

**Arrangements Document for Introduction to Work
Place Skills (SCQF level 3) – Revamped award
Code -GN 19 04
December 2017**

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Introduction

The Skills Development Scotland Introduction to Work Place Skills (IWPS) at SCQF level 3 has been developed in response to the requests from education stakeholders and learning providers to have an appropriate qualification that both provides a structured work placement activity and reflects the skills demanded by employers in the work place. It reflects the need to provide individual with the opportunity to gain experience of the work place where employers' opinion on performance is reflected in the evidence. It is therefore a potential suitable stepping stone onto the Certificate of Work Readiness in relation to developing employability skills in real work environments for individuals.

Candidates who undertake the Introduction to Work Place Skills will develop the skills, behaviours and attributes that meet the established needs of Scotland's employers. The Award differs from other employability awards in that there is emphasis on the workplace performance that requires the candidate to demonstrate appropriate work place skills, behaviours and attributes and gain employer endorsement. The employer opinion is integral to the assessment process. The learning provider is expected to provide the appropriate level of support to the candidate throughout the programme; this support will vary depending on the individual 's needs but the level of support and help required in the workplace reflects the SCQF level of this award . Through this approach it is hoped that the individual will be afforded the optimum opportunity of developing and demonstrating their employability skills in context.

Rationale for development

Skills Development Scotland developed the Certificate of Work Readiness which was put forward as a defined standard of work readiness for entry level jobs that employers could trust, in the Spring of 2012. However, whilst the principles of this development were very much endorsed by both employers and educational stakeholders, it became clear that for some learners, there was a further stepping stone required before they were ready to demonstrate to employers that they were ready for substantive employment. Stakeholders very much appreciated the standards laid out for work placement activity in the customised unit, "*Practical Work Place Skills*" but it was too much to ask of some learners to sustain placements that reflected substantive employment in both nature and terms and conditions.

This proposed “Introduction to Work Place Skills” allow candidates to develop their underpinning core skills and to demonstrate competence in a real working situation over a period of time, establishing use of the desired skills, attributes and behaviours identified by employers and advisory bodies.

The approach of utilising employer endorsement of the aforementioned skills, attributes and behaviours as a ‘stamp’ of approval is one welcomed by employers. However, the subjectivity of interpretation of areas such as behaviours and attributes have been difficult to standardise, so this award offers a strong partnership approach to ensure that standards can be relied upon when it comes to the importance of employer endorsement.

The award aligns with the strategic drivers of The Scottish Government, where employability skills have been identified as an important focus for skills development in young people, including “*Review of Post-16 Educational and Vocational Training*” (2011), “*Skills for Scotland*” (2010), and “*Opportunities for All*”(2012). It also aligns with the findings of CBI and UKCES in consultation with employers.

The award also supports the development of the four capacities in *Curriculum for Excellence* and the Scottish Government’s *More Choices, More Chances* agenda for school-aged learners.

The award encompasses existing SQA nationally recognised employability and core skill units, supported by the Skills Development Scotland customised unit, *Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps* which has been designed with the same principles as our *Practical Work Place Skills* (SCQF level 4) unit. The award has been SCQF credit rated and levelled at SCQF level 3.

The learning programme is crucial to the successful delivery of this award and has been specifically designed to allow candidates to demonstrate practical employability skills within a real working environment for a minimum period of time. However, the delivery of this is more flexible than that of the Certificate of Work Readiness and we see it very much as an appropriate stepping stone towards demonstrating work readiness.

The competencies gained and demonstrated through undertaking this award will adapt to any working environment regardless of occupation involved, allowing candidates to explore occupation-specific skills and competencies either at the same time or subsequently.

Aims of the Award

The principal aims of the award are to enable individuals to:

- Identify the skills, behaviours and personal attributes that employers seek in their employees
- Understand and **demonstrate** the responsibilities of the employee in the workplace
- Understand and **demonstrate** the skills to interact with other employees and customers in the workplace
- Develop and **demonstrate** the required core skills in communication, numeracy, ICT, working with others and problem solving
- Identify and reflect on their own strengths and experiences in relation to the world of work

In general, individuals who complete this award can expect:

- Improved core skill competencies required for entry level work
- Improved opportunities for progression towards employment
- To enhance their skills in self evaluation
- To enhance their skills in planning and setting personal targets in relation to the world of work

Target Groups

This award is targeted at individuals who have not yet experienced the world of work, but who require a 'stepping stone' to develop their employability skills, before they make the transition into the workplace with the appropriate level of guided support for them.

