



Research Skills Guide

A Guide to the Planning, Delivery and Assessment of the Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) within SQA Advanced Diploma Frameworks in China

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Introduction

Who is the guide for?

This guide is designed to help course team managers and practitioners decide on the best approach to the timetabling, delivery and assessment of the Research Skills Unit. The content provides suggestions for developing good practice on how the Research Skills Unit might best be timetabled, the different assessment approaches that could be adopted, and practical guidance on possible integration of assessment with specific project-based graded units.

Why research skills?

Research skills are an essential component of all higher-level courses. Learners benefit from focused teaching of these skills as part of the diploma to complement and enhance their subject-specific study. Learners continuing their academic studies, or entering the increasingly complex world of work, face an environment where the rapid assimilation and analysis of information is the norm, and learners are expected to have the necessary skills to fully participate in an information-oriented environment.

All learners must complete the Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) and the Workplace Communication in English unit (HR1C 46) in addition to the units in the group award frameworks. This reflects best practice and:

- provides a greater educational experience for all learners by encouraging independent study skills on the diploma programme.
- provides learners with additional skills and knowledge that will support them with their project-based graded units.
- supports learners who go on to further academic study after the diploma programme.

It is essential that diplomas provide learners with sufficient opportunity to develop skills in investigating, evaluating and presenting complex information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Learners will look at how to access and use information from a variety of primary sources (such as interviews and surveys) and secondary sources (such as articles and the internet). All learners need to access and analyse information as part of their course of study, and the Research Skills Unit provides them with extra support and the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the concepts and skills required.

The Research Skills Unit is complementary to existing units, including project-based graded units. The assessment instrument for the project-based graded unit can be either an investigation, a case study or a practical assignment. However, if you wish to integrate the Research Skills Unit you can only do this with the investigation, as it meets the evidence requirements. It would not be possible to integrate the Research Skills Unit with a case-study or practical assignment-based graded unit.

The inclusion of the unit provides the opportunity and time for learners to gain a greater understanding of research skills that will help underpin other diploma units as well as assist with future studies and employment demands.

This guidance is based on the unit specifications that were current at the time of publication. The guidance in this document must be reviewed if the unit specification for Research Skills

(J1NB 47) is updated, altered or replaced, and if any of the units with which the Research Skills Unit integrates assessment, are updated, altered or replaced.

Section 1 — Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47)

This section provides details of the Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47). The information below is an extract from the Research Skills Unit specification, which details the outcomes, knowledge and skills, evidence requirements and guidance on approaches to assessment. Centres should study the unit specification in full before starting delivery of the unit.

Outcomes

The unit specification has three outcomes, and on completion of the unit the learner should be able to:

- 1 plan a research investigation.
- 2 access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources.
- 3 present a research investigation.

Knowledge and skills

The knowledge and skills for each outcome are:

Outcome 1 — Plan a research investigation

- ◆ Research purpose and objectives
- ◆ Research methods
- ◆ Legal, regulatory, ethical and social considerations
- ◆ Plagiarism
- ◆ Identification and selection of resources
- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of information
- ◆ Library classification and cataloguing systems
- ◆ Contact methods
- ◆ Identification of key research questions
- ◆ Research investigation timescales

Outcome 2 — Access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources

- ◆ Research techniques
- ◆ Contacts and networking
- ◆ Access and retrieval of online, digital and other data
- ◆ Questioning tools and techniques
- ◆ Analysis, critical evaluation and selection of qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Evaluation of relevance of data to research objectives
- ◆ Accuracy and precision in summarising and recording information
- ◆ Referencing systems
- ◆ Management of data

Outcome 3 — Present a research investigation

- ◆ Analytical and evaluative skills
- ◆ Conventions of research reporting
- ◆ Presentation of findings and conclusions
- ◆ Effective use of language, register and style
- ◆ Presentation skills

Evidence requirements for this unit

Assessment should be carried out:

- ◆ outcome by outcome

The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

Outcome 1

Learners have to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can produce a detailed plan for a research investigation which clearly and accurately:

- ◆ defines the research purpose and objectives.
- ◆ identifies primary and secondary sources.
- ◆ specifies research methods to be used.
- ◆ produces a research timeline.

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 2

Learners have to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary resources. The learner must:

- ◆ implement a research plan effectively.
- ◆ select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources.
- ◆ analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives.
- ◆ produce a referenced record of research activities.

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 3

Learners have to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can present a research investigation. The learner must:

- ◆ present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data.

