

Skills
Development
Scotland



A Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills at SCQF level 6

GL8J 46

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This document provides you with information you will require to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills.

If you need any further information, please contact damian.brown@Instructus.org

Version Control			
Version Number	Revision(s)	Approved by	Date
1.0			
1.1	Minor changes; accuracy and qualification details	Brian Humphrey	Sept 2016
1.2	FA Code and qualification codes	Brian Humphrey	June 2017
1.3	Minor changes to wording, links to relevant guidance	Graeme Hendry	April 2018

Background

One of the key recommendations of Sir Ian Wood's review on developing the young workforce was to "develop better connectivity and co-operation between education and the world of work to ensure young people at all levels of education understand the expectations of employers, and that employers are properly engaged" (Scottish Government response to "Developing the Young Workforce; 2015). The Scottish Government set ambitious targets to ensure this connectivity is delivered through a partnership of schools, colleges/training providers and employers.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS), alongside other partners, is working with industry to increase the range of work based learning opportunities for pupils in the senior phase of secondary schools. One of the ways this is being achieved is through the development of Foundation Apprenticeships and SDS is leading this initiative. Foundation Apprenticeships will allow pupils to gain vocational qualifications that combine sector specific skills alongside the knowledge that underpins these skills in a workplace setting while still at school.

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills is designed to provide Senior Year 5 (S5) and Senior Year 6 (S6) pupils opportunities to develop skills and knowledge for entry into a career in the Business sector. It also contributes directly to achievement of the Modern Apprenticeship in Business & Administration by attainment of core units of the MA qualification.

Business Skills in Scotland

Employers across all sectors of the economy in Scotland cited skills gaps in applicants in important pan-sector skills areas as well as in soft-skills that can have a large impact on employers in terms of such things as meeting customer service objectives and the introduction of new working practices. Employers cited the following skills relevant to Business Administration as lacking by applicants:

- customer handling (36 per cent)
- planning and organisation (35 per cent)
- problem solving (33 per cent)
- written communication (31 per cent)
- literacy (29 per cent)
- numeracy (28 per cent)
- team working (23 per cent)

In addition to this, employers in Scotland stated that the skills that need improving included the following skills that are relevant to business administration:

- planning and organising (46 per cent)
- problem solving (34 per cent)
- team working (34 per cent)
- oral communication (21 per cent)
- written communication (15 per cent).

Also, employers stated that in terms of Secondary school leavers entering employment, 29 per cent were either very poorly or poorly prepared, 21 per cent had a lack of working experience and 14 per cent had a lack of motivation.

Findings such as those detailed above are echoed by the Federation of Small Business (FSB) in Scotland who state that small business employers cite the importance of soft skills and are often looking for people with the right attitude, with time management skills and who work well with both customers and colleagues.

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills has been designed to address such skills gaps as identified above, and will also address the reasons for skills gaps by giving young people experience in the workplace as a route into employment as a part of comprehensive vocational programme with a route into further learning which will enhance competency in the workplace. In addition to this, the apprenticeship will address the more attitudinal factors affecting school leavers entering the workplace by giving them practical experience within the workplace within a structured framework that inculcates behaviours in relation to employability.

Why choose Business Skills?

Administration, management and leadership are key and complimentary business skills, and modern businesses need to ensure all three are adequately included in the management team. Whereas leadership is concerned with the big picture of strategy into the future, management deals more with short term objectives, making best use of resources etc. Administration provides vital insight into what is going on in the 'here and now', and the recent past.

Business administrators and budding managers have a highly transferable set of knowledge, skills and behaviours that can be applied in all sectors. This includes small and large businesses alike; from the public sector, private sector and charitable sector. The role may involve working independently or as part of a team and will involve developing, implementing, maintaining and improving administrative services. The role may require the administrator to take a management or leadership role on behalf of the organisation or department from time to time. Business administrators will advance key skills and behaviours to support their progression towards management positions.

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills is properly 'grounded' in the highly respected profession of Business Administration, whilst giving young people the opportunity to appreciate and understand other management and business priorities, such as:

- Digital Marketing
- Procurement
- Supply Chain management
- Enterprise

What is the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills?

The Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) in Business Skills is for pupils in S5 and S6 and typically takes 2 years to complete.

The first year (S5) of the Foundation Apprenticeship will feature the National Progression Award, *including the work placement unit*. The second year (S6) will mainly be delivered in the workplace, and will enable workplace competence to be developed.

Foundation Apprentices will need some work placement during the first year; and may need some class time in year 2 to complete the National Progression Award.

Background / rationale

This Foundation Apprenticeship supports the commitment to provide relevant work-based vocational education and training as part of the senior phase curriculum. This will prepare young people for direct entry into a career in the Business sector by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively from day one of employment. It also highlights meaningful vocational pathways as challenging and valuable alternatives to existing academic subjects.

Partnership

A Foundation Apprenticeship is about the right balance between delivering the taught elements of the programme (the NPA) and the development of work based competences (the SVQ). Development of true competence depends on the continuing acquisition and application of underpinning skills and knowledge. Young people need to build real workplace skills including both those that are specialist to the chosen career and the generic behaviours and attributes that apply to any workplace. This can only be achieved in a real work setting involving meaningful activities introduced throughout the programme.

Foundation Apprenticeships are delivered by partnerships comprised of school, learning provider and employer. The learning provider is responsible for the approvals, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of the component units and qualifications. Where multiple learning providers are involved, arrangements between them will be detailed in an SQA Partnership Agreement.

The learning provider must have the appropriate SQA centre and qualification approvals in place before it can deliver the Foundation Apprenticeship.

For further support and guidance on SQA's approval and quality assurance processes, please see:

- **Information for Centres on Foundation Apprenticeships:**
https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/InformationForCentresFoundationApprenticeships.pdf
- **Information for Centres on SQA Partnership Agreements, where multiple learning providers are involved:**
https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/PartnershipAgreementTemplate.pdf

Employers are an essential part of the partnership and can contribute in a range of ways, from creating a workplace challenge, to coaching and mentoring, to interviewing and selection. They may also be involved in the assessment of the SVQ.

SDS has provided, in the Product Specification, principles for creating an industry related Foundation Apprenticeship. The partnership will provide to SDS a clear outline of how these principles will be met, of the arrangements they have made to ensure how necessary interdependencies are developed and maintained and of the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners.

Pastoral Care

The young people embarking on this Foundation Apprenticeship are school pupils and therefore all those involved in delivering the programme have a duty of care. This includes providing appropriate health and safety training and measures to ensure the safety of the young people. This must be in the context of the specific workplaces of the individual pupils (one of the mandatory units of the Diploma covers health and safety).

In addition, a workplace mentor must be assigned to be a point of contact for the young person when they are not in the school environment.

Care must be taken to ensure that pupils are allocated to suitable work placements taking into account each pupil's personal circumstances. This must include an understanding of any restrictions that might be in place for travelling or for after school or holiday commitments.

How should the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills be delivered?

Often, delivery and assessment of the relevant NPA will be mostly in S5 and will mainly involve the learning provider. In order to complete the NPA, pupils will require to spend some time on work placement. It is also important that students commence employer contact during S5 to introduce students to the employer context in which digital roles exist and how business skills are utilised in the workplace. Time at the end of the S5 summer term could be spent on familiarisation with the workplace to be used in S6. This could include induction, H&S etc. and involve shadowing/observing and a work based contribution. Such employer engagement will have wider positive outcomes for schools, Business skills teachers and colleges and their Business skills lecturers.

The following suggested activities summarise how delivery of a Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills could be scheduled, across S5 and S6:

Activities in S5:

- NPA in College
- Site visits to employers
- Workplace component /work placement unit of NPA
- Student event (live)

Activities in S6:

- Extended work placement of 1 day per week (16-20 weeks)
- Real work projects
- Team-working
- Interview / career planning support
- Final assessment of SVQ units