Members of the target group can be those individuals still at school and considering leaving to look for work, undertaking a non-advanced college course or not in any form of formal education or training. Or individuals with low level or no qualifications, who have limited or no clear ideas about any particular vocational route and require support in core skills and employability.

Recommended Access to the Award

No specific knowledge of the world of work is required to access this award. Some candidates will access the award through engagement with a Skills Development Scotland work coach/ career coach who will support the individual in evaluating their suitability to undertake this type of programme. This access process is an initial assessment for their learner journey. It involves evaluation of an individual's core skills, their employability skills and consideration of any barriers to learning which need to be considered, in order to ensure that they are placed on the appropriate programme. Other supported entry routes may also be possible through local and regional referral routes. Other candidates may "self-refer" on to this award.

Candidates should be ready to develop their core skills of communication, numeracy and ICT to SCQF level 3. It may be an appropriate progression from an activity agreement or other personal development award. This award allows individuals flexible time to develop their skills before undertaking any award where they are required to demonstrate a sustained ability to engage with the world of work.

Award Structure

SQA Introduction to Work Place Skills - Award Code: GN19 04

4 SQA credits including 1 notional SQA credit

Total of 33 SCQF credit points (330 hours). The work experience is underpinned by development of the 3 core skills either delivered in a work-based or NQ context.

Unit title	Code	SQA credit value	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
Mandatory Units				
Skills Development Scotland customised unit: Practical Work Place Skills: first steps	H37L 04	1	3	15
Options (Mandatory): 4 SQA credits needed				
Group A (Mandatory): 1.0 credit needed				

Communication –A3	F3GB 09	1	3	6
Communication-U	F425 04	1	3	6
Group B (Mandatory): 1.0 credit needed				
Numeracy-A3	F3GF 09	1	3	6
Numeracy U	F429 04	1	3	6
Group C (Mandatory): 1.0 credit needed				
ICT-A3	F3GC 09	1	3	6
ICT U	F42D 04	1	3	6

Table 1: Award structure

Core Skills

Candidates who come with the appropriate level of core skills will receive recognised prior learning for their achievement in the core skills of communication, ICT and numeracy. In addition, learning providers are expected to deliver the underpinning core skills knowledge and understanding, contextualised for work place situations, to support the candidate in achieving the Skills Development Scotland customised work place unit Practical Work Place Skills: first steps

Approaches to delivery and assessment

The approach to the learning programme for this award is fundamental to its success.

The Work Placement

The nature of the work placement experience may differ from other offers that learning providers have set up for their candidates in the past.

It is vital that all partners involved in the delivery of the programme understand the commitments and inputs required.

There are some fundamental requirements of the work placements that are considered mandatory and this is set out in the table below

Characteristic of a “Quality” Work Placement Experience for IWPS	Requirement
The work placement environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work place should ideally be a “real” place of work where business takes place. This may be in the private, public or third sector. However, realistic working environments may be appropriate such as those found in colleges and some 3rd sector placements• The work place environment must have paid employees or self-employed individuals• The work place must have appropriate health & safety compliance, insurance and Equality policy in place and be compliant with Scottish employability law

<p>The terms and conditions of the placement activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business must give the candidate activities and responsibilities that mirror the requirements of a “real” job where they can use, with guidance, basic tools and materials safely and effectively. It would be expected that they carry out simple, familiar and routine tasks which have been pre-planned, applying basic skills. • The candidate must complete at least 150 hours of placement activity. This may be delivered in a flexible manner such as half a day per week (but equally may be more substantive). Placements will therefore span over a variable time and should be agreed locally prior to commencement. • The candidate is expected to follow the rules and policies of the organisation in the same manner that any other employee does (giving consideration to the fact that they require regular supervision and support).
<p>Process requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work place must demonstrate commitment to agreeing, implementing and assessing the activity of the candidate.