Information and conclusions must be a minimum of 1,000 words, or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, not including references.

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only and there may be other approaches suitable for learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Providing learners with a range of assessment methods helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further study.

All assessments are conducted in open-book conditions. Although the evidence requirements for all three outcomes will culminate in the production of an investigative report, assessment tasks should be completed outcome by outcome to allow for feedback at each stage of planning and implementing the research investigation. If assessment is integrated with investigative reporting for another unit, it is important to ensure that the requirements for each unit are clearly evidenced.

Outcome 1

Assessment for Outcome 1 is evidenced by a detailed plan.

Timescales, objectives, sources, resources and methods to be used should be specified as appropriate. Structured headings could be provided as a framework for the task that may be completed orally or in writing.

Outcome 2

Assessment for Outcome 2, the referenced record of research activities, may be evidenced in a range of formats that should reflect industry practice. Records could include, for example, notebooks, reflective logs, meetings records, transcripts or recordings.

Outcome 3

A written report, including information and conclusions, must be a minimum of 1,000 words. Structured headings/subheadings may be provided to make clear to learners the anticipated content and detail required. Referencing should be to a recognised system or in a specified house style. In some written reporting, citations and bibliographies would be expected.

If research results are presented orally, the delivery should last for at least 10 minutes and be in line with industry practice. A detailed observation checklist, learner notes, including reference sources, and a recording of performance should be retained as evidence.

The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learner's work. Retention of notes and draft work, notes of any interventions made, tracking records, e-mails or log records can be a valuable aspect of quality assurance, indicate progress and provide helpful information for the internal and external verification process.

Providing formal, detailed feedback to learners is good practice and is particularly valuable for learners who need to be re-assessed on any outcome. Precise, supportive comments should be related clearly to the evidence requirements. They can also support authentication of a learner's work.

It is important that all concerned in the delivery and assessment of the Research Skills Unit are familiar with the content of the unit specification and assessments, whether stand-alone or integrated. Staff involved in the timetabling and resourcing of the unit should also be familiar with the unit content, assessment requirements and the different approaches that might be applied to assessment.

Section 2 — Content and timetabling

Section 2 outlines the content to be delivered and the different ways that the Research Skills Unit may be timetabled. Further detail on the content of the unit is contained within the guidance section of the unit specification under: 'Guidance on approaches to the delivery of the unit'.

Content

The Research Skills Unit is expressed in generic terms, but should be related to a context that is familiar to learners and appropriate to the group award. It is therefore essential to contextualise the delivery and assessment of the unit with that of the group award being delivered.

Delivery outcome by outcome will allow tutors to give feedback at each stage of development. As part of the delivery (and assessment), learners may be provided with a planning pro forma or template to assist with creating an action plan for the research investigation, but this is not essential. To demonstrate both good and poor practice to learners, existing research plans could be scrutinised to provide an insight into their construction, use of language, timescales, resources, weaknesses and strengths. Skills in analysis can be developed through the examination of existing research and investigative reports in different formats.

Accessing a range of websites to gather information is a valuable skill, particularly when other primary and secondary sources are used to support analysis and critical evaluation. Learners should be encouraged to think critically as they examine sources, their authorship, publisher and reliability. They should be encouraged to use technology in sourcing, storing and presenting information throughout the completion of the unit. Learners should understand the importance of timescales and be encouraged to work independently, self-managing their research investigation.

Additional non-electronic sources of information, and in particular primary sources, should be used and evaluated. Primary sources could include: focus groups, meetings, interviews, surveys, fieldwork and personal observation. The emphasis should be on learning the techniques for original research. Learners should be advised on questionnaire design, sampling methods, and procedures and interview skills. They could practise designing interview questions and questionnaires for a range of purposes, which could then be evaluated in peer group sessions for their relevance to purpose, and how practicable they are. Online access to a range of current secondary sources is essential, particularly when other primary and secondary resources are used to support analysis. Opportunities to interpret information in numerical, statistical and graphic forms will enhance skills in Using Number and Graphical Information. The use of appropriate software may help improve the accuracy of calculations and enhance the presentation of data.

At the start of delivery, learners should be made fully aware of the definition of, and penalties for, plagiarism and be advised of ways to avoid it. Throughout the delivery and assessment of the unit, the need for appropriate referencing and the attribution of sources should be stressed, as this is an essential academic requirement and discipline. Efficient systems of recording and referencing sources during data gathering should be related to the selected medium and vocational area. The referencing approach used should be appropriate to the

format of the evidence, such as the Harvard referencing system, which has widespread use and international recognition.

