

Skills  
Development  
Scotland



## A Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills at SCQF level 6

GV1M 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](mailto:damian.brown@Instructus.org)

<b>Version Control</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Revision(s)</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	New Framework Specification post FA developments	Frank Quinn	<b>October 2020</b>
1.1	Removal of GL8J 46 group award	Deborah Miller	<b>September 2021</b>
1.2	Change of SVQ Units and FA Group Award	Deborah Miller	<b>July 2023</b>

## 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. Increasingly the framework is also available over a shorter duration, typically a single academic year.

Irrespective of the delivery model, the Business Skills framework includes three core elements, namely:

1. National Progression Award in Business Skills
2. Work Based Challenge Unit
3. Work Based Learning units

The full programme specification is outlined further in this document.

## 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. This includes both the development of practical and technical skills alongside the development of learner meta-skills, supported via project-based learning. 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 meta-skills and work-based learning elements.

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 is 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, quality assurance processes and SQA Partnership Agreements, please see:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/79474.html>

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 work-based learning element.

## 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, including relevant safeguarding requirements that are required by respective Local Authority and School partners. This must be in the context of the specific workplaces of the individual pupils (one of the mandatory units of the FA 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.

Work placement allocation and methodology, whether on-site or through remote working, should take cognisance of the learner's personal circumstances to maximise the learner experience and opportunity.

### **How should the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills be delivered?**

Often, delivery and assessment of the relevant NPA occurs at the start of the programme so that the underpinning knowledge can be obtained before contextualising within the work-based learning element.

The work-based challenge unit is designed to support the contextualisation of the National Progression Award, and therefore should be seen as a complementary unit to run concurrent with the NPA.

The work-based learning element is designed to offer the learning access to the workplace, either physically onsite or through remote working. Learning providers are required to identify host employer(s) to provide the work placement opportunity. Employer(s) are asked to provide real work activity aligned to the organisations objectives and to support the development of evidence for assessment against the outcomes

Involvement of industry is encouraged across the entire programme of learning. Learner success is best reflected when the delivery of the theory and practical elements are aligned. This approach maximises the contextualisation for the learner and offers the opportunity to put into practice underpinning learning.

#### Work Based Challenge Unit/Meta-skills:

The WBCU set at SCQF L6 has been designed to support the delivery of the NPA. Providers are asked to engage with employer(s) to identify a suitable project that will complement the learning outcomes within the NPA units.

Incorporated within the WBCU is a meta-skills framework designed to emphasise the importance of meta-skills to industry in addition to technical and practical ability. Through the project associated with the WBCU, learners are required to understand meta-skills and consider which they are likely to develop through their role in the project. Reflective practice is central to the development meta-skills throughout the project. Learners are asked to reflect on their meta-skills development and record this alongside their evidence base.

For further information on the WBCU and meta-skills, please refer to the link provided at the end of this document.

#### Work Based learning Element:

The Business Skills FA contains four units aligned to the respective modern apprenticeship programme. Providers are encouraged to utilise the SVQ route where physical access to the workplace remains and assess in accordance to the SVQ assessment standards required for external verification. Where not possible, providers may utilise the corresponding customised unit. This reflects the same content and standards underpinned by the NOS however offers greater flexibility to the methods of deliver and assessment where access to the physical workplace is not available.

It is acceptable that learners may achieve the Foundation Apprenticeship via a blend of SVQ or Customised units. However, it is critical that irrespective of the route taken, all evidence gathered is mapped to the respective performance criteria and to the standards required of the external verification.

*Please refer to the Foundation Apprenticeship Product Specification for further information on the principles of Foundation Apprenticeship delivery.*

*Please refer to the Annex's at the end of this document for a detailed breakdown of the units and codes within the framework(s)*

- *Annex 2: FA Business Skills*

## **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

## Learner Selection and Entry Requirements

The Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills is aimed at pupils with an interest and enthusiasm in exploring this area of work. Although set at SCQF L6, due to the contextualised learning experience where underpinning theory and practice are aligned with industry, learners operating at SCQF L5 or above on arrival are encouraged.

## 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.

## Learner Progression

Foundation Apprenticeships are directly aligned to three primary progression pathways. These are:

- Modern Apprenticeship
- Further Education
- Higher Education

### Modern Apprenticeship:

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)

### Further Education:

All Scottish further education colleges recognise the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills as an eligible qualification towards Higher National provision, alongside other qualifications.