Suggested learning programme

It is envisaged that the learning programme for delivery is flexible but is designed to incorporate the 150 hours of work placement experience as contained in the unit *Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps*

The preparatory phase

Learning providers should provide an initial introductory period of developing underpinning and preparatory knowledge and understanding to the candidate before they begin the work placement activity. This period may vary between candidates depending on their specific needs, but learning providers may wish to consider each individual's requirement to develop their core skills before embedding the work placement activity within their learning programme.

During this preparatory phase, the learning programme should incorporate the following:

Programme of the Preparatory Phase	What should be done
Deliver the underpinning and preparatory knowledge and understanding for the placement activity	Begin delivery of the SQA Core Skills units: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating their own skills (for the work placement) including strengths, weaknesses and identifying targets• Creating a plan for their work placement (could include timescales etc here)
Agree and prepare the placement activity for the candidate	Identify and agree potential suitable placements for the candidate (using their input) Prepare the candidate to go for interview with the placements (optional) Meet with employer and agree the terms and conditions of the placement activity as defined by Appendix 1.

	Prepare the candidate for the placement by sharing the terms and conditions of the placement with them
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The work placement/ main phase

It is envisaged that the time and incorporation of the work placement activity will vary according to each candidate's needs.

Programme of the work placement phase	What should be done
Delivery and assessment of the work placement activity	<p>Provide an appropriate induction for the candidate to the work place</p> <p>Support and supervise the candidate to carry out the placement according to the agreed terms and conditions</p> <p>Support the candidate to undertake a self evaluation activity after the first 75 hours of the placement</p> <p>Assess the candidate after 150 hours of work placement activity and gain employer endorsement (signature) of the result</p>
Continue to deliver and assess the supporting underpinning units of the award	Complete delivery of the SQA unit: <i>Personal Development: Self and Work</i>

	complete the unit “ <i>Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps</i> ” Continue and complete delivery of Core skill Units
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Defining responsibilities within a partnership model of delivery

A strong partnership model is required to ensure successful delivery of the IWPS Award. Specific responsibilities for the above activities may vary, particularly in relation to any support that is being given to the candidate. **It is recommended that a partnership agreement exists between the learning provider and the employers that they are engaging with, as well as between the learning provider and any supporting partner organisations.** Below, the responsibilities of different roles are exemplified.

Responsibilities of the learning provider

The general responsibilities of the learning provider are to deliver, assess and internally verify the underpinning knowledge and skills of the award and to work to arrange an appropriate work placement for the learner, taking into account the specific needs of the learner.

The specific responsibilities of the learning provider are:

- to enrol the candidate onto the SDS *Introduction to Work Place Skills* award
- To deliver the preparatory part of the learning programme which will support the learner before they undertake their work placement
- To source a suitable work placement for the candidate, taking into account the specific needs of the learner and ensuring that the placement complies with health and safety protocols
- To work closely with the employer to deliver the core skill units
- To ensure that a qualified assessor has delivered and assessed all of the units, using standards equivalent to SQA ASPs or NABs for all of the SQA units
- To ensure that a competent assessor or verifier has agreed with the employer the terms and conditions of the placement activity
- To ensure that a competent assessor or verifier has engaged with the employer to ensure that their endorsement of the candidate is appropriate
- To enter the candidates for the award
- To internally verify delivery of the whole award
- To liaise regularly with the employer to optimize the learning experience for the candidate

Responsibilities of the work placement employer

The general responsibilities of the employer are to ensure that the candidate is appropriately supervised/mentored and supported in the workplace for a period of at least 150 hours and to ensure that they fulfil employer responsibilities to that candidate in line with their policies and procedures.

The specific responsibilities of the work placement employer are:

- To agree with the learning provider the activities and expectations of the candidate
- To ensure that the candidate receives an appropriate induction to the workplace environment including information on work place health and safety, policies and procedures
- To monitor and evaluate the performance of the candidate
- To liaise with the learning provider should any issues arise within the work placement period
- To assess the candidates work readiness supported by guidance from the learning provider assessor
- To liaise regularly with the learning provider to optimize the learning experience for the candidate

Assessment approach

It is recommended that learning providers make use of the SQA national assessment bank material and exemplar assessments which are available for all of the SQA national units in this award. These can be adapted appropriately as required. For the SDS customized unit, **clear guidelines as to the approach to assessment are set out within the appendices of the unit.**