



Group Award Specification for:
Professional Development Award in
Information Technology in Business
at SCQF level 7

Group Award code: GT74 47

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1 Introduction

This document was previously known as the arrangements document. The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ assist centres to implement, deliver, and manage the qualification
- ◆ provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- ◆ inform course managers, teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers, and Higher Education institutions of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- ◆ provide details of the range of learners that the qualification is suitable for and the progression opportunities

This Professional Development Award (PDA) will enable learners to improve their professional practice and provides them with a continuous professional development (CPD) vehicle.

Market research was carried out into the part-time provision in Accounting and Business related areas within the further education sector. This concluded that shorter, bite-sized qualifications were required at SCQF level 7 to meet the needs of employers and delivering centres. This type of qualification will be more accessible to learners in terms of time, cost and assessment. As result of the market research a PDA in Information Technology in Business consisting of three SQA Advanced units (4 SQA Advanced credits) was developed. Learners undertaking this PDA will also be able to build up their qualification towards a full SQA Advanced Certificate by undertaking further PDAs and/or SQA Advanced units.

The PDA is suited to learners wishing to study on a part-time basis while in employment in the sector. It is also appropriate for adult returners to education who do not wish to commit to a full-time SQA Advanced Certificate programme of study but seek to gain skills in administration.

The award has been designed in accordance with the PDA Design Principles and is at SCQF level 7.

2 Qualification structure

This group award is made up of 4 SQA unit credits. It comprises 32 SCQF credit points, all of which are at SCQF level 7, and all units are mandatory. A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in section 5.4.

2.1 Framework

4 code	2 code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
HP6G	47	IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	2	16	7
HP6C	47	IT in Business: Databases	1	8	7
HP78	47	IT in Business: Spreadsheets	1	8	7

3 Aims of the qualification

3.1 General aims of the qualification

- To provide learners with personal and professional development opportunities.
- To provide a CPD vehicle for learners employed in an administrative capacity.
- To develop study and research skills.
- To enable career progression and job mobility.
- To enable progression within SCQF.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

- To develop technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current administrative practice.
- To develop skills and knowledge of word processing and presentation packages to aid business communication.
- To develop an understanding of database management software and the application of databases to aid business decision making.
- To develop an understanding of spreadsheets and their use in providing solutions to business problems.
- To develop skills using technology in an administration role.
- To prepare learners for employment in an administration role.

3.3 Target groups

The PDA in Information Technology in Business at SCQF level 7 is suitable for a wide range of learners including:

- learners employed within an administration role who wish to enhance their career prospects
- learners in employment seeking a vehicle for CPD
- adult returners to education
- learners undertaking the SQA Advanced Certificate in Administration and Information Technology

3.4 Employment opportunities

The PDA in Information Technology in Business will prepare learners for employment in administrative roles within a wide range of public and private sector organisations. The type of positions which may be taken up by learners include:

- administration assistants
- information assistants
- clerks

This award will allow learners to formalise and/or extend their skills which will allow development in their career.

4 Recommended entry to the qualification

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. The following information on prior knowledge, skills, experience, or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification has been provided by the Qualification Design Team as guidance only.

Learners would benefit from having attained the skills, knowledge, and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- communication skills at SCQF level 5 or equivalent
- experience of working in an administration environment
- IT skills at SCQF level 5
- NQ/SVQ in Administration

Learners whose first language is not English are recommended to possess English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) level 5 or a score of 5.5 in International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

5 Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

This qualification was designed to meet a specific purpose and what follows are details on how that purpose has been met through mapping of the units to the aims of the qualification. Through meeting the aims, additional value has been achieved by linking the unit standards with those defined in National Occupational Standards (NOS) and/or trade/professional body requirements. In addition, significant opportunities exist for learners to develop more generic skills, known as Core Skills, through this qualification.

5.1 Mapping of qualification aims to units

The following table identifies how the award aims are met by the individual units:

Code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 10	Aim 11
HP6G 47	IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	X	X
HP6C 47	IT in Business: Databases	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	X	N/A	X	X
HP78 47	IT in Business: Spreadsheets	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	X	X	X

5.2 Mapping of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and/or trade standards

The PDA has been mapped against the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the industry as contained within the SVQ Business and Administration level 3.

