

SQA Advanced Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General information

This graded unit has been validated as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

Graded unit title: Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

Graded unit code: J8ME 48

Type of project: Investigation

Publication date: November 2024

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services:

- ◆ Develop learner competencies in a range of specialised areas of their choice in line with their preferred career pattern or courses of further study in financial services
- ◆ Develop an understanding of complex issues to the financial services industry
- ◆ Develop the learner's knowledge of industry regulators
- ◆ Develop further organisational and investigative skills
- ◆ Develop the learner's skills in presenting complex information
- ◆ Develop the learner's critical analytical and interpretative abilities
- ◆ Promote advanced level of entry to further academic or professional education
- ◆ Promote the development of transferable skills in planning, organising and evaluation and enable the learner to investigate financial services issues and problems in depth

Credit points and level

2 SQA Credit(s) at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

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Recommended entry to the graded unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

- ◆ Communication: Business Communication — HP75 47
- ◆ Creating a Culture of Customer Care — HP73 47
- ◆ Financial Sector: An Introduction — J01W 47
- ◆ Financial Services Regulatory Framework — J01Y 48
- ◆ Income Tax – HP15 48
- ◆ Information Technology: Applications Software 1 — HP6L 47
- ◆ Information Technology: Applications Software 2 — HP12 48
- ◆ Investment — HP1C 48
- ◆ Managing People and Organisations — HP71 47
- ◆ Pension Provision — HP1E 48
- ◆ Personal Financial Services — HP17 47
- ◆ Principles of Insurance — HP1F 48
- ◆ Financial Services: International Transactions – J01X 48
- ◆ Personal and Business Lending – HP1G 48

Core skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill

Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

Assessment support pack

The assessment support pack for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable, and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment support pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment support packs are available on SQA's secure website.

Equality and inclusion

This graded unit 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.

Further advice can be found on our website: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>

SQA Advanced Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners

Graded unit title: Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based investigation developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates they have met the aims of this graded unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner to:

- ◆ Analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project.
- ◆ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion.
- ◆ Reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future.
- ◆ Produce evidence of meeting the aims which this graded unit has been designed to cover

The project must involve the investigation of a financial services issue and the assessment of its implications for a financial services organisation(s) or UK government agency and its customers. The learner will choose the issue to be investigated in consultation with their lecturer, but it should be one which can be directly related to topics, concepts or models studied as part of the Financial Services specific units on the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services. These units are:

- ◆ Financial Sector: An Introduction — J01W 47
- ◆ Financial Services Regulatory Framework — J01Y 48
- ◆ Investment — HP1C 48
- ◆ Pension Provision — HP1E 48
- ◆ Personal Financial Services — HP17 47
- ◆ Principles of Insurance — HP1F 48
- ◆ Financial Services: International Transactions – J01X 48
- ◆ Personal and Business Lending – HP1G 48

The term 'financial services organisation' refers to either a UK financial services regulator or any organisation that is recognised by the UK financial services regulator as a provider of financial services.

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The term 'UK Government Agency' refers to any government body or ombudsman that provides support or advisory services in financial services related matters.

The term 'customers' refers to any external customer of the organisation or to a number of such customers. 'Customers' of a regulator can be either the organisations they regulate or the customers of these organisations or the users of UK financial services in general. 'Customers' of a UK Government Agency refers to any user or potential user of their advisory/support services.

It is expected that learners will carry out the investigation individually. Learners should not produce joint evidence. Each learner must provide their individual responses to each of the three stages of the investigation and lecturers must be satisfied that the work has been completed by the individual learner.

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project.

During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance.

Reasonable assistance

Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing learners with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support, which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes.

In relation to the assessment of Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, assessors may provide advice, clarification, and guidance during the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, ie at each stage of the project.

Remediation

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learner responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, such instances must be formally noted by the assessor, either in writing or recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier.

In relation to Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, learners must be given the opportunity for remediation at each stage of the project.

The evidence for an Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded unit is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks *across all* sections, and should reflect the ability of the learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to Advanced Certificate/Diploma project-based graded units, learners who have failed any stage of the

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project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for re-assessment of that stage.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any re-assessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.