It is essential that the delivery of the Research Skills Unit is co-ordinated with associated units that will benefit from its content. It is good practice for centres to consider how content and timetabling can benefit other units and to maximise the connections between these units.

Timetabling

The Research Skills Unit can be timetabled in different ways to suit the needs of each group award. Timetabling will in part depend on how the unit is assessed. This guide outlines three different approaches to assessment:

1: Full integration with a two-credit project-based graded unit (investigation)

With integration the learner has to complete one set of assessments for one unit and provide one set of answers, but the answers must meet the evidence requirements needed for both the units. There are opportunities where the Research Skills Unit can have its assessment integrated with the assessment for another unit. Integration is possible with the project-based graded units where the assessment instrument is an investigation, such as in the Business group awards and Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (J02L 48). These are two-credit units and it is recommended that they be run over both semesters in year 2.

2: Integration with a one-credit project-based graded unit (investigation)

The Research Skills Unit could be assessed as part of a shorter single-credit project-based graded unit where the assessment instrument is an investigation.

3: Stand-alone assessment

Where it is not possible or desirable to integrate the assessment of the Research Skills Unit with another unit, the Research Skills Unit can be assessed on a stand-alone basis. For example, a project-based graded unit where the assessment instrument is a case study is unlikely to be suitable for an integrated assessment approach. Or assessors may prefer to use the Research Skills Unit as a practice investigation, prior to undertaking a graded unit. The different assessment options will be discussed later in this guide.

A sample schedule for delivery is provided in Table 1 (next page), which illustrates the delivery of the Research Skills Unit over a semester of 16 weeks. This can be adapted and changed to suit the needs of learners, and the timetabling of other units when assessment is integrated.

More detail on timetabling is provided in the next section, where three different assessment approaches are discussed. There is detailed advice on how to timetable the delivery of the Research Skills Unit, depending on the assessment approach adopted.

Table 1: Adaptable delivery schedule: Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47)

Semester One Week	Activity
1	Introduction to the unit Planning for your project, plagiarism
2	Brainstorming project idea
3	e-Resources, other secondary sources, library visit
4	Referencing and report writing Ideas — progress update
5	Conventions of research reporting Effective use of language Register and style — using third person Ethics, confidentiality and safety
6	Aims and objectives Ideas — progress update
7	The research process Research methods — questionnaire surveys and interviews
8	Research methods — focus groups, observation etc
9	Practical support for individuals and research design
10	Practical support for individuals and research design
11	Practical support for individuals and research design
12	Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
13	Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
14	Critical evaluation skills
15	Practical support for reporting writing and presentation skills
16	Practical support for individuals

*If the semester is of a different length, the delivery schedule should be adapted to ensure that all activities are covered. See the next section for examples of timetabling the Research Skills Unit depending on the assessment approach chosen.

Section 3 — Assessment and conditions

This section provides an outline of the different approaches to assessment that may be used. There are details regarding general assessment requirements and internal/external verification. Section 4 contains a detailed explanation of the different assessment approaches.

Approaches to assessment

Integration of assessment means that the assessment for one unit also covers the assessment requirements for another unit. Using an integrated approach, the learner only has to complete one set of assessments rather than two separate sets of answers. Where integrated assessment is used, it is vital that the full delivery time for both of the units is allocated and timetabled, and that appropriate tutors are tasked with delivering both units. If there are different tutors for the Research Skills Unit and the unit within which the assessment is embedded, there must be a close working relationship between the tutors, as the delivery of each unit should complement the other. Without that connection, the benefits of integrating the Research Skills Unit will not be fully realised.

It is possible for the same tutor to deliver both units, which can be advantageous as it reduces the problems of ensuring that delivery is suitably co-ordinated. Where part-time staff are used, having one tutor avoids the problem of different tutors not being present at the centre at the same time.

Of course, there are also benefits of having two tutors who may offer different skills and perspectives. Ultimately, it is the centre's decision on the best approach to take for their teaching staff and learners.

The Research Skills Unit can be assessed on a stand-alone basis, which affords candidates the opportunity to develop important skills while gaining additional tutor support that helps candidates when they start the graded unit project.

When an integrated assessment approach is used, the learner's evidence must meet the evidence requirements of both units. It is essential that staff study both unit specifications carefully.

