

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information

Unit title:	Project Management: Strategy, Decision Making and Risk
Unit code:	J5FM 48
Superclass:	AG
Publication date:	November 2021
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	03 (April 2024)

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to develop learners' understanding of the process of project management in the workplace. It aims to develop a theoretical understanding with a practical underpinning. Learners will be required to consider the importance of information in order to make strategic decisions while assessing risks and their relative impact. Learners will interpret data, apply project management theories and demonstrate a level of competency with project management software. Learners are also required to create their own project plan.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- 1 evaluate the role of business information in decision making
- 2 assess the potential strategic risks posed to an organisation in a specific context
- 3 develop a plan to manage identified risk
- 4 plan a project using project management software

Credit points and level

2 SQA unit credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8).

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Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Evaluate the role of business information in decision making.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ levels of decision making
- ◆ information requirements
- ◆ types of information system
- ◆ legislation governing the management and handling of information

Outcome 2

Assess the potential strategic risks posed to an organisation in a specific context.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ impact assessment
- ◆ risk management principles
- ◆ levels of risk
- ◆ risk management strategies

Outcome 3

Develop a plan to manage identified risk.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ interpret a business situation
- ◆ critical thinking
- ◆ data analysis
- ◆ action plan

Outcome 4

Plan a project using project management software.

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Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ project tasks and sub-tasks
- ◆ task dependency and constraints
- ◆ time determination and management
- ◆ project milestones
- ◆ resource determination and allocation
- ◆ project scheduling
- ◆ project management software

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

- ◆ identify and compare the nature of information required at strategic, tactical and operational levels of decision making for a given situation
- ◆ evaluate the information required at strategic, tactical and operational levels of decision making for one internal source and one external source for each level
- ◆ evaluate the nature of information systems required to support decision making at strategic, tactical and operational levels
- ◆ identify and analyse the implications for decision making of two pieces of current legislation governing the management and handling of information

Outcome 2

- ◆ assess the impact of information on strategy
- ◆ assess the impact of information on risk
- ◆ evaluate different approaches that can be taken and their relative impact
- ◆ select appropriate strategy to a given situation

Outcome 3

- ◆ interpret a business situation
- ◆ evaluate and analyse project information
- ◆ analyse and interpret project information and data
- ◆ identify critical points from the project information and data
- ◆ establish a credible course of action upon which a project plan could be based

Outcome 4

- ◆ schedule a project using project management software
- ◆ establish project tasks and sub-tasks
- ◆ establish task dependencies and constraints
- ◆ determine appropriate duration of sub-tasks
- ◆ create and apply base and resource calendars
- ◆ establish and describe project milestones
- ◆ determine the resources required for a project
- ◆ assign resources to sub-tasks determination and allocation
- ◆ analyse and interpret reports and charts

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Support notes

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Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This unit is designed to develop learners understanding of the process of project management in the workplace. It aims to develop a theoretical understanding with a practical underpinning. Learners will be required to consider the importance of information in order to make strategic decisions while assessing risks and their relative impact. Learners will interpret data, apply project management theories and demonstrate a level of competency with project management software. Learners are also required to create their own project plan.

This unit is designed to develop learners understanding of the process of project management in the workplace and offers learners an understanding of information in the decision-making process, risk management and strategy. Learners should be able to evaluate and analyse information as well as create appropriate plans with key milestones and targets to assist in achieving business objectives. Learners should have a comprehensive understanding of business information and be able to apply theory in a practical way in the modern business environment.

This unit is mandatory within the SQA Advanced Diploma in Business (GT2C 48) but may form part of other group awards and may be delivered as a stand-alone unit.

The unit is designed to allow learners to achieve a theoretical understanding with a practical underpinning. Delivery of Outcome 1 will allow learners to appreciate the impact of business information on decision making. This should cover internal and external information and its influence on this process. Delivery of Outcome 2 will allow learners to appreciate the importance of information and its impact on strategy and risk. Learners should be able to understand multiple approaches that can be taken with the same piece of information and recognise the different levels of risk involved with each approach.

Outcomes 3 and 4 offer learners the opportunity to critically assess and interpret information and data set in a business context and create a project plan using project management software. Suitable software can include, but is not exclusive to, Microsoft Project, Asana, Monday, Accelo, Backlog, Teamwork and Easy Projects. The outcomes should cement learners understanding of information and offer confidence in adapting to the modern-day workplace and the systems in place for project management. Learners should learn to look for key features in project software such as calendars, planning options, targets and timeframes, milestone markers, team creation, staff/role allocation possibilities, etc.

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For delivery within SQA Advanced Certificate/Diploma *Business*, this should be considered in its wider context. Learners should be able to pull together concepts and ideas from various other units such as J5FL 48 *Managing Business Culture and Strategy* and *Business: Graded Unit 2*.

Guidance on approaches to the delivery of this unit

This unit may be delivered using a variety of learning environments, eg the first and second outcomes could be delivered via lectures followed up by tutorial work or small group work considering case studies. The practical nature of the content lends itself towards a combination of interactive learning and independent study as well as learning through participating in group work.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcome 1

Learners could be presented with a set of generic questions unrelated to any particular business situation. Alternatively, learners may be asked to relate their knowledge to a particular business situation detailed in stimulus material, or through researching an organisation of their choice, or one selected by their tutor. Evidence could be written and include diagrammatic representation which may be presented in response to a set of questions.