HP6G 47 IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Unit 217 — Use presentation software	
Use appropriate techniques to handle, organise and save files	Outcome 1 - Carry out effective file management
Link information within the same type of software	Outcome 3 - Develop knowledge and skills in an appropriate presentation package
Add information from one type of software to information produced using different software, such as a spreadsheet graph to a word processing document; text to an image file; picture to a presentation slide; or simple information from a database onto a website	Outcome 3 - Develop knowledge and skills in an appropriate presentation package Outcome 3 - Use graphics and drawing tools to enhance the presentation
Use a wide range of editing techniques appropriately for more complex presentations such as inserting objects and other resources, resizing images and changing the position or orientation of other objects	Outcome 3 - Use graphics and drawing tools to enhance the presentation Outcome 3 - Use animation and transitions appropriately
Use proof reading techniques to check that text and images look professional	N/A
Check text formatting techniques are used appropriately	Outcome 3 - Use graphics and drawing tools to enhance the presentation Outcome 3 - Use animation and transitions appropriately
Check images and other objects are positioned and edited appropriately	Outcome 3 - Use graphics and drawing tools to enhance the presentation Outcome 3 - Use animation and transitions appropriately
Format complex presentations using appropriate tools and techniques, such as changing colour schemes for slides or using an organisational house style	Outcome 3 - Use graphics and drawing tools to enhance the presentation Outcome 3 - Use animation and transitions appropriately

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Choose an appropriate method and presentation style to suit audience needs	N/A
Choose, use and adjust templates for presentations	Outcome 3 - Develop knowledge and skills in an appropriate presentation package
Save a presentation as a slide show	Outcome 3 - Develop knowledge and skills in an appropriate presentation package Outcome 3 - Prepare a short presentation
Print speaker notes	Outcome 3 - Develop knowledge and skills in an appropriate presentation package
Unit 314 — Use word processing software	
Convert files to another suitable format, where necessary	Outcome 1 - Carry out effective file management
Export and import, link objects between different software	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Make references to external data eg hyperlinks, object linking, embedding	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Use advanced techniques for combining or merging versions of information from different users	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Use advanced editing techniques appropriately, such as: sort and merge a data source with a main document, change security, authoring tools, create, modify and merge different versions and improve efficiency for users	Outcome 1 - Carry out effective file management
Format complex word processing documents effectively using appropriate tools and techniques for sections (formatting text differently in each section) and styles (create, rename, modify styles eg characters, tabs, paragraphs)	Outcome 1 - Create a range of complex business documents within a given timescale Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Use appropriate tools and techniques for creating, editing and formatting complex tables such as convert text to tables and tables to text	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Create suitable templates	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style
Change document structure, such as headings, footnotes, bookmarks, watermarks, captions and numbered paragraphs, and also cross references to these, such as indexes and table of content	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style
Check structure, style and formatting are used to aid meaning in complex text	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style
Unit 318 — Design and produce documents	
Agree the purpose, content, style, quality standards and deadlines for the document	Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style
Identify and prepare the resources you need	N/A
Research and organise the content you need	N/A
Make efficient use of the technology available	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Design and produce the document in the agreed style	Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style
Integrate non-text objects in the agreed layout	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Check for accuracy, editing and correcting as necessary	Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation
Store the document safely and securely in an approved location	Outcome 1 - Carry out effective file management

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NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Present the document in the required format within agreed deadlines and quality standards	Outcome 1 - Create a range of complex business documents within a given timescale Outcome 1 - Use word processing software to effectively produce and enhance document presentation Outcome 1 - Produce all documents to meet specified needs and organisational house style