At SCQF level 8 learners should work independently. Discussions should take place between the learner and lecturer to establish the suitability of the learner's chosen issue from the outset of the investigation. It is the responsibility of the centre to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the learner. For example, centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure, where research is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others, that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

Evidence requirements for this graded unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<p>Develop a brief to investigate a financial services issue and the assessment of its implications for a financial services organisation and its customers. The brief must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ An appropriate title of the project ◆ Background and rationale, including the issue to be investigated. This should include identification of the issue and the organisation/agency and customer group being investigated ◆ Objectives of the project ◆ Justification of the choice of organisation(s) and/or agencies and customers involved ◆ Explanation of the range of primary or secondary sources of information which will be used for the investigation and justification for the choice of each source ◆ Explanation of how the investigation will be conducted with justification for the choice of methods used <p>Devise an action plan to carry out the investigation. The plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Negotiated dates for the planning, development and evaluation of the project ◆ Interim and final timescales and dates for conducting the investigations which should be related to the objectives of the investigation ◆ Identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the investigation <p>Produce a reflective log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocation.</p>	24% (18% + 6%)

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% mark allocation
	<p>Evidence of all of the above should be presented. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with their lecturer. If oral evidence is provided by the learner, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded.</p> <p>The learner should retain evidence of their progress, experiences and personal development during the planning and developing stages of the investigation. This will assist and support the learner during the evaluation stage of the project.</p> <p><i>The brief is worth 18% of the marks for the investigation while the plan is worth 6% of the marks.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the planning stage.</i></p>	
Stage 2 — Developing	<p>Prepare a report of the investigation of a financial services issue and the assessment of its implications for a financial services organisation/government agency and its customers. It must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a detailed explanation of how the issue affects the organisation(s)/agency chosen and the customer group selected. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered as in the Financial Services specific units of the group award. The explanation should be consistent with objectives at the planning stage ◆ an analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and data collected ◆ an assessment of the implications of these effects for the chosen organisation(s) and/or agency should be analysed in relation to the organisation(s)/agency, the business environment and the impact upon customers and should make reference to concepts and topics studied within the Financial Services specific units of the group award 	54%

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% mark allocation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a statement of the conclusions drawn from the investigation and any appropriate recommendations to be made to the organisation(s). These should be explicitly related to the issues being investigated and the needs of customers ◆ a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated <p>The report should comprise 2,500–3,500 words and must be presented in a format suitable for a business report. This must include a contents page, a summary of findings, acknowledgements and references. The evidence may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with their lecturer. If this is done, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded.</p> <p>The learner should retain evidence of their progress, experiences and personal development during the planning and developing stages of the investigation. This will assist and support the learner during the evaluation stage of the project.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the developing stage.</i></p>	
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>Providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation. The evaluation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ an assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the investigation have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the investigation and their importance and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. Throughout, the assessment should be supported with credible reasons ◆ commentary on aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively and why and/or aspects of the planning and developing stages which did not work as effectively as expected. Three separate aspects should be covered — one for the planning brief, one for the plan and one for the development report 	22%

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% mark allocation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ an assessment of the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information ◆ an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the investigation. This should be supported by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness ◆ recommendations for future investigations. These should be based on items above and must relate to the personal development of the learner (eg, in terms of the further development of skills used in this investigation) and aspects of the process or product of the investigation (eg, with respect to setting timescales, gathering information or possible future investigations). It should be clear from the recommendations that the learner has reflected on what happened and has drawn conclusions from this reflection ◆ an assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the investigation <p>Learners may present this evidence in a manner which they consider appropriate but it must be negotiated and agreed with their lecturer. The evidence may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with their lecturer. If this is done, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the evaluating stage.</i></p>	

Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of 100. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **evidence requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum evidence requirements for the planning stage before progressing to the developing stage before progressing to the evaluating stage. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum evidence requirements and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the grade related criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

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Learners are required to work independently to meet the evidence requirements of the graded unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support.

