

NextGen: HN unit specification

Leading Projects and People Through Change (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JT3S 48

SCQF level: 8 (32 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 project-based unit provides learners with a comprehensive understanding of the core responsibilities of an office manager in leading projects and people through change. It emphasises applying theory to practical, real-world scenarios.

Learners:

- explain decision making at all levels
- analyse the office manager's role in operational planning and employee support during operational change
- explain effective and sustainable teamwork
- explain the role of the office manager in managing a small project
- develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context
- explain the importance of sustainability in an organisation

It is suitable for learners studying administration and primarily intended for learners who want to pursue careers as an office manager, executive assistant, HR co-ordinator, or to continue their studies in business management.

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

- a relevant qualification or units at SCQF level 7
- HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies

This is a mandatory unit in Higher National Diploma (HND) Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. Learners can also complete it on a stand-alone basis.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the HND can progress to degree-level study (such as BA Business and Management) or find employment in senior administration or supervisory roles in a business environment.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. explain strategic, tactical and operational decision making and produce a project plan and operational plan
2. analyse the office manager's responsibilities in operational planning and the strategies they use to support employees through organisational change
3. explain the principles of effective and sustainable teamwork
4. explain the key stages of the project lifecycle and create a project brief based on an operational decision
5. develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context
6. explain the importance of sustainability in an organisation

Evidence requirements

Assess all outcomes under unsupervised, open-book conditions.

You must ensure authenticity and originality of all submitted work.

Outcome 1

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- describe three real-world decisions: one strategic, one tactical and one operational decision
- explain how decisions made at strategic, tactical and operational levels drive change
- explain four key features of each level of decision making, including:
 - who is responsible for making the decision
 - level of risk
 - if the decision is structured or unstructured

- identify the information required to make decisions at a strategic, tactical and operational level, including the purpose of strategic frameworks
- produce a project plan that includes specific tasks, timelines and resource requirements for departments
- produce an operational plan

Outcome 2

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- outline three key responsibilities the office manager has in operational planning
- describe five tools or frameworks that support operational planning, including communication and budget control
- identify two potential barriers to organisational planning
- identify five resources required to implement the operational plan
- explain the strategies an office manager can use to support employees through organisational change and how to minimise resistance to change at an operational level

Outcome 3

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain the importance of a minimum of five different interpersonal skills in effective teamwork
- describe the purpose of personality and behavioural frameworks in establishing effective teams
- describe the role of the team leader
- explain the purpose of motivational theories in teamwork
- explain the behavioural patterns, key challenges, and defining characteristics associated for each stage of team development
- describe the purpose and three benefits of providing feedback
- explain why it is important to reflect on individual performance following teamwork

Outcome 4

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- define what a project is, and use three real-world business examples to distinguish what makes a small project different from routine operational task
- for the initiation stage, explain the importance of:
 - the project's purpose
 - setting clear objectives
 - defining the scope and stakeholders
- for the planning stage, explain the importance of:
 - identifying specific tasks for the project
 - assigning responsibilities
 - developing timelines and milestones
 - estimating budgets
 - allocating resources
 - identifying potential risks
- for the execution stage, explain the importance of:
 - delivering tasks according to the plan
 - delegating responsibilities effectively
 - communicating progress to stakeholders
- for the monitoring stage, explain the importance of:
 - tracking project progress using appropriate metrics
 - adjusting plans in response to challenges
 - measuring performance against objectives
- for the closure stage, explain the importance of:
 - reviewing project outcomes
 - documenting lessons learned
 - formally recognising individual and team contributions

- create a project brief for a possible change driven by the operational (day-to-day) decision identified in outcome 1, including:
 - the project purpose (objective)
 - scope and deliverables
 - key stakeholders
 - an outline of major tasks
 - timelines and resources
 - potential risks

Outcome 5

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- self-assess their meta-skills baseline
- create a plan to develop their own meta-skills
- carry out activities to develop and demonstrate their meta-skills
- use reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills they have improved and developed

For more information about meta-skills, see the educator guide, [Skills 4.0: A skills model to drive Scotland's future](#) and [our meta-skills web page](#).

Outcome 6

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- define 'sustainability' in business
- explain how to measure sustainability
- define the pillars of sustainability
- advise on good sustainability practices

Learners must relate their submission to two specific and relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: • strategic, tactical and operational and levels of decision making • how decisions made at strategic, tactical, and operational levels drive change • the main features of each decision-making level • the information required to make strategic, tactical and operational decisions	Outcome 1 Learners can: • produce a project plan and operational plan
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: • the role of the office manager in operational planning • operational planning tools and frameworks • potential barriers to operational planning • operational planning resources • strategies to support employees through organisational change • how to minimise resistance to change at an operational level	Outcome 2 Learners can: • analyse the role of the office manager in developing and executing operational plans • identify the key factors and conditions necessary for the office manager to deliver the operational plan effectively, including potential challenges and barriers • analyse the essential resources required by the office manager to successfully implement the operational plan • explain strategies to support employees through organisational change and to minimise resistance to change