Conditions of assessment

Learners should be given a date for completion of the assessments and should receive the instructions for the assessments with enough time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment tasks. During the time between the distribution of the assessment instructions and the completion date(s), tutors may answer questions, and provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The evidence should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date.

In an integrated assessment approach, the final grading given for the graded unit should reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the completion date. However, assessment for the Research Skills Unit is not graded. Where the Research Skills Unit is assessed independently, suitable feedback should be provided and the evidence should be assessed as either having met or not met the evidence requirements.

It is important to remember that, when integration is used, evidence for the project-based graded unit (investigation) is generated over time and will usually involve three distinct stages. Each stage has to be achieved before the next one is undertaken, so any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

The learner and tutor should discuss the suitability of the learner's chosen topic from the outset of the investigation. Although the tutor should provide reasonable assistance to the learners. Although the tutor should provide reasonable assistance to the learners, it is important that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised by the tutor providing too much help. This requires professional judgement on the part of the tutor and careful consideration of the assistance being sought by each individual learner.

Authenticity of evidence

A lot of work will be undertaken outside of the class, and appropriate checks must be put in place to ensure the authenticity of the work submitted. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the evidence produced is the learner's own work.

Retention of draft work, tracking records, and e-mail exchanges between staff and learners, can be a valuable aspect of quality assurance, and can indicate progress and help to minimise plagiarism. Centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of their work to minimise plagiarism. 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.

Validity of evidence

The centre must check that the evidence is valid and meets the evidence requirements of each unit being assessed. The tutor will act as a supervisor and must employ professional judgement in gauging the amount of direction and advice given. Internal verification and standardisation meetings provide a forum to discuss and record decisions regarding the level of supervision and authenticity of the evidence submitted.

Internal and external (qualification) verification

It is essential that each centre carry out pre-delivery internal verification of assessments, regardless of whether they are integrated or stand-alone. Further internal verification of learners' evidence, both during and after completion, should also take place. Internal verification records such as pre-delivery checklists and records of sampling must mention both units where assessment is integrated with another unit.

Allocation of verification duties may vary by centre, but the internal verifier and the tutor must be different people, and an assessor must not verify their own unit. A centre may use one internal verifier for both of the units, or use two different verifiers to verify the different units.

The appendices contain assessment checklists for two different examples of integration, and an exemplar of a stand-alone assessment for the Research Skills Unit. It is essential that learners are made aware of the requirements for both units where assessment is integrated, and the centre must advise the learners of the integration and provide guidance on where the Research Skills Unit components would be covered within the graded unit assessment.

Appendix C contains a stand-alone assessment and is just one example of how the Research Skills Unit could be assessed on its own without integration. The assessment could be adapted and tailored so that an investigation is planned and undertaken based on a range of different subjects. If you wish to adapt the Appendix C example, the assessment should be submitted for prior verification before use, after passing it through the centre's internal verification system. A revised SQA-produced ASP for stand-alone assessment of the new Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 has been published.

All units are subject to external scrutiny by SQA, and the Research Skills Unit will be subject to external verification by a subject specialist. When the Research Skills Unit assessment is integrated with another unit, then the combined assessment evidence may be scrutinised by one or two external verifiers. Where the latter happens, each verifier will look at the evidence that relates to one unit only, rather than across both units. When a centre is selected for external verification, SQA will identify which unit(s) is/are being verified. This may involve only one unit from the integrated assessment, or it could involve both.

Section 4 — Assessment options and timetabling

The fourth section details the different approaches that may be used to assess the Research Skills Unit. Options for integrating the assessment with another unit, and adopting a stand-alone approach to delivery and assessment are discussed, with suggestions on how the unit(s) might be timetabled.

Full integration with a two-credit project-based graded unit (investigation)

With integration the learner has to complete one set of assessments for one unit and provide one set of answers, but the answers must meet the evidence requirements needed for both the units. The term ‘fully integrated’ means that the activities required to produce all of the required evidence for the Research Skills Unit are contained within the assessment for the other unit, and there is no requirement for any additional tasks.