At the end of each stage there should be opportunities for remediation and reassessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final evaluation stage.

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Grade-related Criteria	Grade-related Criteria
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard and is quite clearly inter-related 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful interpretation of the project brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is highly focused throughout the investigation on the SMART objectives identified by the learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ meets the objectives of the investigation but may not always be focused or fully comprehensive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ carefully selects information from a variety of primary and secondary sources to provide strong and valid reasons to justify points made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ uses information from a limited range of primary and secondary sources to support reasons given
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ uses a range of concepts and topics from the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services accurately and relevantly to justify points made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ makes limited reference to concepts and topics from the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services which may not be fully justified in relation to the points made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ includes a careful and considered reflection of the investigation and the skills and knowledge used, which will inform realistic recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has some reflection but it is not comprehensive and this is reflected in the nature of any recommendations for the future that are made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is based on a well-chosen, apposite methodology and innovative methods of gathering information which are congruent with each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ uses a suitable methodology and conventional methods of gathering data but does not consider carefully the relationship between them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ provides well thought out and logical justification of points made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ provides some justification of points made but reasons given may be limited and may lack clarity and focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the evaluation is coherently related to the SMART objectives of the investigation and concepts and topics from the SQA Advance Diploma in Financial Services provide a strong basis for judging its success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the evaluation is related to the investigation but is limited in scope and may lack sustained support from concepts and topics within the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services

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Grade-related Criteria	Grade-related Criteria
Grade A	Grade C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ negotiations and discussions are conducted confidently and constructively, questions are dealt with confidently and answers fully and logically justified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ negotiations and discussions are entered into positively and questions are answered accurately and concisely
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

A =70%–100%

B =60%–69%

C =50%–59%

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.

Note: the learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence requirements specified in the unit specification for each stage of the project in order to achieve the graded unit.

Learners must attain a minimum of 50% of the available marks for each stage. The distribution of marks is highlighted in the table below.

Stage	Element	Available marks	Minimum mark required	Total marks
Planning	Brief	16	8	24
	Plan	6	3	
	Reflective Log	2	2	
Developing	Report	54	27	54
	Reflective Log	4	2	
Evaluating	To be negotiated	22	11	22

If a learner does not achieve a pass or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project ie, all stages are undertaken using a new project (case study, investigation or practical assignment). In these circumstances, the highest grade achieved should be awarded.

Re-assessment

The evidence for a project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stages. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks across all sections, and should reflect the ability of the learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to project-based graded units, learners who have failed any stage of the project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for re-assessment of that stage.

Any learner who has failed their graded unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. In the case of project-based graded units, this must be done using a substantially different project.

Final learner grade

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence *at the time of completion* of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved through any re-assessment, remediation and/or reasonable assistance provided.

SQA Advanced Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

Graded unit title: Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

The unit is designed to build upon previously acquired transferable skills which can be best developed through application to an issue or issues identified by the learner in relation to a financial services organisation or organisations and its customers. This approach will facilitate the contextualisation of the knowledge and skills from the group award and promote the importance and understanding of integration of the knowledge of financial services topics and concepts, and the development of transferable skills including planning, organisation, time management, research techniques, problem solving, evaluation, and presentation. Using this approach learners will be able to develop their knowledge and understanding of the key financial services competencies and will be provided the opportunity to apply innovative and creative approaches to issues pertinent to their chosen financial services environment. It is anticipated that opportunities to integrate content from Financial Services specific units within the mandatory section of the group award will promote greater knowledge and understanding of the interdependency of financial services topics and concepts. It is recommended that preparation for the investigation primarily takes the form of learner/lecturer discussions and learner led research and development.

The investigation requires the learner to demonstrate required knowledge and skills through the assessment of a challenging financial services situation that impacts on customers. The issue(s) and organisation(s) should test the breadth and application of the learner's knowledge and understanding of the specific aspects of the Financial Services specific units of the group award. This should enable the learner to demonstrate their depth of knowledge in specific areas of these units and provide innovative and creative problem solving approaches and evaluation of a challenging issue(s) in a financial services environment.

