

NextGen: HN unit specification

Esports: Business Management (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J9JW 47

SCQF level: 7 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit 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 unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit helps learners to develop their knowledge and skills in managing business operations in the esports industry. It builds on what learners know about business principles and applies them to the unique context of esports. You teach learners about:

- the esports ecosystem
- legal and ethical challenges
- global and cultural aspects
- business strategies
- technology and innovation
- entrepreneurial skills

The unit is suitable for learners studying esports, business management, or related fields. It is primarily intended for learners who want to take up a career or further study in esports management, event organisation, marketing, or entrepreneurship. It is also appropriate for those who want to develop their skills in business strategy, leadership, and innovation in the esports context.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before they start the unit, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

- a basic understanding of business principles, such as those covered in introductory business or management courses
- familiarity with the esports industry, either through personal interest, participation, or previous study
- experience in project management or event organisation, which can be beneficial for understanding the practical aspects of esports management

Progression opportunities include further study in specialised areas of esports management, such as marketing, event management, or entrepreneurship. Learners may also pursue careers in esports organisations, event management companies, marketing agencies, or start their own esports ventures.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. describe the esports ecosystem to understand stakeholder relationships
2. explain the legal and ethical challenges unique to the esports industry
3. explain the global and cultural aspects of esports
4. develop business strategies tailored to the esports industry
5. apply technology and innovative strategies to enhance esports operations
6. develop entrepreneurial skills to launch and grow esports ventures

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge and product evidence. The standard of evidence should be consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Knowledge evidence

Learners must:

- describe the esports ecosystem, including its key components and stakeholders
- explain the legal and ethical challenges specific to esports, highlighting relevant issues and compliance requirements
- explain the global and cultural dimensions of esports, highlighting diverse market dynamics and cross-cultural interactions

Product evidence

Learners must:

- develop and present at least one business strategy tailored to the unique characteristics of the esports industry, demonstrating strategic thinking and application
- apply technology and innovative solutions to enhance esports operations, demonstrating practical implementation and impact on efficiency

- create and propose at least one entrepreneurial initiative for launching and growing esports ventures, showing creativity and feasibility of ideas

This evidence can be presented in a variety of formats, allowing flexibility and creativity in how learners choose to demonstrate their competencies

Authentication is required when the evidence is produced in lightly-controlled conditions.

The 'Approaches to assessment' section, provides advice on assessment methods suitable for generating this evidence.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the structure and components of the esports industry, including teams, leagues, and tournaments • the roles and relationships of key stakeholders, such as players, organisations, broadcasters, and sponsors • major esports titles and their impact on market dynamics and industry growth • economic impact, including revenue streams from sponsorships, media rights, and merchandise • relevant legal frameworks, such as contracts, intellectual property, and player rights • ethical issues such as match-fixing, gambling, fair play, and regulations governing tournaments • global reach of esports, incorporating cultural differences and preferences • the impact and significance of major international esports events • the application of core business functions like marketing, finance, and operations to esports • technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI), and their role in enhancing esports operations 	<p>Learners can demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analytical skills, to map and understand the esports ecosystem • research skills for gathering, interpreting, and utilising industry data • communication skills for effectively conveying strategies and insights to diverse audiences • critical thinking, to identify and evaluate legal and ethical challenges • problem-solving skills to develop solutions to complex issues • ethical decision-making, to navigate moral dilemmas in the esports industry • strategic thinking, for creating adaptive and forward-looking business strategies • the ability to implement technological solutions to improve operational efficiency • entrepreneurial skills in networking and building relationships with stakeholders • project management capabilities, to plan, execute, and assess esports initiatives

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - staying on task, managing time effectively, setting goals and maintaining concentration when demonstrating the knowledge and skills for the learning outcomes
 - organising and structuring the information pertaining to the esports ecosystem in a logical way
 - prioritising key legal issues, without drifting off topic
 - staying on brief during business plan pitches
 - avoiding distractions when demonstrating the application of knowledge and skills
- integrity:
 - demonstrating integrity when acknowledging data sources in their research of esports ecosystems
 - handling ethical dilemmas thoughtfully
 - showing moral reasoning and transparency in decision making when looking at the legal and ethical environment surrounding esports, and when discussing financial projections in business plans truthfully
- adapting:
 - adjusting effectively when using different communication styles to gather information and communicate it to different audiences

- demonstrating adaptability when presenting contingent or alternative strategies in their business proposals
- initiative:
 - demonstrating innovation by identifying gaps in current esports industry practices and suggesting forward-thinking solutions
 - bringing original ideas when identifying areas of technological improvement