### Higher Education:

Scottish universities recognise the Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills as an eligible qualification towards under-graduate degrees and graduate apprenticeship provision, alongside other qualifications.

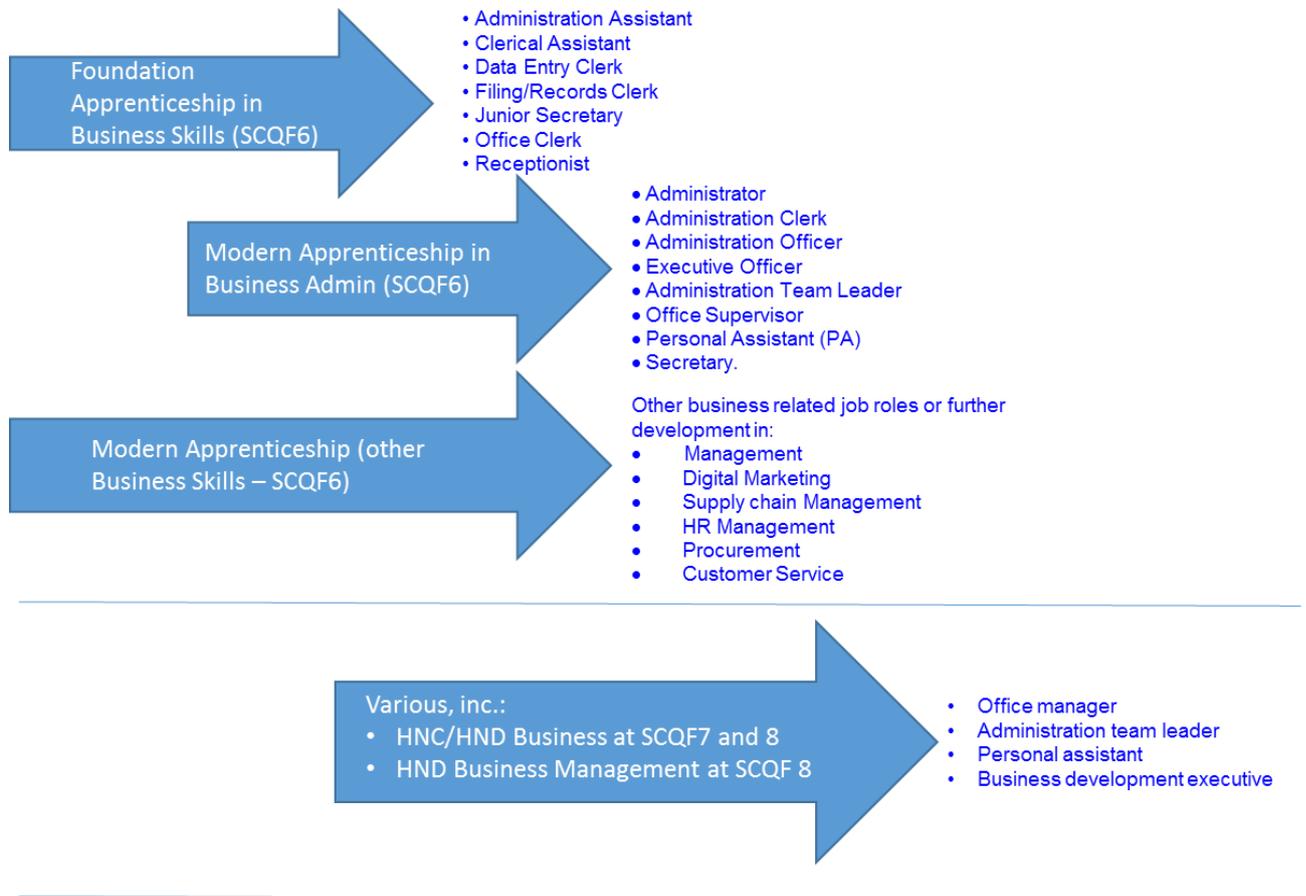
### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

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

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### Further information

Further information on the Business Skills sector can be found at: [www.instructus.org](http://www.instructus.org)

### Further Reading

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- *Foundation Apprenticeship Product Specification (link)*
  - *SQA Assessment Guidance for SVQ3 Business and Administration (link)*
  - *Approach to Assessment of FA Customised Units (link)*
  - *Business Skills Customised Units Delivery and Assessment Requirements (link)*
  - *Work Based Challenge Unit Specification (link)*
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## Foundation Apprenticeships – assessment arrangements 2023-24

SQA and SDS can confirm the following arrangements for the delivery and assessment of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in session 2023–24 only.

