meet the sector need.

The following tables show how the qualification can benefit employers and HEIs by equipping learners with the necessary skill set:

- Table 1 shows how units map to the aims of the qualification.
- Table 2 shows how the units map to National Occupational Standards (NOS).
- Table 3 shows the assessment strategy for the qualification.

Table 1: mapping qualification aims to units

All seven general aims are directly relevant to all three mandatory units.

| Unit code | Unit title | General aim |
|-----------|---|------------------------|
| J99X 47 | Administration Applications in Practice | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 |
| J9A0 47 | Digital Technologies in Practice | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 |
| J99Y 47 | Administration Fundamentals | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 |

Table 2: mapping National Occupational Standards (NOS) to units

There are NOS-based SVQs in Business and Administration at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 8. Each SVQ unit defines one aspect of a job or a work role, and what it is to be competent in that aspect of the job.

Learners doing SVQs collect and submit evidence from their own work. So, in terms of mapping evidence from SVQ to HNC, this is primarily for the knowledge criteria, rather than performance criteria.

Learners can use SVQ evidence collected in their workplace for the HNC if it meets the evidence requirements of the HNC unit, including the assessment conditions.

The SCQF level 6 and level 8 Business and Administration SVQs are likely to be most relevant to the HNC (SCQF level 7). You must make sure that the SVQ evidence is commensurate with SCQF level 7, particularly in the case of the SCQF level 6 SVQ, where learners might need to provide supplementary evidence to meet the requirements of SCQF level 7.

| Unit code | Unit title | SVQ Business and Administration unit |
|-----------|---|--|
| J99X 47 | Administration Applications in Practice | SCQF level 6: S303, S309, S311, S317, S341, S346, S349 |
| J99Y 47 | Digital Technologies in Practice | SCQF level 6: S302, S317, S320, S323, S356, S357, S358, S361 |
| J9A0 47 | Administration Fundamentals | SCQF level 6: S301, S304, S315, S320, S324 SCQF level 7: S226 SCQF level 8: S413, S414 |

Table 3: assessment strategy for the qualification

| Unit code | Unit title | Assessment method |
|------------------|---|---|
| J99X 47 | Administration Applications in Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• open-book project using digital software |
| J9A0 47 | Digital Technologies in Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• open-book project using social media and online digital resources• meta-skills development and reflective activities |
| J99Y 47 | Administration Fundamentals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• open-book research, project or case study |

Meta-skills

Every NextGen: HN Qualification gives learners the opportunity to develop meta-skills.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help people to adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation. Each of these is made up of four meta-skills and a number of sub-skills.

- Self-management — focusing, integrity, adapting, initiative
- Social intelligence — communicating, feeling, collaborating, leading
- Innovation — curiosity, creativity, sense-making, critical thinking

From early in the qualification, we want learners to identify and understand the meta-skills they can develop, and to appreciate the personal and professional value of these skills. We want to support learners to continue to articulate, use and build on them long after they have achieved their qualification. In this way, we help learners to develop broad skills profiles, enabling them to thrive in a changing world.

Every NextGen: HN unit signposts opportunities for learners to develop meta-skills, and there is an assessed outcome in one of the mandatory units. When you make your whole-qualification grade decisions, you consider learners' commitment to engaging with meta-skills development.

You do not assess learners on their competence or progress in individual meta-skills. Instead, you assess them on evidence that they have engaged with a personal process of development. Meta-skills development is founded on a clear process of self-assessment, goal setting, action planning and reflective practice.

You can find meta-skills teaching, learning and assessment resources on [our meta-skills web page](#).