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - demonstrating communication throughout all unit outcomes
 - presenting clearly using engaging visuals, strong structure and confident delivery for assessments of outcomes 4, 5 and 6, and when interacting with tutors and peers, and for generating evidence for the outcomes
- feeling:
 - showing feeling when acknowledging diverse perspectives and emotional experiences in ethical discussions
 - showing respectful understanding of cultural values when developing global strategies
- collaborating:
 - negotiating ideas, assigning roles and compromising in team projects for all assignments
 - sharing workload fairly and supporting teammates under pressure

- leading:
 - facilitating team meetings
 - delegating tasks based on people's strengths
 - ensuring deadlines are met when carrying out all forms of assessments
 - handling conflict or disagreement diplomatically, finding solutions everyone supports
 - leading presentations or pitches with confidence, and representing the group's work with integrity

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - demonstrating curiosity when researching lesser-known roles or trends in the esports ecosystem, ethical dilemmas, and when exploring unfamiliar cultures and their relationship to esports
 - demonstrating curiosity when exploring new or developmental technologies like VR, AI, and blockchain, and when asking questions about how start-ups succeed in esports
- creativity:
 - demonstrating creativity when developing unique ways to explain the esports ecosystem to different audiences
 - proposing new codes of conduct or conflict-resolution systems for esports
 - developing creative pitch decks or storytelling in investor presentations
 - naming, branding and positioning a start-up in a way that stands out

- sense-making:
 - demonstrating sense-making when mapping relationships and dependencies in the esports ecosystem
 - explaining how audience behaviour, business needs and technology trends overlap
 - linking principles of ethical frameworks and stakeholder interests
 - showing how finance, operations and branding all work together in a business plan

- critical thinking:
 - evaluating sources and selecting the most reliable when learning about the esports ecosystem
 - critiquing the current global esports models and suggesting improvements
 - weighing pros and cons of technologies
 - responding to tough questions from simulated investors

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- 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

Learners can gain a general understanding of **environmental sustainability** by exploring the impact of esports on energy use, including carbon-emissions from server farms, live events and electronic waste. They can investigate **economic sustainability** aspects, such as fair pay for streamers, event organisers and support staff. Learners can reflect on **social sustainability** issues, such as promoting mental health, diversity and responsible online behaviour in gaming communities.

Learners can demonstrate an understanding of the UN SDGs by researching or generating campaigns that support women in gaming (Goal 5 — Gender Equality), by being aware, and pursuing opportunities in esports employment (Goal 8 — Decent work and economic growth), by getting educated in e-waste reduction in gaming hardware (Goal 12 — Responsible consumption and production).

Learners understand sustainability in esports business models by looking at the long-term viability of a business, ethical sponsorships and practices. They evaluate technological sustainability, including cloud infrastructure efficiency and greener hardware, and analyse community health and longevity, including positive social interactions and digital citizenship.

Learners reflect on their role as future esports professionals in shaping a more ethical, sustainable industry. They discuss real-life scenarios and their own sustainable behaviour as gamers, leaders or entrepreneurs. Learners build action

plans to implement sustainable principles in their esports ventures or personal gaming habits.

Delivery of unit

This is an optional unit in HNC Esports. You can deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit or partially integrate it with elements of Esports: Marketing and Sponsorship.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 80 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Describe the esports ecosystem to understand stakeholder relationships (10 hours)

Outcome 2 — Explain the legal and ethical challenges unique to the esports industry (10 hours)

Outcome 3 — Explain the global and cultural aspects of esports (12 hours)

Outcome 4 — Develop business strategies tailored to the esports industry (18 hours)

Outcome 5 — Apply technology and innovative strategies to enhance esports operations (15 hours)

Outcome 6 — Develop entrepreneurial skills to launch and grow esports ventures (15 hours)

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

You can deliver this unit as an immersive and professionally contextualised journey through the modern esports landscape, with a strong focus on industry relevance, innovation and sustainability. Learners begin by exploring the esports ecosystem in depth, gaining a clear understanding of the key stakeholders, structures and career pathways in the industry. This enables them to analyse the relationship between game publishers, professional teams, tournament organisers, broadcasters, platforms, sponsors and audiences. Through independent research and group mapping exercises, learners begin to make sense of how these components interconnect, preparing them to think critically about their roles and opportunities in esports.

Learners then investigate the legal and ethical dimensions of esports. Using real-world controversies and current challenges in areas like player welfare, monetisation, contracts, and inclusivity, learners develop the ability to evaluate risks and respond with ethical, well-informed strategies.

Learners then explore cultural sensitivity and global awareness. They examine how esports differ around the world and how audiences' expectations, infrastructure, game titles and player representation vary across regions. This global perspective is key to ensuring that their eventual business or project ideas are inclusive and responsive to international trends.