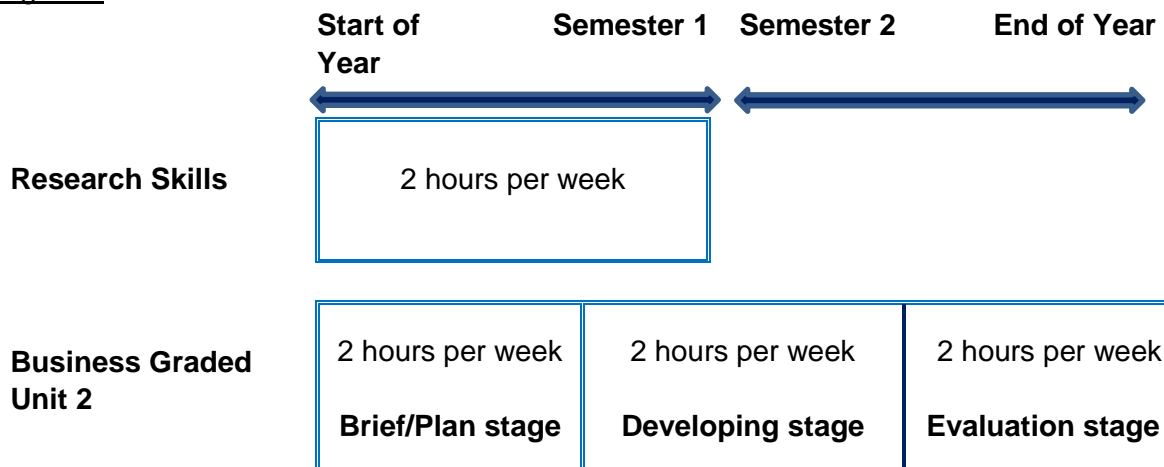
Where the Research Skills Unit assessment is fully integrated with the assessment for another unit, it should be delivered at the same time as the graded unit; for example, the two-credit project-based Business and Financial Services graded units. The Hospitality Management Graded Unit 2 (HP4W 48) is a case study and is not suited for an integrated assessment approach.

Both units would start at the same time, at the beginning of the academic year. The first two parts of the project-based graded unit (investigation), the Brief/Plan and the Developing stage would contain the fully integrated assessment for the Research Skills Unit. There is therefore no need to run the Research Skills Unit while learners complete the final Evaluation stage of their project.

Option 1 for Graded Unit 2 within Business and Financial Services frameworks

When both units are timetabled to run in parallel, there are different views as to when it is the best time to stop the delivery of the single-credit Research Skills Unit. For ease of timetabling it is easier to schedule the units so they both start at the beginning of the first semester, with the Research Skills Unit stopping at the end of the first semester (see Figure 1). In this example, both units are timetabled for two hours a week, allowing candidates a total of four hours class time throughout the first semester. This may be appropriate if the learners have an early completion date for the Brief/Plan stage of the graded unit. It is important that the two units are co-ordinated and, as the Developing stage of the investigation involves the ‘doing’ part of the research, it is sensible that the Research Skills Unit continues during the early part of that stage.

Figure 1



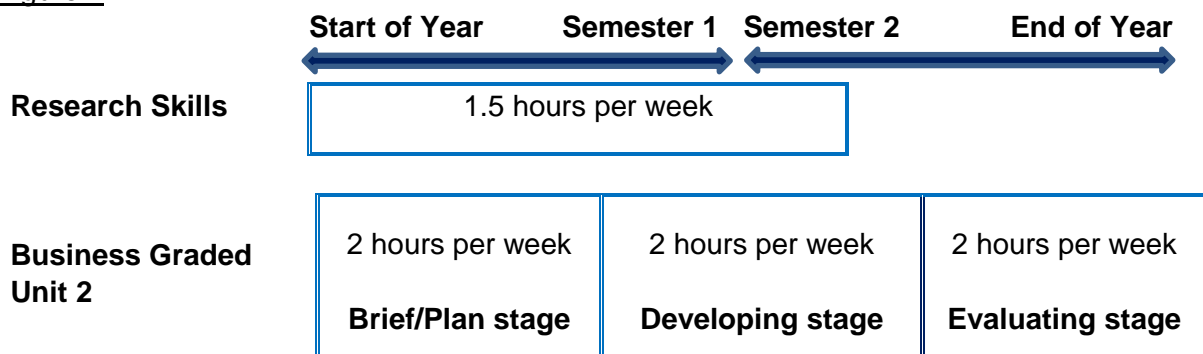
Much therefore depends on the delivery and assessment of the project-based graded unit (investigation). It might be reasonable to expect submission of the Brief/Plan in late November or early December, followed by completion of the Developing stage in late March or early April, and finally the Evaluation stage in early May. These are only suggestions and centres will have their own ideas about submission dates and how they fit with verification requirements.