HP6C 47 IT in Business: Databases

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Unit 216 — Use database software	
Create fields for entering data with the required field characteristics, such as name, type, size and format	Outcome 1 - Design a database structure using established database terminology Outcome 1 - Define key fields and establish appropriate relationships Outcome 1 - Create a database showing tables and relationships
Modify field characteristics within a simple (eg single table, non-relational) database while maintaining the integrity of existing data, such as name, type and size	Outcome 1 - Design a database structure using established database terminology Outcome 1 - Define key fields and establish appropriate relationships Outcome 1 - Create a database showing tables and relationships Outcome 2 - Editing tables – adding / moving / deleting fields and adding / editing / deleting records
Use appropriate tools and techniques to format data that is text and numbers	Outcome 1 - Design a database structure using established database terminology Outcome 1 - Define key fields and establish appropriate relationships
Format reports from simple (eg single table, non-relational) databases using appropriate tools and techniques for page layout, such as page size, page orientation, page numbering, headers and footers and margins	Outcome 3 - Present information in a clear manner to assist decision making
Use automated facilities for checking data and reports, such as spell checking and sorting data	Outcome 2 - Demonstrate ability to sort information stored on more than one criterion
Check reports are formatted and laid out appropriately	Outcome 3 - Present information in a clear manner to assist decision making

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Create and use multiple criteria queries to extract data	Outcome 3 - Analyse business problems Outcome 3 - Selection of appropriate data sources is effective Outcome 3 - Apply an efficient and effective search strategy Outcome 3 - Use database query function to create simple queries to aid decision-making
Plan and produce reports from single (eg single table, non-relational) databases	Outcome 3 - Present information in a clear manner to assist decision making
Set up short cuts	N/A

HP78 47 IT in Business: Spreadsheets

NOS	SQA Unit Learning outcome
Unit 318 — Design and produce documents	
Agree the purpose, content, style, quality standards and deadlines for the document	N/A
Identify and prepare the resources you need	N/A
Research and organise the content you need	N/A
Make efficient use of the technology available	N/A
Design and produce the document in the agreed style	Outcome 1 - Design spreadsheets Outcome 1 - Formatting features
Integrate non-text objects in the agreed layout	Outcome 2 - Prepare graphical information Outcome 2 - Use chart enhancement features Outcome 2 - Explanation of graphical information
Check for accuracy, editing and correcting as necessary	N/A
Store the document safely and securely in an approved location	N/A
Present the document in the required format within agreed deadlines and quality standards	Outcome 1 - Design spreadsheets Outcome 1 - Formatting features

5.3 Embedded Core Skills

The importance of Core Skills is recognised and these are developed throughout this award. There is automatic certification of some Core Skill components in the unit IT in Business: Spreadsheets. Further information on the embedded Core Skills and signposting of opportunities to develop Core Skills is given in this subsection and the next.

Unit title	Unit code	Core Skill Certification
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	HP6G 47	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 5
IT in Business: Databases	HP6C 47	Information and Communication Technology at SCQF Level 6 Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6
IT in Business: Spreadsheets	HP78 47	Using Number at SCQF level 5 Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 4 Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

5.4 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Unit title	Unit Code	Core Skill Development Opportunity
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	HP6G 47	Communication - Reading Communication - Writing Using Graphical Information Using IT Problem Solving - Critical Thinking Problem Solving - Planning and Organising Problem Solving - Reviewing and Evaluating
IT in Business: Databases	HP6C 47	Communication - Reading Communication - Writing Using IT
IT in Business: Spreadsheets	HP78 47	Communication - Reading Communication - Writing Using Graphical Information Using IT Problem Solving - Critical Thinking Problem Solving - Planning and Organising

5.5 Assessment strategy for the qualification

Unit Title	Outcome 1 assessment	Outcome 2 assessment	Outcome 3 assessment	Outcome 4 assessment
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications	Open-book Controlled conditions Produce final version documents	Open-book Controlled conditions Written responses Integrated with Outcome 3	Open-book Controlled conditions Produce presentation hard copy Integrated with Outcome 2	Open-book Controlled conditions Short responses
IT in Business: Databases	Open-book Analyse a business problem and construct a database Integrate with Outcome 2	Open-book Adding data and editing tables Integrate with Outcome 1	Open-book Controlled conditions Solve business problems May be integrated with Outcomes 1 and 2	N/A
IT in Business: Spreadsheets	Open-book Controlled conditions Case Study Integrate with Outcome 2	Open-book Controlled conditions Case Study Integrate with Outcome 1	Open-book Controlled conditions Case study May integrate with Outcomes 1 and 2	N/A

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

The units contained in the PDA may be delivered as standalone qualifications, as part of the SQA Advanced Certificate in Administration and Information Technology framework, or as part of the PDA. Where they are delivered as the PDA group award they constitute a coherent, attractive and relevant programme which will equip learners with the knowledge and/or skills required for employment within an administration environment. The PDA award would also be attractive to those already in employment but who do not possess a relevant vocational qualification.

