



National 4
Course
Specification



National 4 Graphic Communication Course Specification (C735 74)

Valid from session 2023–24

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: National 4 Graphic Communication

SCQF: level 4 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C735 74

Mandatory Units

H27V 74 2D Graphic Communication (National 4) 9 SCQF credit points

H27W 74 3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication (National 4) 9 SCQF credit points

Added Value Unit

H27X 74 Graphic Communication Assignment (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for the assessment of added value in the Added Value Unit. Further information on this Unit is provided in the Assessment section.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 Design and Technology Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in Graphic Communication or related areas
- ◆ further study, employment or training

Further details are provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

The Graphic Communication (National 4) Course introduces learners to the diverse and ever-increasing variety of presentation methods employed in graphic communication. It provides scope for personalisation and choice.

The Course allows learners to broaden and deepen their skills base and to widen their horizons regarding a range of vocations and careers. It provides opportunities to further acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, including: creativity, flexibility and adaptability; enthusiasm and a willingness to learn; perseverance, independence and resilience; responsibility and reliability; confidence and enterprise.

Learners are encouraged to exercise imagination, creativity and logical thinking. They will develop an awareness of graphic communication as an international language. They will find that the skills they acquire by successfully completing this Course will be invaluable for learning, for life and for the world of work.

The Course provides skills that are complementary to other curricular areas such as expressive arts, sciences and mathematics. It provides skills that are valuable for learners in the other areas of study in the technologies.

The Course provides progression from experiences and outcomes in expressive arts and ICT, as well as in craft, design, engineering and graphics.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The Course provides opportunities for learners to gain skills in reading, interpreting, and creating graphic communications. Learners will initiate, develop and communicate ideas graphically. They will develop spatial awareness and visual literacy through graphic experiences.

The Course is practical, exploratory and experiential in nature. It combines elements of recognised professional standards for graphic communication partnered with graphic design creativity and visual impact.

The Course allows learners to engage with technologies. It allows learners to consider the impact that graphic communication technologies have on our environment and society.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop skills in graphic communication techniques, including the use of equipment, materials and software
- ◆ extend and apply knowledge and understanding of graphic communication standards, protocols and conventions, where these apply
- ◆ develop an understanding of the impact of graphic communication technologies on our environment and society

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is a broad-based qualification suitable for learners with an interest in graphic communication — both digital and paper-based. It is suitable for those wanting to progress onto higher levels of study in the subject.

The qualification is largely learner-centred and includes practical and experiential learning opportunities. Because the world of graphic communication covers such a wide variety of styles and modes of communication, there is a broad scope for personalisation and choice within the Course for each learner.

On completing the Course, learners will be able to: initiate, develop and communicate ideas graphically; interpret graphic communications initiated by others; use graphic communication equipment, software and materials effectively; and apply knowledge and understanding of graphic communication standards, protocols and conventions, where these apply.

In addition, learners will have developed: design skills, including creativity; an understanding of the impact of graphic communication technologies on our environment and society; and spatial awareness and visual literacy.

Course activities also provide opportunities to build self-confidence, to enhance generic and transferable skills in literacy, numeracy, researching, ICT, planning and organising, working independently and in collaboration with others, critical thinking and decision making, communication, as well as self- and peer-evaluation.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

On completing the Course, learners will have developed skills in 2D and 3D graphics, as well as pictorial graphics. They will be able to apply these skills in order to produce graphics that require relevant visual impact and graphics that transmit information.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The Course consists of three mandatory Units including the Added Value Unit. Each of the Units of the Course is designed to provide progression to the corresponding Unit at National 5.

2D Graphic Communication (National 4)

This Unit helps learners develop their creativity and skills within a 2D graphic communication context. It will allow learners to initiate, develop and communicate ideas using graphic techniques in straightforward and familiar contexts. Learners develop 2D graphic spatial awareness.

3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication (National 4)

This Unit helps learners develop their creativity and skills within a 3D and pictorial graphic communication context. Again, it will allow learners to initiate, develop and communicate ideas using graphic techniques in straightforward and familiar contexts. They will develop 3D graphic spatial awareness.

In both of the 9-credit Units, learners will develop an understanding of how graphic communication technologies impact on our environment and society.

Added Value Unit: Graphic Communication Assignment (National 4)

This Unit adds value by introducing challenge and application.

Learners will be able to extend and apply their knowledge and skills through the assignment. They will draw on their range of graphic communication experiences from the Units in order to produce an effective overall response to the assignment. The assignment brief will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

Conditions of award

To achieve the National 4 Graphic Communication Course, learners must pass all of the required Units, including the Added Value Unit. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

National 4 Courses are not graded.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Full skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course are given in the *Added Value Unit Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. These include:

- ◆ replicating basic and familiar graphic forms in 2D, 3D and pictorials
- ◆ initiating and producing simple preliminary, production and promotional graphics in familiar contexts
- ◆ initiating and producing simple informational graphics in straightforward and familiar contexts
- ◆ demonstrating visual literacy by interpreting simple and familiar graphic communications
- ◆ spatial awareness in simple and familiar 2D, 3D and pictorial graphic situations
- ◆ using standard graphic communication equipment, software and materials effectively for simple and familiar tasks
- ◆ knowledge of graphic communication standards, protocols and conventions, in straightforward and familiar contexts
- ◆ applying design skills, including creativity, when developing solutions to simple graphics tasks
- ◆ basic knowledge of computer-aided graphics techniques and practice
- ◆ knowledge of colour, illustration and presentation techniques in straightforward and familiar contexts
- ◆ basic knowledge of the impact of graphic communication technologies on our environment and society

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes* and the *Added Value Unit Specification*.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

2D Graphic Communication (National 4)

For this Unit, evidence will be required that the learner can produce a variety of simple 2D graphics, to a given standard, in familiar contexts. Knowledge will also be assessed.

3D and Pictorial Graphic Communication (National 4)

For this Unit, evidence will be required that the learner can produce a variety of simple 3D and pictorial graphics, to a given standard, in familiar contexts. Knowledge will also be assessed.

Added Value Unit

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html)¹. At National 4, added value will be assessed in an Added Value Unit. The Added Value Unit will address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge and application.

In the National 4 Graphic Communication Course, the Added Value Unit will focus on challenge and application.

The learner will draw on, extend and apply the skills and knowledge they have developed during the Course. This will be assessed through an [assignment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html)² requiring application of skills and knowledge from the Units to produce an effective overall response to the brief. The brief for the assignment will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

² Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

2 Numeracy

2.2 Money, time and measurement

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

5 Thinking skills

5.1 Remembering

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Bullet point in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding' section removed.	Qualifications Manager	May 2023

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