The second half of the unit is more focused on strategy, planning and innovation. Learners move into creating their own esports initiative, whether a team, tournament, tech solution or media product. They apply business modelling, competitor analysis and financial planning techniques to ensure their concepts are viable.

Technological development plays a key role, with learners identifying problems in the current esports environment and working in teams to develop creative, tech-driven solutions using available digital tools.

Finally, learners adopt an entrepreneurial mindset to refine, pitch their projects to an audience, simulating a professional industry setting.

Resources

You can use a wide range of resources across digital platforms, professional tools, case studies, industry publications and interactive learning technologies to deliver the unit effectively and dynamically.

At the time of writing, platforms like Newzoo, Statista and Esports Insider provide valuable reports and data on global esports trends, viewership figures, monetisation models and audience demographics. These can help learners understand the current landscape while developing analytical skills. Learners can use interactive tools like Miro, Lucidcharts or Canva to visualise the esports ecosystem, and collaboratively map industry stakeholders and systems.

For legal and ethical discussions, you can use real-world examples and news articles from sources like Dexerto, Polygon and the Esports Observer. Case studies, such as the FaZe Clan contract controversies, or issues around diversity and harassment in gaming communities offer powerful starting points for debates and ethical analysis. Supporting materials from Google Scholar, ACAS or Creative Commons Licensing guides can further reinforce learners' understanding of digital responsibility and intellectual property.

To explore cultural perspectives, videos and documentaries such as *Against the Odds — OG's comeback to win DOTA2's TI8* (YouTube by Riot Games), *Free to Play* (by Valve) and *Game Changers* initiatives (highlighting gender diversity in esports) can bring stories to life.

For business and financial planning, you can use Business Model Canvas by Osterwalder, alongside templates and worksheets available through different online platforms, like StartUpNation, or EntreComp resources. You can introduce basic

financial modelling through spreadsheet tools like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets, with mock funding simulations using platforms like Seedrs or pitch deck templates from Slidebean or Visme.

In the technology and innovation stage, learners can use tools such as OBS Studio for understanding streaming setups, Trello or Notion for project collaboration, and basic UX design platforms like Figma or Marvel to prototype app or platform solutions. For their final pitches, learners can record presentations using Loom, or present live through Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or even on platforms like Discord, which many esports communities already use professionally.

Learners could also access the following books:

- Hedlund, D. and Fried, G. (2020), *Esports Business Management*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics
- Rogers, R. (2021), *Understanding Esports: An Introduction to the Global Phenomenon*. Lanham: Lexington Books
- Sands, W.R. et al. (2022), *The Ethics of Digital Sport and Esport: Celebrating Virtues, Values and Integrity*. London: Routledge.

Approaches to delivery

You can use an outcome-aligned approach when delivering the unit, although centres can decide on what is the best approach for their own audience. The following is a guide that you can consider.

Learners need to understand the esports ecosystem from outcome 1 before the other knowledge and skills. This provides the context for legal, cultural, strategic and technological exploration. You can deliver this by using a combination of lectures, group discussion and learner-led research. Learners can map the esports ecosystem. You can host workshops for learners to analyse different roles and career paths. Learners can use data sources for insights into audience size and growth.

You can deliver outcome 2 next, using a problem-based learning strategy through case studies. This encourages critical thinking and integrity, shaping how learners

approach decisions later when developing projects or business ideas. You can facilitate group debates and ethical decision-making simulations. Learners can analyse real-world esports scandals, role-play ethical and/or legal dilemmas from the perspective of different stakeholders. You can facilitate group discussions around the implications of data privacy, digital wellbeing and player exploitation.

You can deliver outcome 3 next, using a comparative, global learning approach, supported by international case studies and reflective discussion. Learners could compare esports in different countries and/or regions, for example Korea versus Europe. Learners can explore how cultural values affect gaming habits, fan behaviour and market strategies. You can use international guest speakers or recorded interviews from diverse industry voices as learning opportunities.

When the context and cultural awareness are established, learners are ready to begin shaping their strategic ideas, developed in outcome 4. You can deliver this by using a project-based learning approach to develop strategic esports ventures. Learners can use the Business Model Canvas (BMC) and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis to have a clear understanding of the strategic direction of a business idea. Learners form teams to create esports ventures, analyse market competitors and trends, and create sustainable business plans. Learners conduct financial forecasting exercises using spreadsheet modelling.

Outcome 5 fuels the creativity and problem-solving skills learners need to enhance their strategic projects and prepare for pitching. You can deliver this outcome using a design thinking approach, focusing on innovation and practical problem solving. You should encourage learners to work in teams to create a prototype. You could ask learners to identify current technology gaps or issues in esports, for example poor fan engagement or accessibility. Learners develop and prototype tech solutions using tools like Figma or OBS, or any other available tools. Learners collaborate in teams using project management software.