Option 2 for Graded Unit 2 within Business and Financial Services frameworks

A second and more effective way to timetable the Research Skills Unit is for it to run on after semester one into the early weeks of the second semester (see Figure 2). This does not fit neatly with the semesters, but it means the tutor for Research Skills is available to give practical help when learners are creating questionnaires or other primary research instruments, undertaking secondary research and analysing results.

Centres allocate different amounts of time per week for the delivery and assessment of subjects but, for the purpose of this guide, the following examples assume two hours per week for each subject delivered in a semester. Consequently, we could expect a two-credit unit being run over two semesters to have two hours per week allocated. When a single-credit unit is stretched over a larger number of weeks it is common for the time for delivery to be reduced to 1.5 hours per week (see Figure 2). This approach to a stretched delivery is sometimes known as the 'long and thin' approach.

Figure 2



Whether the Research Skills Unit is delivered in semester one or it runs into semester two, the learners' evidence has to be assessed against the evidence requirements for both units. The centre has to make a decision on how and by whom this is done. Because the Developing stage of the project will usually be submitted after the delivery of the Research Skills Unit has ended, care has to be taken in deciding who has responsibility for assessing the Research Skills Unit elements that are embedded in the investigation project Developing stage. SQA recommended that these responsibilities are identified early in the planning process and recorded in pre-delivery internal verification documents. It is possible for the learner evidence of the Planning and Developing stages of the project to be assessed for both units by the same tutor or by separate tutors.

Thus, the Research Skills Unit may run until the end of the first semester, or alternatively continue to run part way into the second semester. An example delivery schedule provided earlier in the guide can be adapted to match the needs of the learners as they complete the first two stages of the project-based graded unit (investigation).

It is critical that the delivery and content of the Research Skills Unit is co-ordinated with the delivery and management of the project. It is important that the learners are suitably supervised. It is also important that when two tutors are involved in the delivery of the units, the tutor for the Research Skills Unit acts in a supporting supervisory role. The tutors involved in both units need to have a close working relationship and have the opportunity to regularly communicate with each other.

Two examples of checklists that integrate the project-based graded unit (investigation) with the Research Skills Unit are provided in Appendices A and B. Please also refer to the earlier sub-section on 'Internal and external (qualification) verification'.

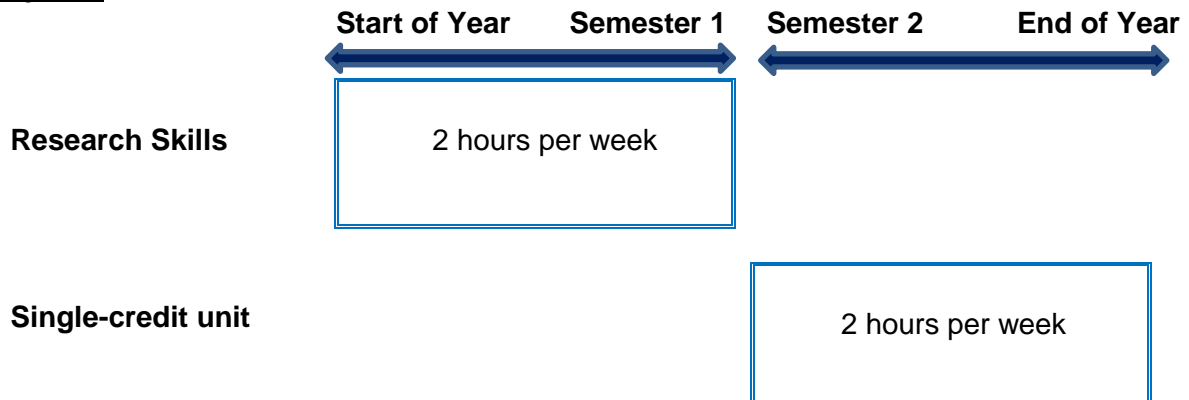
Integration with a single-credit investigation-based unit

There are two single-credit project graded units: Administration and Information Technology Graded Unit 3 (HP6K 48) and Travel and Tourism Graded Unit 1 (HP5D 47). Both are case-study based and their assessments would not be suitable for integration with the Research Skills Unit assessments. It might be possible to integrate assessment with another unit from the group award, and if so, centres should take a sensible approach to timetabling Research Skills and the unit with which it is being linked. Because such opportunities are currently very limited it is appropriate to only cover the potential options for timetabling briefly. Options include:

Option 1

The Research Skills Unit could, in theory, be delivered in semester 1 and then assessed in the linked single-credit unit starting in semester 2 (see Figure 3). A potential weakness is that there is no overlapping delivery for the units and the connection between them could become lost.

