



Group Award Specification for:

Professional Development Award

in

Financial Accounting at SCQF level 7

Group Award Code — GT1Y 47

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1 Introduction

This is the group award specification for the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Financial Accounting at SCQF level 7. This document includes: background information on the development of the group award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the group award structure, and guidance on delivery.

This group award is one of a suite of Professional Development Awards (PDAs) in Accounting and Book-keeping.

2 Rationale for the development of the award

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 also be more accessible to learners in terms of time, cost and assessment.

As a result of the market research a PDA in Financial Accounting, 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 financial accounting.

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

2.1 Market research and consultation

Consultation details are summarised in the following table:

Stakeholder	Method of consultation
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ face to face interviews◆ online questionnaire
Approved centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ face to face interviews◆ online questionnaire◆ practitioner events (subject networks)
Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ online questionnaire

National Occupation Standards Setting Body/Sector Skills Council	◆ telephone conversation/emails
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In addition, extensive use was made of current research data compiled for Futureskills Scotland, particularly *Labour Market Projections 2007 to 2017*. The full report can be found at www.futureskillscotland.org.uk.

2.2 Summary of feedback

- ◆ good range of delivery formats available — flexible, open and distance learning, and as part of SQA Advanced Certificate in Accounting
- ◆ appropriate choice of units had been included in PDA
- ◆ employers stated their interest in using PDA as a training route
- ◆ learners would find PDA a useful ‘stepping stone’ to gaining further qualifications
- ◆ PDA builds on current provision

3 Aims of the award

3.1 General aims of the award

1. to provide learners with personal and professional development opportunities
2. to provide a continuous professional development (CPD) vehicle for learners employed in the accounting sector
3. to develop study and research skills
4. to enable career progression and job mobility
5. to enable progression within SCQF

3.2 Specific aims of the award

6. to develop technical and administrative knowledge relevant to current financial accounting practice
7. to develop manual book-keeping skills
8. to develop skills using commercially produced financial accounting software to record accounting transactions and prepare accounting reports
9. to develop skills in the preparation of final accounts for a range of business organisations
10. to prepare learners for employment in a financial accounting role

3.3 Target groups

The PDA in Financial Accounting at SCQF level 7 is suitable for a wide range of learners including:

- ◆ learners employed in the accounting sector 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 Accounting

3.4 Employment opportunities

The PDA in Financial Accounting will prepare learners for employment within the accounting and business services sector. The type of positions which may be taken up by learners include:

- ◆ accounting assistants
- ◆ financial administrators

4 Access to award

Access to the award will be at the discretion of the centre. In general, entry should be open to any learner who can demonstrate, by formal qualification or experience, a reasonable expectation of successfully completing the award. It would be beneficial for learners to be competent in *Communication*, *Numeracy* and *IT* skills to SCQF level 5.

We recommend that learners whose first language is not English should have English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) level 5 or a score of 5.5 in International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

5 Award structure

5.1 Framework

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Recording Financial Information	HP04 47	8	7	1
Using Financial Accounting Software	HR10 47	8	7	1
Preparing Financial Statements	HR12 47	16	7	2

5.2 Mapping information

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

Unit title	Unit code	Aims
Recording Financial Information	HP04 47	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
Using Financial Accounting Software	HR10 47	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10
Preparing Financial Statements	HR12 47	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10

5.3 Core Skills

The importance of Core Skills is recognised and these are developed throughout this award. Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components within the award, the PDA provides possibilities for developing Core Skills. Further information on the signposting of Core Skills is given in Appendix 1.

5.4 Occupational standards

The PDA has been mapped against the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the industry (see Appendix 2).

5.5 Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer

Learners who successfully complete this PDA may undertake further related PDAs or SQA Advanced units to build up their qualification(s) towards a full SQA Advanced Certificate in Accounting. No exemptions, for CIMA or ACCA qualifications, are available to learners undertaking this PDA. Professional bodies require learners to achieve all mandatory SQA Advanced Certificate units before exemption is granted.

6 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 Accounting framework or as the Professional Development Award. 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 a financial accounting environment. The PDA award would also be attractive to those already in employment but who do not possess a relevant vocational qualification.

It is recommended that *Recording Financial Information* is delivered prior to or in tandem with *Using Financial Accounting Software* (HR10 47), and before *Preparing Financial Statements* (HR12 47).