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: • the interpersonal skills that contribute to effective teamwork • different team roles, including the role of the team leader • different ways individuals contribute to team success • recognised frameworks for example Belbin and Myers Briggs • motivational theories, for example Maslow and Herzberg • the stages of team development for example Tuckman's model • the purpose of feedback and self-reflection	Outcome 3 Learners can: • identify the interpersonal skills that contribute to effective teamwork • explain team roles and how individuals contribute to the team's success in different ways • describe the role of the team leader and leadership approaches • outline the stages of team development • describe the purpose of feedback and self-reflection following teamwork
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: • the definition of a project • the key stages of a project lifecycle • how to create a project brief	Outcome 4 Learners can: • define what a project is • explain the main stages of the project lifecycle involved in managing a small project • create a project brief for a possible change driven by the operational (day-to-day) decision

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 5 Learners should understand: - the meta-skills categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation, and associated meta-skills, as described in Skills 4.0 - the importance of developing meta-skills, including employability, adaptability and effectiveness - what meta-skills are most relevant to their vocational or academic context - how to develop meta-skills, including these approaches: - self-awareness: analysing preferences, strengths and development needs, meta-skills self-assessment - goal setting and action planning - reflective practice: principles, tools and approaches for effective reflective practice	Outcome 5 Learners can: - create a plan to develop their meta-skills - carry out, review and adapt their meta-skills development plan - assess their meta-skills development
Outcome 6 Learners should understand: - what sustainability is - how to measure sustainability - how to apply models of sustainability - good sustainability practices	Outcome 6 Learners can: - define 'sustainability' in business - explain how to measure sustainability - define the pillars of sustainability - advise on good sustainability practices

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:
 - breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps with their own deadlines
- integrity:
 - referencing any frameworks, models, or real-world examples they use in their analysis
- adapting:
 - understanding the importance of adaptability as an interpersonal skill required for effective teamwork
- initiative:
 - proactively researching and suggesting tools, methods, or resources relevant to tasks

Social intelligence

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

- communicating:
 - understanding why good communication is important for teamwork and for the office manager's role in planning
- feeling:
 - recognising the importance of respecting the emotions and perspectives of individuals in teamwork
- collaborating:
 - understanding the importance of collaboration in operational planning and in an effective team
- leading:
 - exploring the importance of an effective leader in teamwork

Innovation

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

- curiosity:
 - exploring the types of decisions made at each level
- creativity:
 - designing a project brief based on a real-world decision

- sense-making:
 - connecting theoretical concepts (for example decision-making models, teamwork frameworks) to real-world scenarios
- critical thinking:
 - evaluating how effective teamwork supports long-term sustainability decision making

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by identifying a budget for operational planning.

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by understanding the importance of communication in effective teamwork.

Digital

Learners develop digital skills by using digital platforms to access information to support learning and understanding.

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)
- 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

Learners identify how to make sustainable decisions that consider long-term effects on the environment, resources and organisational efficiency. They also explore the principles of sustainable teamwork, including collaboration, inclusion, and effective communication, to support a positive workplace culture and long-lasting team performance.

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. You can deliver it as a stand-alone unit or partially integrate it with elements of the Advanced Administration Software Applications unit.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 160 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — explain strategic, tactical and operational decision making and produce a project plan and operational plan (40 hours)

Outcome 2 — analyse the office manager's responsibilities in operational planning and the strategies they use to support employees through organisational change (40 hours)

Outcome 3 — explain the principles of effective and sustainable teamwork (40 hours)

Outcome 4 — explain the key stages of the project lifecycle and create a project brief based on an operational decision (40 hours)

Outcome 5 — develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context

Outcome 6 — explain the importance of sustainability in an organisation

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Resources

Access to digital resources.

Approaches to delivery

You can deliver this unit in person or online. Learners should be able to work independently through the unit content and assessments.

You can integrate the delivery of outcome 4 with the Advanced Administration Software Applications unit.

The overall unit delivery time is a notion 160 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. The notional time for self-directed study is 160 hours.

Approaches to assessment

All assessment tasks for this unit are open book and unsupervised. Assessments should therefore be sufficiently contextualised and personalised to reduce the risk of plagiarism and to allow learners to demonstrate independent understanding and application of knowledge.