The unit should be delivered and assessed over an extended period of the SQA Advanced Diploma course programme to enable learners to have completed or be in the process of completing the Financial Services specific units prior to embarking upon the graded unit. It is strongly recommended that a centre utilises the appropriate SQA assessment support material and support documentation that exist to support the validity and reliability of assessment evidence. Staff delivering the units would be advised to discuss examples of outcomes from within the Financial Services specific units of the group award that would make suitable topics for an investigation of this nature. It is expected that this will facilitate the negotiation of a suitable topic for the project between the lecturer and learner.

It is best practice for a centre to ensure that all the staff involved in the delivery of the course programme and in particular, those involved in the delivery of the Financial Services specific units of recommended prior knowledge and skills are made aware of the requirements of the graded unit.

Staff delivering and assessing this unit have to be technically competent in the delivery of financial services specific units. Whilst there is no one best way to deliver and assess the

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unit, many instances of good practice have been noted where subject experts discuss possible options for investigation with the learners.

Centres should be aware that the scheduling of Financial Services specific units within the course programme will have an impact upon the choice of suitable topics and the development of chosen topics. Learners are likely to have studied, or be in the process of studying topics on which they base their investigation.

It is recommended that learners discuss the feasibility of possible investigations with their tutor and negotiate appropriate resources, including time that should be utilised and managed throughout the course of the investigation. Learners must keep a record of their experience through the planning and developing stages to facilitate and support the evaluation process. This could be done through some form of reflective log, diary or blog. The lecturer should provide a mentor/support role and facilitate a learner-led investigation. The importance of planning, SMART objectives, time management, organisation and evaluation should be discussed and reinforced on a regular basis by the lecturer. In addition, examples of good practice in terms of assessment verification have existed where second marking or cross marking has taken place to satisfy the requirements of internal and external quality processes.

Centres may wish to use previous investigations as a useful stimulus for learners to assist them in their choice of issue(s) and organisation(s). This can in turn provide an opportunity for delivery staff to provide reflective feedback and promote constructive discussion. In general terms, the more specific the topic chosen for the investigation, the more manageable the investigation shall be for learners and staff alike. This will facilitate the formulation of SMART objectives which in turn provide focus and structure for the learner's investigation. Investigations must include consideration of the financial services organisation(s)/ government agency customer therefore an investigation focusing on investment analysis is unlikely to satisfy the requirements of this unit.

Learners should be encouraged to research a range of primary and secondary sources of information to ensure appropriate data is available for the investigation. Staff delivering and assessing the unit should recognise that it is highly unlikely that larger UK financial services organisations will respond to surveys from learners, therefore alternative approaches to primary research will need to be considered. The methodologies chosen for investigation should be clearly explained and justified by the learner. The sources of information and research methodologies should be consistent with objectives identified by the learner and should enable them to identify source material as the basis of explanation, evaluation, analysis and recommendation.

Possible opportunities for presenting the evidence for the evaluation could include a submission of work in a format suitable for a business report, though evidence for specific elements could be presented using options which could include an oral presentation, a poster type presentation (eg, a blog), a meeting or a question and answer session and the learner should negotiate and agree how this is to be done with the tutor in advance. Lecturers and/or fellow learners may ask questions of learners to elucidate further evidence and allow the learner to provide further explanation. Where this is done a record of the questions and responses should be kept.

Opportunities for developing core and other essential skills

The unit offers opportunities for learners to gather evidence which could help them demonstrate achievement for all core skills. The following table gives further information on the core skills to which the unit does or may contribute, and on the opportunities which the unit provides for core skills development.