Outcome 6 is the culmination of everything learned — bringing together the research, strategy, technology, ethics and innovation into a final presentation. You can deliver this outcome by using a studio-based approach where learners refine their business ideas and deliver live or recorded pitches. Learners can refine

business plans and prepare professional pitch decks. They could present ideas to a panel of peers, educators or external industry professionals. Learners could also reflect on challenges and lessons through a learning journal or video diary.

Approaches to assessment

Learners can complete all assessments under open-book conditions:

Although your centre can choose if each learning outcome is assessed individually or all learning outcomes are assessed holistically, you can consider the following suggestions. It is at your centre's discretion to implement the following suggestions.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

In these outcomes, learners can work collaboratively in pairs. They can generate an 'Industry Newsroom' (broadcast or podcast). They can create a podcast or news-style video discussing the esports ecosystem, legal and/or ethical issues, cultural sensitivity and global trends in esports. Learners can interview industry professionals (live or simulated) or roleplay stakeholders with different perspectives.

You can use a checklist to ensure that learners have included all required elements from the evidence requirements.

Outcomes 4, 5 and 6

In these outcomes, learners can carry out a 1 to 2-day challenge event, which can be called 'Esports innovation hackathon'; or a 'Live pitch' competition, in the style of a Dragon's Den event. They can work in groups of three to five learners.

For the 'Esports innovation hackathon', learners can collaboratively identify a technology or business challenge in esports (for example fan engagement or accessibility) and prototype a solution, pitch to a panel and showcase a mini-implementation roadmap.

You can use a checklist to ensure that learners have included all required elements from the evidence requirements.

For the 'live pitch', learners can create a business plan for an esports product or service. The business plan can include a professional executive summary, and learners pitch their plan to a panel acting as investors, focusing on strategic thinking, finances and innovations.

You can use a checklist to ensure that learners have included all required elements from the evidence requirements.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must 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](#).

Information for learners

Esports: Business Management (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

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

Unit information

This unit develops the knowledge and skills you need to manage business operations in the esports industry. You explore the unique aspects of esports, including its ecosystem, legal and ethical challenges, global and cultural influences, and the role of technology and innovation. You also learn how to create business strategies and develop entrepreneurial skills, to launch and grow esports ventures.

Before starting this unit, we recommend that you have:

- a basic understanding of business principles, such as those covered in introductory business or management courses
- familiarity with the esports industry, either through personal interest, participation, or previous study
- experience in project management or event organisation, which helps you to understand the practical aspects of managing esports businesses

You show what you've learnt by writing reports, giving presentations, and keeping reflective journals. These assessments help you to apply your knowledge to real-world esports scenarios and develop practical skills in business planning, analysis, and communication.

On completion of the unit, you can:

1. describe the esports ecosystem to understand stakeholder relationships
2. explain the legal and ethical challenges unique to the esports industry
3. explain the global and cultural aspects of esports
4. develop business strategies tailored to the esports industry
5. apply technology and innovative strategies to enhance esports operations
6. develop entrepreneurial skills to launch and grow esports ventures

You are well-prepared for further study in specialised areas of esports management, such as marketing, event organisation, or entrepreneurship. You can also pursue careers in:

- esports organisations, working in roles such as team management, operations, or business development
- event management companies, organising esports tournaments and events
- marketing agencies, creating campaigns to engage esports audiences
- startups, launching your own esports ventures or consulting for others in the industry

This unit provides a strong foundation for a career in the esports industry, equipping you with the skills to succeed in a variety of roles.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the esports sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative.

You learn to focus amidst the dynamic environment of esports, adapting to new challenges, and taking initiative by proposing innovative solutions. Integrity is key as you navigate ethical considerations, ensuring transparency and moral reasoning in decision-making.

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading.

You refine your communication skills to effectively convey ideas to diverse audiences and collaborate within teams. As you lead projects, you practise empathy and cultural sensitivity, understanding and engaging with the global esports community.

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking.

You heighten your innovative capabilities through curiosity and creativity as you explore emerging technologies and devise strategic business plans.

By cultivating these meta-skills, you are well-prepared to tackle challenges and seize opportunities in the vibrant esports sector.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the esports sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

You learn how the esports industry impacts on energy use, carbon emissions, and electronic waste, and delve into economic sustainability by examining fair compensation for streamers and event organisers. Social sustainability is also key, with discussions on promoting mental health, diversity, and responsible online behaviours in gaming communities. Through this unit, you reflect on your role in shaping an ethical and sustainable industry.

Administrative information

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Superclass: CB

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.

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