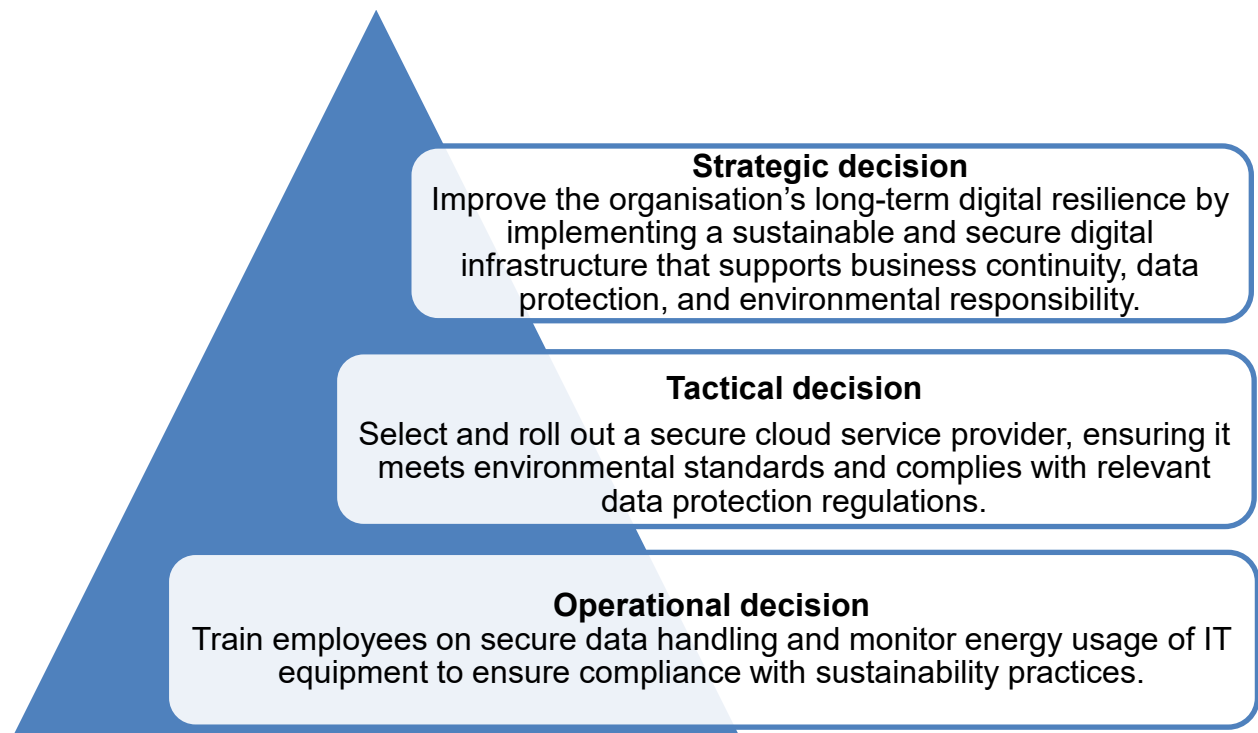
You can assess outcomes individually or together, as appropriate. When assessing outcomes together, ensure the learners clearly meet the evidence requirements for each outcome.

Assessing outcome 1

Learners need to describe three real-world decisions:

- one strategic (long-term)
- one tactical (departmental)
- one real-world operational (day-to-day)

Example approach based on secure and sustainable digital system:



Learners use the operational decision identified in outcome 1, in outcome 4.

Assessing outcome 4

The focus of this outcome is the theory of project management. Learners can use the project brief they created in outcome 4 as the basis for their project in the Advanced Administration Software Applications unit.

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

Leading Projects and People Through Change (SCQF level 8)

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 your ability to explain strategic, tactical and operational decision making and understand their influence on business performance as you produce a project plan and operational plan. You also explore the office manager's responsibilities in operational planning, including the strategies used to support employees through organisational change. The unit also covers effective and sustainable teamwork, highlighting how collaboration contributes to success. You also gain insights into managing small projects, a key aspect of the office manager's role.

This is a mandatory unit in Higher National Diploma (HND) Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. You can also complete it as a stand-alone unit.

The unit is suitable if you are studying administration and want to:

- pursue a career as an office manager, executive assistant or HR co-ordinator
- continue your studies in business management

Before you start the unit, we recommend you have one or more of the following:

- a relevant qualification or units at SCQF level 7
- Higher National Certificate (HNC) Administration and Digital Business Technologies

During the unit, you work independently either in person or remotely. All your assessments are open book and unsupervised.

If you complete the unit as part of HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies, you can progress to degree-level study (such as BA Business and Management) or find employment in senior administration or supervisory roles in a business environment.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the administration 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. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps with their own deadlines
- integrity:
 - referencing any frameworks, models, or real-world examples you use in your analysis

- adapting:
 - understanding the importance of adaptability as an interpersonal skill required for effective teamwork
- initiative:
 - proactively researching and suggesting tools, methods, or resources relevant to tasks

Social intelligence

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

- communicating:
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 - understanding the importance of collaboration in operational planning and in an effective team
- leading:
 - exploring the importance of an effective leader in teamwork

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- curiosity:
 - exploring the types of decisions made at each level
- creativity:
 - designing a project brief based on a real-world decision
- sense-making:
 - connecting theoretical concepts (for example decision-making models, teamwork frameworks) to real-world scenarios
- critical thinking:
 - evaluating how effective teamwork supports long-term sustainability decision making

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 administration sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

You identify how to make sustainable decisions that consider long-term effects on the environment, resources, and organisational efficiency. You also explore the principles of sustainable teamwork, including collaboration, inclusion, and effective communication, to support a positive workplace culture and long-lasting team performance.

Administrative information

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Superclass: AB

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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