The unit specifications detail the Evidence Requirements and assessment procedures for each assessment event and assessment exemplars are available for the units comprising the PDA. Assessment exemplars 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 Appendix 3.

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
- ◆ groupwork
- ◆ online materials
- ◆ IT based teaching materials
- ◆ projects
- ◆ written assessment both seen/unseen and open/closed-book conditions
- ◆ virtual learning environments (VLEs)

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

7 General information for centres

Disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this group award 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* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for learners

This PDA in Financial Accounting at SCQF level 7 offers you an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required for a financial accounting support role within an organisation. It is primarily intended for those who expect to take up a career in accounting and/or financial administration but is also relevant to those with appropriate work experience who wish to formalise their qualifications or progress in their accounting career.

You will develop manual book-keeping skills, and prepare and analyse final accounts and statements for a variety of business organisations — sole traders, partnerships and companies. You will be introduced to the use of accounting software packages to record accounting transactions and produce accounting reports.

You will have an opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Numeracy*, *Information and Communication Technology* and *Problem Solving* although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

On completion of the PDA you may continue study towards another PDA or the full SQA Advanced Certificate in Accounting.

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk

SCQF credit points: One SQA Advanced credit is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points. This applies to all SQA Advanced units, irrespective of their level.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. SQA Advanced units will normally be at levels 6–9. Graded units will be at level 7 and 8.

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

Graded unit: Graded units assess learners' ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the units of the group award. Their purpose is to add value to the group award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage learners to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

Dedicated unit to cover Core Skills: This is a non-subject unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills.

Embedded Core Skills: This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the unit and where the unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

Signposted Core Skills: This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

Qualification design team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the SQA Advanced Certificate/Diploma from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Consortium-devised SQA Advanced Certificates and Diplomas are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

Specialist single centre and specialist collaborative devised SQA Advanced Certificates and Diplomas are those developments or revisions led by a single centre or small group of centres who provide knowledge and skills in a specialist area. Like consortium-devised SQA Advanced Certificates and Diplomas, these developments or revisions will also be supported by SQA.

10 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 any changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the 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](#).

11 Appendices

Appendix 1: Core Skills signposting within the PDA

Appendix 2: National Occupational Standards (NOS) Mapping

Appendix 3: Overview of Assessment Strategy

Appendix 1: Core Skills signposting within the PDA

Unit code	Unit title	Communication			Numeracy		ICT	Problem Solving			Working with Others
		Communications — Reading	Communications — Writing	Communications — Oral	Using Graphical Information	Using number		Critical thinking	Planning & Organising	Reviewing & Evaluating	
HP04 47	Recording Financial Information	X	X			X		X	X	X	
HR10 47	Using Financial Accounting Software	X				X	X	X	X	X	
HR12 47	Preparing Financial Statements	X	X			X		X	X	X	

Appendix 2: National Occupational Standards (NOS) Mapping

	Recording Financial Information	Preparing Financial Statements	Using Financial Accounting Software
NOS Units			
Professional Standards			
PS1 – Work Effectively in Accountancy			✓
PS2 – Professional Ethics in Accountancy and Finance			
Financial Accounting			
FA1 – Process Income	✓		
FA2 – Process Expenditure	✓		
FA3 – Account for Income and Expenditure	✓		
FA4 – Prepare Accounts		✓	✓
FA5 – Draft Financial Statements		✓	✓
Management Accounting			
MA1 – Provide Cost and Revenue Information			
MA2 – Provide Management Information			
MA3 – Draft Budgets			
MA4 – Monitor Financial Performance			
Tax			
T1 – Calculate Personal Tax			
T2 – Calculate Business Tax			
T3 – Report VAT	✓		✓

Appendix 3: Overview of Assessment Strategy

Unit	Assessment			
	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Recording Financial Information (HP04 47)	Practical exercise – Closed-book supervised	Practical exercise – Closed-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised
Preparing Financial Statements (HR12 47)	Practical exercise – Closed-book supervised. Pro forma layout provided	Practical exercise – Closed-book supervised. Pro forma layout provided	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised
Using Financial Accounting Software (HR10 47)	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised	Practical exercise – Open-book supervised