Structure of the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills

GL8J 46 Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills			
Group Award Title	Unit Title	SCQF level	SCQF Credit points
GL8H 46 National Progression Award (NPA) in Business Skills at SCQF level 6	H20R 76 Understanding Business	6	6
	H20S 76 Management of People and Finance	6	6
	F1FE 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software - Word Processing and Presenting Information	6	6
	F1FJ 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software - Spreadsheet and Database	6	6
	HE9E 46 Contemporary Business Issues	6	6
	HF88 46 Work Placement	6	6
GK6Y 23 SVQ in Business and Administration (part of)	FD9Y 04 Plan how to manage and improve own performance in a business environment		4
	FE02 04 Communicate in a business environment		3
	FE04 04 Support other people to work in a business environment		4
	FE0X 04 Design and produce documents in a business environment		4
Foundation Apprenticeship Certification Unit	HE6E 04 Foundation Apprenticeship Certification unit	-	0
TOTAL SCQF CREDIT POINTS			51

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills has a validation period from 01st August 2016.

1 SCQF credit point is equal to 10 notional hours of learning.

Certification

SQA will issue the commemorative certificate for the Foundation Apprenticeship.

Learning providers must ensure that they have appropriate approvals in place with SQA for the Foundation Apprenticeship and all mandatory components. Candidates must be entered and resulted for all relevant units for verification and certification purposes.

Once all contributing results are entered on SQA systems, the candidate's commemorative certificate will be produced.

SQA Awarding Body quality assurance requirements apply to the delivery of the SQA component units and group awards. Centres are required to sign up to the relevant Assessment Strategy for the SVQ and comply with all its requirements.

Business Skills placements for the Foundation Apprenticeship

Placements for pupils undertaking a Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills should provide the opportunity to have significant input to a long-term engagement with a business issue, from the identification of a problem or opportunity, through to its resolution or implementation. This should include tasks such as:

- producing business documents
- contributing to the organisation of events
- developing and delivering presentations
- providing reception services
- using and maintaining office equipment
- taking responsibility for logistics e.g. travel and accommodation
- providing administrative support for meetings
- using a variety of software packages
- presenting business documents and managing projects
- applying problem-solving skills to resolve challenging or complex complaints

Selection of pupils and entry requirements for the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills Commencing S5

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills is aimed at pupils commencing S5. Pupils will have the ability to work towards the SCQF level 6 qualification components (the same level as Higher). They need to have a good level of English and Mathematics. Having taken a Business subject would be an advantage.

In general apprenticeship roles within the Business Skills sector require:

- individuals to be prepared to apply a solutions-based approach to improve business processes and helping define procedures
- individuals to be prepared to engage and foster relationships with internal and external suppliers and partner organisations
- the ability to work logically and methodically, often under pressure to set deadlines
- good attention to detail and the ability to deliver what is required, when it is required

- individuals to be open to change and focus on the requirements of the business at all times

Equalities

We expect those involved in the development, recruitment and delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships to be pro-active in ensuring that no-one should be denied opportunities because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or pregnancy and that any barriers (real or perceived) are addressed to support all pupils. These are the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and training providers and employers must comply with this Act to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against in terms of entry to and promotion within the industry.

Our emphasis throughout is upon equality and diversity both for new entrants to the sector and opportunities for progression for the existing workforce.

Enhancement

A pupil completing the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills will have achieved a large proportion of the requirements for a Modern Apprenticeship in Business Admin Level 3. Progression routes from the Business Admin Modern Apprenticeship (BAMA) framework could include, for example:

- SVQ 4 in Business & Administration
- SVQ 4 in another cross-sector area such as Management
- Business related HNCs (SCQF Level 7)
- Business related HNDs (SCQF Level 8) with possible progression to a full Honours Degree
- Professional qualifications (SCQF Level 7 and above).

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills will also give a good insight into other Business-related subjects, which the graduating Foundation Apprentice could pursue, either through a Modern Apprenticeship or academic/vocational studies in:

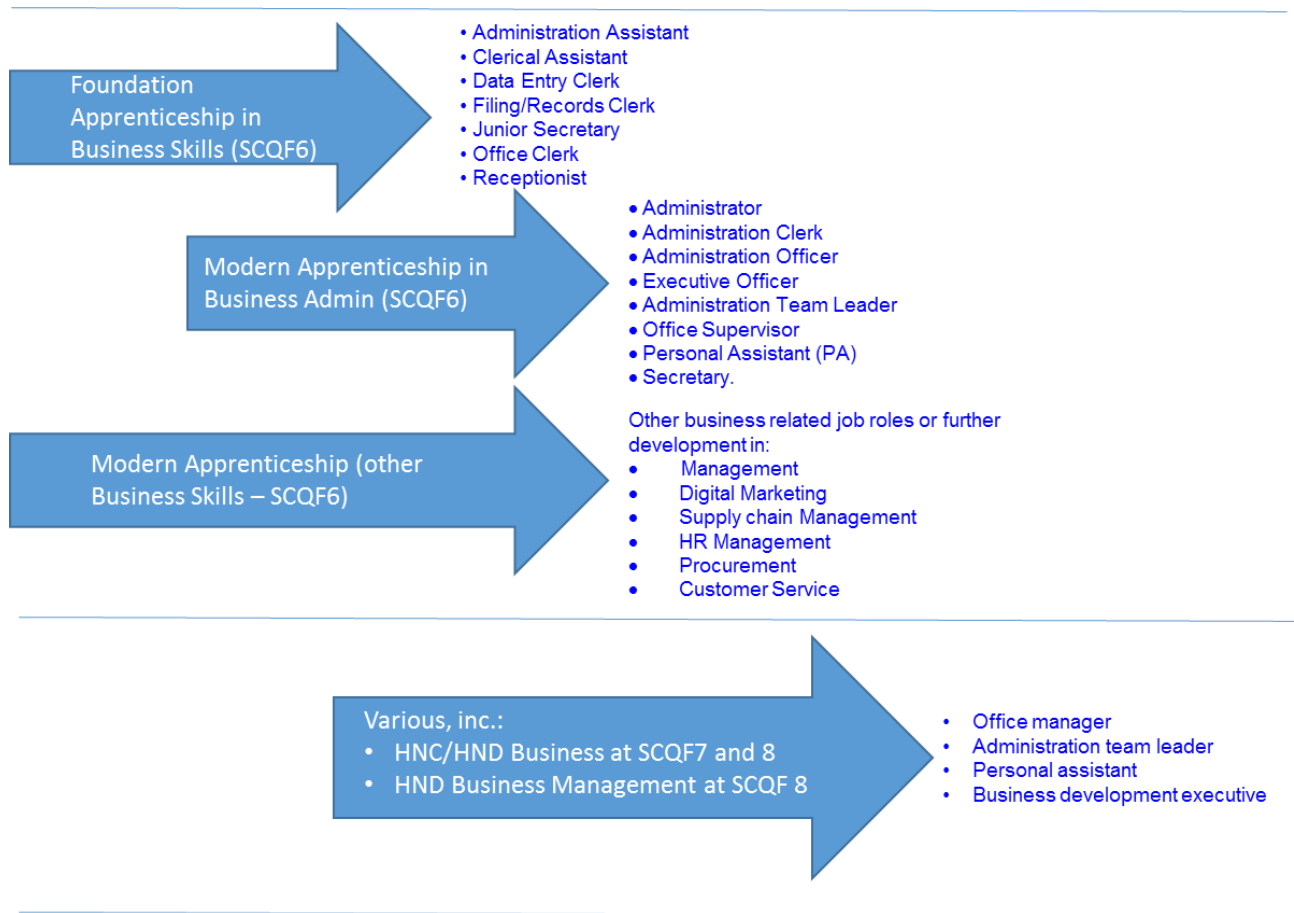
- Digital marketing
- Procurement
- Supply chain management
- Enterprise

Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA's policy is to recognise prior learning as a method of assessing whether a learner's experience and achievements meet the evidence requirements (i.e. the standard) of a SQA Unit or Units and which may or may not have been developed through a course of learning.

More information can be found on the [SQA website](#).

[Pathways into the workplace and into post-secondary education](#)



Further information

Further information on the Business Skills sector can be found at: www.instructus.org

Annex 1



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Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills Framework Endorsement

Instructus Group is pleased to endorse and support the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills Framework.

A young person who successfully completes the award will achieve units of the Modern Apprenticeship Business and Administration (SCQF level 6). They will be certificated to show their achievements.

On completion of the Foundation Apprenticeship they will be able to progress to complete the full Modern Apprenticeship Business and Administration (SCQF level 6).

Damian Brown
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