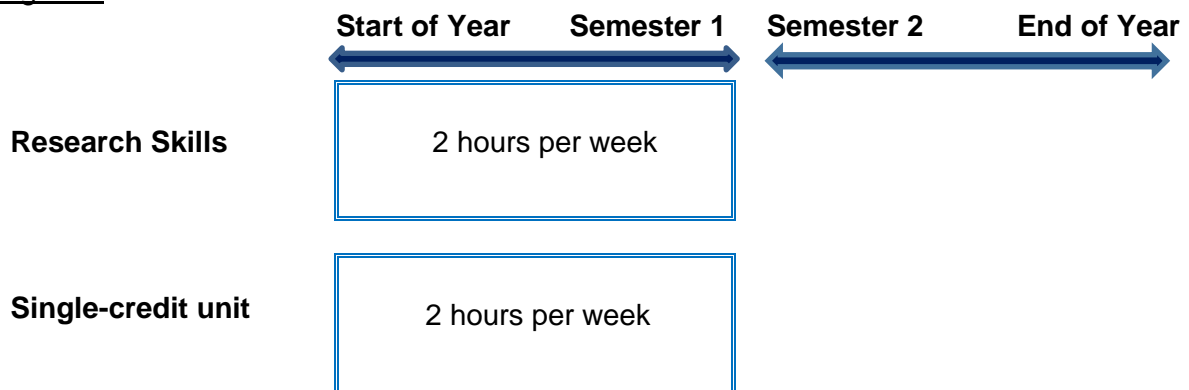
Figure 3



Option 2

A second option is to overlap the delivery of the two units. This allows for a stronger connection between the two units. The units could run in parallel, which would allow for co-ordinating content and activities between the units (Figure 4). This is easy to timetable:

Figure 4



A further option is for the two units to start at different times and then overlap one another. This has some advantage but is more difficult to timetable.

No integration: stand-alone assessment

The Research Skills Unit can be assessed on a stand-alone basis. This approach could be adopted if the group award does not have a suitable project-based graded unit (investigation) with which the assessments could be combined, or if it is the centre's preferred approach.

For example, the graded unit case-study project in Administration and Information Technology may not be compatible, and therefore assessment of Research Skills is likely to be conducted on a stand-alone basis. This does not mean that the learning undertaken as part of the Research Skills Unit will not benefit a case-study based graded unit. Careful consideration therefore needs to be given as to when the Research Skills Unit is delivered when it is being assessed on its own. Where separate assessments are used, the delivery of the Research Skills Unit should be co-ordinated with any units where the learners could apply what they have learned.

The ideal delivery model is to ensure that any units within a group award framework that will directly benefit from the knowledge and understanding gained from Research Skills should be timetabled either at the same time as Research Skills or after its completion.

Section 5 — Integrated and stand-alone assessment details

The fifth section contains details on how the evidence requirements for Research Skills can be integrated with those of a two-credit project-based unit. There is also further detail added to what should be expected with regard to the evidence requirements for the Research Skills Unit.

Full integration with a two-credit project-based graded unit (investigation)

Graded Unit 2 in the Business, Financial Services* and Global Trade and Business group awards are all two-credit units in the form of an investigation-based project. Assessment checklists integrating all evidence requirements for the Business graded units and the Research Skills Unit can be found in Appendix A. Financial Services Graded Unit 2 checklists can be found in Appendix B. The final assessment evidence produced by learners for the project-based Graded Unit 2 (investigation) will allow learners to evidence all of the evidence requirements for the Research Skills Unit.

*The legacy single-credit project-based Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (H7VA 35 / HP1A 48) requires the completion of additional assessment tasks.

The following example of integration is based on the Business: Graded Unit 2 project units within the SQA Advanced Diploma Business awards, but is equally applicable to other two-credit Graded Unit 2 investigation-based project units.

Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) contains three outcomes:

- ◆ **Outcome 1** — Plan a research investigation
- ◆ **Outcome 2** — Access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ **Outcome 3** — Present a research investigation

To achieve the Research Skills Unit, each learner must provide sufficient valid evidence at SCQF level 7 to meet all of the evidence requirements and the requirements relating to length and authenticity. Bullet points have been added to provide further detail about evidence that would be expected to help meet the associated requirements.