Meta-skills in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies

Industry-specific professional skills and personal behaviours (meta-skills) include:

Self-management

- focusing:
 - accuracy and attention to detail
 - being concise in communications
 - using systems and technology effectively
 - planning and organising work
- integrity:
 - self-awareness and sense of responsibility
 - positive work ethic
 - goal-oriented over self-oriented
 - reliability and consistency
- adapting:
 - willingness to learn and critically reflect
 - openness to feedback and guidance
 - resilience and working under pressure
 - prioritising to manage and meet deadlines
- initiative:
 - independent problem solving
 - taking responsibility for own work without sign-off
 - self-promotion and articulating ideas
 - looking for opportunities

Social intelligence

- communicating:
 - verbalising messages clearly and concisely
 - active listening skills
 - conveying information in written and graphical form
 - crafting messages for different audiences and situations
- feeling:
 - showing empathy
 - following etiquette
 - considering own and others' feelings and perspectives
 - reflecting on experiences to continuously improve
- collaborating:
 - understanding role of self and others
 - identifying opportunities to co-operate and add value
 - prioritising team objectives over self interest
 - being open to change
- leading:
 - setting positive examples
 - taking appropriate responsibility
 - providing clear vision and goals to colleagues
 - offering positive reinforcement and support to colleagues

Innovation

- curiosity:
 - regularly questioning practices and processes
 - being interested in detail and finding out why
 - applying a range of methods to finding information
 - questioning simple statements or generalisations
- creativity:
 - coming up with solutions to problems
 - visualising new possibilities
 - engaging and effective storytelling
 - using technology to enhance messaging, problem solving or creating new things
- sense-making:
 - deconstructing and reconstructing processes
 - analysing data and information
 - thinking strategically
 - making decisions on rational, objective thinking and evidence
- critical thinking:
 - evaluating the performance of processes and projects
 - challenging statements and claims that lack evidence
 - comparing statements with experience and evidence
 - continually looking for ways to make improvements

Learning for Sustainability

Context

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UK in 2015, has shaped the development of Scottish, national and international sustainability policy. It sets out the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), which are central to the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#). Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is a commitment to embedding the SDGs in Scottish education.

LfS embraces global citizenship, sustainable development, social justice, human rights, climate change, biodiversity loss, equality and inclusion. Learners develop their capacity to deal with the unpredictable social, economic and environmental challenges facing our rapidly changing world.

LfS combines:

- education for sustainable development (ESD)
- global citizenship
- outdoor learning

ESD is the internationally used term for sustainability education. Although LfS has a broader remit, the terms are largely interchangeable. Colleges and universities tend to use ESD, while schools usually use LfS. Both focus on a broad range of social, economic and environmental themes and approaches across all levels of education. Qualifications Scotland uses LfS as an umbrella term.

Learning for Sustainability in NextGen: HN Qualifications

Sustainability is a core component in this qualification.

Learners who complete this qualification should have:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the SDGs
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Sustainability is embedded as an outcome in the Digital Technologies in Practice unit.

Learners who complete this outcome can:

- assess their own knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs
- review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue
- apply knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvements

Through its focus on digital collaboration, content creation, and evaluation, the qualification encourages learners to consider sustainability in their work. Digital collaboration reduces the need for physical meetings and paper-based communication. This approach minimises travel-related carbon emissions and the use of physical resources, contributing to a more sustainable way of working. It encourages paperless workflows as the project method of assessment relies on digital tools, from planning and organising tasks to creating and sharing content. This reduces the need for printed materials, which supports the goal of reducing paper waste and conserving resources.

LfS lends itself to a holistic approach of evidence gathering across all qualification units. The LfS evidence requirements are defined in the Digital Technologies in Practice unit. Learners must include evidence relating to at least two SDGs to achieve the unit.

You can cover any of the SDGs that are relevant to the subject area.

Find out more about Qualifications Scotland's approach on the [NextGen: HN Learning for Sustainability web page](#). There is an LfS reflective template available in the resources section. You may find it helpful as a starting point for considering how the SDGs are, or could be, embedded in a qualification, unit or assessment.

Grading

Please see the grading pack for this qualification for more information on making grade judgements.

Grading in NextGen: HN Qualifications produces a valid and reliable record of a learner's level of achievement across the breadth of the qualification content.