### FA Learners completing in session 2023-24

Now that Covid-19 restrictions have been removed, centres are urged wherever possible to ensure all learners undertaking a Foundation Apprenticeship are assessed in a workplace in line with the original frameworks.

**However, to minimise disruption for existing learners and centres, the following arrangements will be in place for learners completing a Foundation Apprenticeship in 2023-24 only:**

- Learners starting a Foundation Apprenticeship in June 2023 who will complete in a **single year**, or current learners who are already entered on a two-year delivery model, can either:
  - use optional Customised units or pathways if required, or
  - use the original framework.

These are one-year arrangements that will be closely monitored.

Centres must ensure that they are approved by SQA to deliver the appropriate Foundation Apprenticeship prior to commencing delivery and that all these learners are entered for all Customised components of their Foundation Apprenticeship by **1 December 2023**. No entries should be made for learners on these arrangements after that date.

This will ensure these learners can be certificated by December 2024 at the latest.

**SQA will remove all Customised units and Customised pathways from Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks in December 2024 without exception. These only apply for session 2023-24 and new arrangements will be announced in due course for session 2024-25.**

### FA Learners completing in 2024-25

The arrangements detailed above **do not apply** to learners who are starting a Foundation Apprenticeship in 2023-24 on a two-year delivery model.

Any learner beginning their Foundation Apprenticeship on a **two-year delivery model** – completing in 2024-25 – must use the original Foundation Apprenticeship framework and accordingly, learn and be assessed in a workplace.



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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  
Chief Operating Officer

## Foundation Apprenticeships Framework Specification: Business Skills at SCQF Level 6

GV1M 46 Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Skills			
Group Award Title	Unit Title	SCQF Level	SCQF Credits
<b>GR3P 46 National Progression Award (NPA) in Business Skills at SCQF level 6</b>	J229 76 Understanding Business	6	6
	J22A 76 Management of People and Finance	6	6
	HE9E 46 Contemporary Business Issues	6	6
	F1FE 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Word Processing and Presenting Information AND F1FJ 12 PC Passport: Working with IT Software – Spreadsheet and Database	6	6
	<b>OR</b> HA6L 46 Web Apps: Spreadsheets AND HA6M 46 Web Apps: Word Processing	6	6
	6	6	
<b>Work Based Challenge Unit</b>	J4YL 04 Work Based Challenge	6	6
<b>Work Based Learning (GT9H 23) SVQ in Business and Administration</b>	J6WV 04 Develop Self and Improve Own Performance in a Business Environment <b>OR</b> <b>Customised Unit: J7LS 04 Develop Self and Improve Own Performance in a Business Environment</b>	6  6	5  5
	J6WX 04 Communicate in a Business Environment <b>OR</b> <b>Customised Unit: J7LT 04 Communicate in a Business Environment</b>	6  6	3  3
	J6X0 04 Design and Produce Documents in a Business Environment <b>OR</b> <b>Customised Unit: J7LV 04 Design and Produce Documents in a Business Environment</b>	6  6	4  4
	J6X4 04 Collaborate and Provide Support in a Business Environment <b>OR</b> <b>Customised Unit: J7LW 04</b>	6  6	6  6

	<b>Collaborate and Provide Support in a Business Environment</b>		
Foundation Apprenticeship Certification Unit	HE6E 04 Foundation Apprenticeship Certification Unit	-	0
<b>TOTAL SCQF CREDIT POINTS</b>			<b>54</b>

One SCQF credit point is equivalent to ten (10) notional hours of learning.

**Learners starting a Foundation Apprenticeship in June 2023** who will complete in a **single year**, or current learners who are already entered on a two-year delivery model, can use optional Customised units or pathways if required. All these learners must be entered for all Customised components of their Foundation Apprenticeship by **1 December 2023**. No entries should be made for learners on these arrangements after that date.

**SQA will remove all Customised units and Customised pathways from Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks in December 2024 without exception.**

Any learner beginning their Foundation Apprenticeship on a **two-year delivery model** – completing in 2024-25 – must use the original Foundation Apprenticeship framework and accordingly, learn and be assessed in a workplace.