Outcome 2

A number of different approaches could be used to assess the knowledge and skills for this outcome. These could include the use of a case study, stimulus material or involve independent research of organisations. Evidence could be generated through a report based on set questions or assignment tasks. Other modes of assessment could be possible as long as they would allow learners to generate the required evidence without any unnecessary barriers.

Outcome 3

This outcome is likely to be assessed through the use of a case study/stimulus material containing information and data relating to a business situation set in a context inviting one or more possible actions. The different actions should be sufficient to warrant the creation of a project plan that could evidence the requirements of Outcome 4. Evidence could be presented as a report or a presentation advising of strategic options based on the learner's interpretation of the data. While integration with Outcome 4 is encouraged, it is possible to assess Outcomes 3 and 4 independently.

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Outcome 4

Assessment of Outcome 4 may be integrated with Outcome 3 or assessed independently. The evidence will be generated through the development of a project plan using project management software, accompanied by an analysis and interpretation of reports and charts.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment, we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres wishing to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment — as specified in the evidence requirements — are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at: www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 are embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

The unit offers opportunities for learners to gather evidence which could help them demonstrate achievement for the following Core Skills. The following table gives further information on the Core Skills to which the unit may contribute and on the opportunities which the unit provides for Core Skills development.

Core Skill component Written Communication (Reading) of the Core Skill Communication at SCQF level 6

Learners undertaking this unit are expected to read and understand complex written information — the general skill of this component. They are expected to make use of theoretical concepts of risk management and will, therefore, have to read relevant material relating to these ideas. This information is conventionally available in textbook and similar sources such as websites which involve complex written material. Learners may be required during their study for the unit to prepare notes from such sources which will require that they identify and summarise relevant ideas and supporting details through their reading of the information available. In this way they will be able to demonstrate the first of the two specific skills associated with this Core Skills component.

Core Skill component Written Communication (Writing) of the Core Skill Communication at SCQF level 6

Learners can provide written evidence to meet the evidence requirements. For Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 it is anticipated learners will provide a written response which ideally, will have to be well-structured, laid out in a logical order showing sequential thinking and organisation of findings. By doing this, they could provide evidence for the general skill of this component which is 'Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics'. A report in particular could allow learners to demonstrate that they can meet all the specific skills associated with this general skill. For example, a good report would present all essential ideas and information on business information and decision making and data communication systems and emergent technologies in a logical and effective order as well as providing

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suitable supporting detail. The report itself could be presented in a way which can take account of the purpose of the report and the audience and which links major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity of the report and the impact of the writing. To meet the Core Skill component, the report would use a suitable structure, format and layout and, therefore, employ effective conventions to achieve its purpose. Spelling and punctuation would be accurate.

Core Skill component Critical Thinking of the Core Skill *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6

The general skill for this component is 'Analyse a complex situation or issue'. Different assessment formats for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 would allow learners to gauge the importance of information in making business decisions. They would assess relevant concepts and analyse levels or risk, strategies and decision-making processes. Being able to interpret and evaluate information and identify problems and potential courses of action will further add to this skill. Learners could be encouraged to adopt this approach to their assessment to aid the development of this Core Skill. This unit could, therefore, yield evidence which learners could use to demonstrate their achievement of this Core Skill component.

Core Skill component Planning and Organising of the Core Skill *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6

In Outcome 4 learners are provided with a scenario from which they are required to produce a detailed plan. The scenario may be linked to Outcome 3. The use of project management software will be used where possible. Learners have to plan a complex task using a number of features such as milestones, deadlines, targets and timeframes.

Core Skill component Reviewing and Evaluating of the Core Skill *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6

Outcomes 3 and 4 allow learners to evaluate the effectiveness of all stages of the strategy and draw conclusions/make recommendations. The completion of a response which demonstrates sequential thinking and organisation of findings could, therefore, provide evidence which could be used for this Core Skill component.

Core Skill component Providing and Creating Information of the Core Skill *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 6.

The use of software to achieve Outcome 4 could provide evidence for the development of this Core Skill. A combination of making selective use of ICT and evaluating information to present findings in an appropriate format is an essential aspect of the Providing/Creating Information component at SCQF level 6.

The Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 are embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
03	New Assessment Support Pack now available on the secure site	08/04/24
02	Embedded Core Skill info added: Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 Core Skills Component Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6	09/02/22

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

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Further information

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

General information for learners

Unit title: Project Management: Strategy, Decision Making and Risk

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

This unit provides you with the opportunity to assess the importance of business information and its' impact on strategy, risk and decision making. Skills in project management will be acquired and your ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate strategy and risk will be developed.

In **Outcome 1** you will consider the role of information in the decision-making process, this will involve looking at the difference between data and information, the different types of information required at different levels within organisations and how legislation impacts upon the management of information.

In **Outcome 2** you will also examine the impact of information and its relevance to levels of risk and consequently strategy.

Outcomes 3 and 4 are of a practical nature and are designed to offer you the skill set of adapting to different working environments. By achieving these outcomes you should feel confident in identifying, evaluating and critically assessing key pieces of information. You will have the opportunity to plan a project and apply your theoretical knowledge in a practical way.

Evidence could be generated through using case studies, preparing reports, management briefing papers, charting projects and other relevant means. Outcomes 3 and 4 may be combined or assessed independently. Outcome 4 will involve the use of project management software.

These assessments may be carried out under a variety of conditions.

The Critical Thinking and Planning and Organisation of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 are embedded in this unit. When you achieve the unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

This unit may provide you with the opportunity to develop the Core Skills components of Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating, Written Communication (Reading) and Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6, and the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 6.