As well as grading the whole qualification, you assess individual units on a pass or fail basis. Each unit has evidence requirements that learners must achieve before you can consider them for whole-qualification grading.

Whole-qualification grade outcomes

Learners who pass NextGen: HN Qualifications receive one of the following grade outcomes for the qualification as a whole:

- Achieved with Distinction
- Achieved with Merit
- Achieved

To determine a learner's whole-qualification grade, you use the grading matrix provided in the grading pack to assess and judge their performance across the key aspects of the HNC. You must align your judgements with the following whole-qualification grade descriptors.

Whole-qualification grade descriptors

Achieved with Distinction

The learner has achieved an excellent standard across the course content, going significantly beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete high-quality work. They engaged significantly with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved with Merit

The learner has achieved a very good standard across the course content, going beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a very good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete work of a standard above that expected for an Achieved grade. They actively engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved

The learner has achieved a good standard across the course content, credibly meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and used them to apply skills to complete work of the required standard. They engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Approaches to delivery and assessment

Sequencing or integrating units

The three mandatory units are designed to integrate themes and topics. This means you can integrate learning and assessment in a meaningful way by reflecting real-world and professional practice.

Assessing project units

The three mandatory units are designed to be integrated and delivered through practical projects based on learner-led investigation or case study scenarios. The structure allows for flexible and multi-disciplinary learning opportunities.

The HNC suits a project-based approach. Centres set their own projects, which are likely to vary in size, scope and content, depending on local needs and selected optional units. You can use:

- one project to cover a whole unit
- smaller project activities to cover each outcome separately
- projects that cover more than one unit — for example, if the project focuses on a single organisation or case study

Opportunities for e-assessment

All three mandatory units assess the use and application of digital software, including well-established office applications such as spreadsheets and word-processing software, as well as more specialist applications such as blogs, social media and cloud-based meeting applications.

Additional guidance on integrated or holistic assessment

Holistic or integrated assessment focuses on assessing a number of outcomes in a unit together, or in some cases, assessing the unit as a whole, rather than by

outcome. When assessing a unit of competence holistically, the assessment activities integrate a number of aspects of the competence. Holistic or integrated assessment can reduce the time spent on assessment and can promote greater equity in the assessment process.

When developing or revising a NextGen: HN Qualification, Qualifications Scotland works with a development team to devise an appropriate assessment strategy that accommodates holistic or integrated assessment. However, the practice of integrating units for the purposes of learning and teaching is a centre-led activity.

Units are designed to facilitate holistic or integrated assessment approaches that prevent large, unwieldy assessments.

Evidence requirements must do what they say: specify requirements for evidence of learner competence in the unit. The evidence must be of sufficient quality for an assessor or verifier to judge that the learner has achieved the unit.

Remediation and re-assessment in NextGen: HN Qualifications

Remediation

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learners' responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, the assessor must formally note such instances, in writing or as a recording, and make them available to the internal and external verifier.

Remediation is not permitted for closed-book assessments.

The size and structure of the larger NextGen: HN units should mean that the assessor or lecturer is close enough to ongoing assessment activity in project-based units to identify the requirement for remediation as it occurs.

Re-assessment

We must give learners who fail the unit a re-assessment opportunity or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Where we have introduced larger units to the framework, we expect instances of re-assessment to be minimal, due to the approach to assessment and remediation. Where re-assessment is required in a project-based unit, a substantially different project must be used.

Resource requirements

Learners need access to digital devices and relevant software, including online applications that they can access free of charge for the functionality required.

Information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The units in this HNC are designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Internal and external verification

You must make sure all assessment methods you use in this qualification are internally verified according to your centre's policies and Qualifications Scotland's guidelines. Information on how to request prior verification for your assessment from Qualifications Scotland is available on our [prior verification web page](#).

Qualifications Scotland carries out external verification to ensure that internal assessment meets the national guidelines for this qualification.