A wide range and combination of teaching, learning and assessment methods may be used by centres. The following are suggested delivery methods which could be adopted by centres:

- lectures
- tutorials
- study packs
- problem based scenarios
- case studies
- group work
- online materials
- IT based teaching materials
- role play/simulation
- projects
- virtual learning environments
- distance learning
- blended learning

The award is flexible and can be delivered in many modes, to suit different learners and different centres, including open learning. This PDA is ideally suited for distance learning. Under all circumstances, delivering centres will be responsible for ensuring the authenticity of learners' work.

The unit specifications detail what the evidence requirements and assessment procedures are for each assessment event, and assessment exemplars are available for the units comprising the PDA. Assessment Support Packs are accessible via the secure section on the SQA website; centre SQA co-ordinators have details of how to access these. An overview of an assessment strategy is given in subsection 5.5.

Details of learning and teaching materials available to support this PDA can be found on the [PDA webpage on SQA's website](#).

6.1 Recognition of prior learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full group award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full group award.

The recognition of prior learning may not be used as a method of assessing in the following types of units and assessments:

- SQA Advanced graded units
- course and/or external assessments
- other integrative assessment units (which may or not be graded)
- certain types of assessment instruments where the standard may be compromised by not using the same assessment method outlined in the unit
- where there is an existing requirement for a license to practice
- where there are specific health and safety requirements
- where there are regulatory, professional, or other statutory requirements
- where otherwise specified in an assessment strategy

More information and guidance on the recognition of prior learning may be found on our [Recognition of Prior Learning](#) website.

6.2 Articulation and professional recognition

Learners who successfully complete this award may wish to undertake the PDA in Office Administration at SCQF level 7. Learners may also complete further units from the SQA Advanced Certificate in Administration and Information Technology award and build their qualification into a full SQA Advanced Certificate.

The PDA in Administrative Management at SCQF level 8 may also provide further development opportunities.

Further information on credit transfer arrangements can be found in the SQA Advanced Certificate/Diploma in Administration and Information Technology group award specification.

7 General information for centres

7.1 Equality and inclusion

The unit specifications making up this group award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice on [assessment arrangements](#) can be found on our website.

7.2 Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within these group awards should be internally verified using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification 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 verification can be found in SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

8 Glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills: The assessment evidence for the unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner successfully completing the unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a unit gives an indication of the contribution the unit makes to an SQA group award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching, and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF, visit the [SCQF website](#).

SCQF credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one SQA Advanced unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. SQA Advanced Certificates and SQA Advanced Diplomas are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8, respectively. SQA Advanced units will normally be at levels 6 to 9 and graded units will

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be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2 to 6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2 to 7.

Subject unit: These contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

Signposted Core Skills: These refer to opportunities to develop Core Skills in learning and teaching, but are not automatically certificated.

9 History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification, and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes (if any) summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA Connect to confirm that they are using the most up-to-date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a unit is revised by another unit:

- No new centres may be approved to offer the unit which has been revised.
- Centres should only enter learners for the unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the unit before its finish date.

Version number	Description	Date

Acknowledgements

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

Further information

Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our [Centre Feedback Form](#).

10 General information for learners

This section will help you to decide whether this is the qualification for you by explaining: what the qualification is about; what you should know or what you should be able to do before you start; what you will need to do during the qualification; and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The PDA in Information Technology in Business at SCQF level 7 offers you the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills for employment within an administration role. The award will provide you with the skills required to undertake a variety of administration functions using IT in an organisation.

You will develop your knowledge and skills in the use of office and information technology to carry out administrative tasks. You will use word processing, spreadsheet and database software applications to complete tasks.

You will produce a variety of documents using word processing and presentation software. The production of accurate, well-laid-out documents aids business communication. You will develop skills in the use and manipulation of databases in order to present information for use in decision making. You will use your skills in the use of spreadsheets to help solve business problems.

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 the full SQA Advanced Certificate in Administration and Information Technology.