Core skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
Problem Solving (Automatic certification)	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Investigation and analysis of a complex problem. ◆ Plan, organise and carry out a suggested approach using identified objectives and resources. ◆ Analyse the problem solving activity and assess. ◆ Progress, implement remedial action where appropriate and evaluate process.
Communication	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The reading and understanding of complex information relating to the vocational area, with analysis and evaluation of key concepts and terminology. ◆ Produce a well-structured document containing complex information. ◆ Discuss a complex issue through an interview and during discussions and negotiation with the tutor.
ICT	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Presentation of information using appropriate software packages. ◆ Accessing and communicating information using ICT facilities. ◆ Keeping information secure.
Numeracy	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Statistical analysis of organisational and/or market data. Production, analysis and presentation of graphical data.
Working with Others	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Review of involvement in the presentation of evidence of the evaluating stage. ◆ Negotiation with lecturing staff to agree suitable topics. Organisation of and participation in presentation of evaluating stage of the investigation. Seek support of others and provide support for others through audience interaction.

The project investigation may contribute to the development of broader skills in the areas of enterprise, employability, sustainable development and citizenship. The opportunities and depth of development will be dependent on the nature of the topic selected for investigation. The unit will also enable learners to develop the following meta-skills:

- ◆ Self-management – focusing, integrity, adapting, initiative
- ◆ Social intelligence – communicating
- ◆ Innovation – curiosity, sense making, critical thinking

History of changes to graded unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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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](#).

General information for learners

Graded unit title: Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

In this unit you will develop skills in bringing together and applying the knowledge you have gained in the following units:

- ◆ Communication: Business Communication — HP75 47
- ◆ Creating a Culture of Customer Care — HP73 47
- ◆ Financial Sector: An Introduction — J01W 47
- ◆ Financial Services Regulatory Framework — J01Y 48
- ◆ Income Tax – HP15 48
- ◆ Information Technology: Applications Software 1 — HP6L 47
- ◆ Information Technology: Applications Software 2 — HP12 48
- ◆ Investment — HP1C 48
- ◆ Managing People and Organisations — HP71 47
- ◆ Pension Provision — HP1E 48
- ◆ Personal Financial Services — HP17 47
- ◆ Principles of Insurance — HP1F 48
- ◆ Financial Services: International Transactions – J01X 48
- ◆ Personal and Business Lending – HP1G 48

It is important, therefore, that you are familiar with the content of these units. While there is no new content within the unit, you will however work with your lecturer in identifying a suitable topic for investigation and in developing the necessary techniques and approaches to enable you to use the knowledge and understanding you have already gained and apply it to a complex financial services situation.

To achieve this unit you will produce an investigative project which will involve the investigation of a financial services issue and the assessment of its implications for a financial services organisation/organisations or UK government agency and its customers. You will choose the issue to be investigated in consultation with your lecturer but it should be one which can be directly related to topics, concepts or models studied as part of the Financial Services specific units on the SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services. These units are:

- ◆ Financial Sector: An Introduction — J01W 47
- ◆ Financial Services Regulatory Framework — J01Y 48
- ◆ Investment — HP1C 48
- ◆ Pension Provision — HP1E 48
- ◆ Personal Financial Services — HP17 47
- ◆ Principles of Insurance — HP1F 35
- ◆ Financial Services: International Transactions – J01X 48
- ◆ Personal and Business Lending – HP1G 48

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The investigation is divided into three stages; planning, development and evaluating. Planning incorporates a brief and plan and this provides the basis for the subsequent stages. The developing stage is the output of your practical activities as you collect and collate data, interpret and analyse information and summarise findings and draw conclusions.

Possible opportunities for presenting the evidence for the evaluation could include a submission of work in a report format. The method to be used should be negotiated and agreed with your lecturer.

This graded unit is marked out of 100 and to pass you must obtain at least 50% of the marks. You must also pass each of the three stages.

You must attain a minimum of 50% of available marks to pass each stage. The distribution of marks is listed in the table below.

Stage	Element	Available marks	Minimum mark required	Total marks
Planning	Brief	16	8	24
	Plan	6	3	
	Reflective Log	2	1	
Developing	Report	54	27	54
	Reflective Log	4	2	
Evaluating	To be negotiated	22	11	22

On successful achievement of the unit a grade will be awarded based on your final mark as follows:

A =70%–100%

B =60%–69%

C =50%–59%

This grade will apply only to this unit and not to the full SQA Advanced Diploma in Financial Services.

If you fail the project overall or wish to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project (case study, investigation or practical assignment). In this case, your grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.