More information on internal and external verification is available in our [Guide to Assessment](#) and in [NextGen: HN Quality Assurance — Guidance for Centres](#).

PDA's embedded in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies

Professional Development Awards (PDAs) offer employers a highly flexible and cost-effective way to invest in their workforce. Designed for those who are already employed or cannot commit to full-time study, PDAs provide manageable, bite-sized qualifications that allow learners to improve their skills while balancing work and personal commitments.

Why PDAs matter for industry

PDAs address the growing demand for part-time and flexible upskilling opportunities. They enable training providers to deliver learning in a range of adaptable ways, including:

- day-release or part-time study
- evening classes
- blended and distance-learning options

This flexibility makes sure that employee development can happen without disrupting business operations and that employees can immediately apply their new skills in their role.

A strategic investment for employers

Supporting employees to complete a PDA brings clear benefits to organisations, including:

- more productive and confident employees equipped with practical, up-to-date knowledge
- improved retention and morale, as employees feel valued and invested in
- improved organisational capability in key areas such as digital technologies, administration, and business operations

- sustainable workforce planning, as PDAs create a pipeline of talent ready for progression

A clear pathway to further and higher qualifications

There are four PDAs embedded in HNC Administration and Digital Technologies:

- PDA Administration Applications in Practice
- PDA Digital Technologies in Practice
- PDA Administration Fundamentals
- PDA Medical Administration

Each PDA is made up of one or more of the units from the HNC. This means that learners can:

- complete each PDA as a stand-alone qualification
- carry credit forward into the HNC automatically*
- exit early from an HNC with a recognised qualification*
- progress at their own pace on a part-time basis

This allows organisations to support employee development in a structured, incremental way.

*Although unit credit is automatically recognised, centres must enter learners for the HNC or PDA so they can be certificated for the relevant qualification.

PDA Administration Applications in Practice at SCQF level 7

Qualification code: GAVG 47

Qualifications Scotland credits: 3

PDA Administration Applications in Practice equips learners with the digital, analytical, and administrative skills required in today's modern business environment. Through hands-on experience with industry-standard tools, including word processing, spreadsheets, database applications, and integrated digital platforms, learners develop the ability to create professional business documents,

analyse and interpret data, and support effective decision making. It strengthens essential problem-solving, critical-thinking, and adaptability skills, which reflect the demands of dynamic administrative roles.

Designed for those who want to progress into a career in administration or business, or advance to further study, it provides a strong foundation in practical IT skills as well as wider administrative principles. Learners gain confidence, capability, and a competitive edge as they prepare for future study or employment.

This PDA is made up of one of the three mandatory units in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies.

Structure of PDA Administration Applications in Practice

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J99X 47 | Administration Applications in Practice | 3 | 24 | 7 |

PDA Digital Technologies in Practice at SCQF level 7

Qualification code: GGK8 47

Qualifications Scotland credits: 4

PDA Digital Technologies in Practice empowers learners to develop the essential digital, collaborative, and content-creation skills needed in today's modern administrative and IT environments. It introduces them to:

- cloud-based collaboration tools
- secure digital working practices
- online research and curation
- the creation and promotion of digital content, such as blogs or simple websites

Learners also build confidence in using social media professionally, applying legislation and etiquette while evaluating the effectiveness of online campaigns.

Alongside these practical skills, the PDA develops key meta-skills including self-management, social intelligence and innovation, helping learners prepare for roles in digital administration, or further study.

This PDA is made up of one of the three mandatory units in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies.

Structure of PDA Digital Technologies in Practice

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J9A0 47 | Digital Technologies in Practice | 4 | 32 | 7 |

PDA Administration Fundamentals at SCQF level 7

Qualification code: GO3T 47

Qualifications Scotland credits: 3

PDA Administration Fundamentals provides learners with the essential skills and knowledge needed to excel in modern administrative roles. It prepares them to support smooth business operations, contribute to strategic decision making and confidently manage key organisational processes.

Drawing on real-world practices, the PDA develops:

- strong communication skills
- understanding of HR and recruitment procedures
- competence in digital meeting management
- the ability to deliver high-quality customer service

Learners also:

- create professional documentation
- create effective electronic filing systems that meet current legislation
- explore sustainable working and travel practices

Ideal for those who want a career in office management, executive support, or HR coordination, this PDA offers a comprehensive pathway into the dynamic world of business administration.

This PDA is made up of one of the three mandatory units in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies.

Structure of PDA Administration Fundamentals

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J99Y 47 | Administration Fundamentals | 3 | 24 | 7 |

PDA Medical Administration at SCQF level 7

Qualification code: GKE4 47

Qualifications Scotland credits: 3

PDA Medical Administration equips learners with the specialist knowledge and practical skills needed to thrive in today’s fast-paced healthcare environment. It develops confidence and competence in handling medical terminology, supporting patient pathways, and understanding the legislation and procedures that underpin high-quality care across both hospital and GP settings.

Learners develop a strong foundation in clinical language, administrative processes, information governance, and patient-focused communication — highly sought-after skills in roles such as medical secretary, receptionist, administrative officer or support staff in the NHS.

With an emphasis on accuracy, professionalism and applied practice, PDA Medical Administration provides a comprehensive foundation for employment or progression in the healthcare sector.

This PDA is made up of three optional units in HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies.

Structure of PDA Medical Administration

| Unit code | Unit title | Qualifications Scotland credits | SCQF credit points | SCQF level |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| J9KJ 47 | Medical Terminology | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9KK 47 | GP Medical Administration | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| J9KL 47 | Hospital Patient Administration | 1 | 8 | 7 |

Glossary

Qualifications Scotland credits: 1 Qualifications Scotland credit equals 8 SCQF credit points.

Qualifications Scotland credit value indicates the contribution the unit makes to a Qualifications Scotland qualification. A Qualifications Scotland credit value of 1 represents approximately 40 hours of learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's national framework for describing qualifications. We use SCQF terminology in this guide to refer to credits and levels. [For more information on the SCQF, visit the SCQF website.](#)

SCQF credit points indicate the amount of learning required to complete a qualification. NextGen HNCs and HNDs are worth 120 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels indicate how hard the qualification is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. NextGen HNCs are at SCQF level 7 and NextGen HNDs are at SCQF level 8.

Information for learners

Higher National Certificate (HNC) Administration and Digital Business Technologies

This information explains:

- what the qualification is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the qualification
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Qualification information

The administrative function is vital for businesses to operate efficiently and successfully in all industries and sectors of the economy. HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies gives you practical and theoretical knowledge and skills for working in office, business and administrative environments.

This HNC prepares you to be able to successfully apply digital technologies in the business environment by combining interpersonal, organisational and meta-skills with technical knowledge and skills.

Home-based and flexible working arrangements are increasingly displacing traditional office-based working patterns and cultures in many businesses. This is driving an ever-growing demand for administrative staff with the capabilities to use technology to enable collaborative work, across multiple locations, to be carried out to the same professional standard as in-person interaction. The content of the HNC reflects the criticality of both strands — organisational, interpersonal, collaborative and leadership competencies, along with technical digital knowledge and skills. Success in professional practice is only possible with both.

Typical entry requirements can include:

- two relevant Highers at C or above and three National 5s
- National Certificate (NC) Administration at SCQF level 5
- National Progression Award (NPA) in administration at SCQF level 5:
 - Administration: Office Skills and Services
 - Administration: Information Technology and Audio
 - Administration: Medical (Administrative Secretary)
 - Administration: Medical Receptionist
- Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Business and Administration SCQF level 5 or SCQF level 6
- other relevant qualifications and/or work experience

Key content areas

Administration Applications in Practice unit

| Administrative and organisational | Digital technology | Personal and collaborative |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional business documents • business data • supporting decision making • editing and proofreading • organising content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word processing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ document formatting ○ content organisation ○ advanced features • spreadsheets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ data management ○ formulas and functions ○ data visualisation and analysis ○ automation • databases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ querying ○ reporting ○ data integrity • presentation apps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ design ○ multimedia ○ transition and automation • cross application integration • workflow automation • data consistency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working from a brief • problem solving • creativity • analysis • reporting |

Digital Technologies in Practice unit

| Administrative and organisational | Digital technology | Personal and collaborative |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and organising work • researching and evaluating credible information • sustainability • creating content to a brief • promoting content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online business tools and apps • creating and publishing a blog • creating a simple website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating with others to plan and organise • evaluating evidence sources • evaluating effectiveness of communications • developing meta-skills |

Administration Fundamentals unit

| Administrative and organisational | Digital technology | Personal and collaborative |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational structure • purpose of the administration function • organisational policy and procedures • recruitment and selection procedures • meeting management • organising travel sustainably • data legislation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digital filing systems • recruitment documentation • digital and cloud-based meeting applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills and attributes of the senior administrator role • developing personal objectives and goals for progression • positive internal and external relationships • customer service |

Assessment

During the qualification, you are assessed holistically across each unit by a range of methods, which could include:

- projects
- open-book assignments
- practical research and investigation
- presentations
- designing digital solutions

Once you complete the HNC, you are awarded one of the following overall qualification grades:

- Achieved
- Achieved with Merit
- Achieved with Distinction

Your qualification grade is based on your performance in the three mandatory units.

Meta-skills

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help people to adapt and succeed in life, study and work. You develop a range of meta-skills throughout each unit, including:

- self-management — focusing, integrity, adapting, initiative
- social intelligence — communicating, feeling, collaborating, leading
- innovation — curiosity, creativity, sense-making, critical thinking

You are not expected to cover all meta-skills in your assessment activities and evidence, although you may use most of them in your learning and assessment work. Instead, you reflect on the areas you think your individual strengths and weaknesses are in, and identify a few to focus on improving and developing.

You are not assessed or graded on your competence or progress in individual meta-skills. Instead, you are assessed on the process of meta-skills development

you go through. This means you need to provide evidence of planning, developing and reflecting on your own meta-skills. This evidence contributes to part of your overall grade.

The meta-skills outcome in the Digital Technologies in Practice unit defines what meta-skills evidence you need to produce. Meta-skills cannot be assessed in isolation — they have to be applied in a particular context. For example, you might be focused on something, communicating, being curious, or creating something. This means that how you apply meta-skills during the other outcome assessments provides evidence for the meta-skills outcome and units. This is known as 'holistic assessment'.

Further learning and employment

HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies prepares you to progress into employment in a range of administrative roles and supervisory positions. You can also progress to Higher National Diploma (HND) Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies (SCQF level 8), entry or advanced entry to a university degree, or other degree-level study.

Entry to these qualifications is at the discretion of the colleges, centres or universities delivering them.

The following examples are common progression routes, but there are others too.

| Progression to employment | Progression to other qualifications |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrator for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ customer service ○ HR ○ IT support ○ marketing • senior administrator • administration officer • team leader or team coordinator • receptionist • events officer • executive assistant • personal assistant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies • HND Business • Professional Development Awards (PDAs) in management at SCQF level 7 • PDAs in management at SCQF level 8 • Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree in Business, year 1 • BA Degree in Business, year 2 • other degree, year 1 |

Administrative information

Published: April 2026 (version 1.0)

History of changes

| Version | Description of change | Date |
|---------|-----------------------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

If a unit is revised:

- no new centres can be approved to offer the previous version of the unit
- centres should only enter learners for the previous version of the unit if they can complete it before its finish date

For more information on NextGen: HN Qualifications please visit the [NextGen: HN web page](#).

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