Assessment should be carried out outcome by outcome. The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learners' work.

Outcome 1

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can produce a detailed plan for a research investigation which clearly and accurately:

- ◆ defines research purpose and objectives
- ◆ identifies primary and secondary sources

- ◆ specifies research methods to be used
- ◆ produces a research timeline

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 2

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources. The learner must:

- ◆ implement a research plan effectively
- ◆ select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives
- ◆ produce a referenced record of research activities

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 3

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can present a research investigation. The learner must:

- ◆ present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data

Information and conclusions will be a minimum of 1,000 words or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, not including references.

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Having completed the investigation-based project Business: Graded Unit 2, Stage 1 — Planning, learners should have completed the following for the Research Skills Unit:

- ◆ defines research purpose and objectives
- ◆ identifies primary and secondary sources
- ◆ specifies research methods to be used
- ◆ produces a research timeline

Upon completion of Business: Graded Unit 2, Stage 2 — Developing, learners should have completed the following for the Research Skills Unit:

- ◆ implement a research plan effectively
- ◆ select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives
- ◆ produced a referenced record of research activities
- ◆ present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data

Outcome 2 of the Research Skills Unit will be completed during the completion of the Developing stage, and the tutor should review progress as the learners draft their project report. Upon completion of the project report the learners can be assessed on Outcome 3 of the Research Skills Unit.

Business: Graded Unit 2, Stage 3 — Evaluating, may provide further opportunities to collect evidence for the Research Skills Unit. However, learners should have completed the Research Skills Unit through completion of the Planning and Developing stages of the project-based graded unit (investigation).

Full details of the assessment task for the Graded Unit 2 projects are contained in the respective diploma assessment support packs. The assessment task instructions are presented in two parts. The first gives guidance for tutors on how to administer the investigation. The second contains material that can be given to learners to explain to them what is required, and how they could set about meeting the requirements of the graded unit. Both parts rely heavily on the graded unit specification.

The project-based graded unit specifications contain guidance on how to grade learners. This takes the form of a table. Any assessment decisions should be consistent with the criteria set out in the table. Tutors should refer closely to the table when allocating marks for the investigation. Each specification contains the minimum standards of performance expected of learners. The diploma assessment support pack provides further guidance on the allocation of marks.

The Research Skills Unit is not graded, and learners are assessed as having achieved each of the evidence requirements, or not having achieved them.

The Research Skills Unit specification identifies three outcomes which must be met in order to achieve the unit. The checklists in Appendix A show where these evidence requirements may be identified within the project-based graded unit (investigation). The column on the right of each checklist must be completed to record evidence of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance in the Research Skills Unit.

The assessment checklists map the Research Skills Unit evidence requirements against the requirements of the investigation-based project graded unit. All of the Research Skills Unit evidence requirements are mapped against those in the graded unit without the need for supplementary tasks. The tutor needs to judge whether the evidence provided meets the evidence requirement for both units. Where the evidence meets a requirement in one unit but not the other, additional work would have to be undertaken.

The focus has been on the project-based graded units where the assessment instrument is an investigation, contained within the Business group awards. There are also opportunities to integrate Research Skills within other similar graded units from other diploma group awards and Appendix B contains details of how this can be achieved for the Financial Services: Graded Unit 2.

Stand-alone assessment of the Research Skills Unit

The Research Skills Unit is a single-credit unit which can be assessed on a stand-alone basis. There may not be another appropriate unit within the diploma with which to integrate assessment, or where integration is possible the centre may decide that it is preferable to assess Research Skills on its own.

As stated previously, Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 contains three outcomes:

- ◆ **Outcome 1** — Plan a research investigation
- ◆ **Outcome 2** — Access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ **Outcome 3** — Present a research investigation

To achieve the Research Skills Unit, each learner must provide sufficient valid evidence at SCQF level 7 to meet all of the evidence requirements and the requirements relating to length and authenticity. Additional comments in italics provide further detail about evidence that would be expected to help meet the requirements of the Unit.

Assessment should be carried out outcome by outcome.

The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learners' work.

Outcome 1

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can produce a detailed plan for a research investigation which clearly and accurately:

- ◆ defines research purpose and objectives
 - *Clear identification and explanation of the topic for research.*
 - *Learners must 'define research objectives appropriate to purpose', by breaking down their topic of research into clear objectives.*
- ◆ identifies primary and secondary sources
 - *Learners must identify primary and secondary sources to be used in their investigation.*
- ◆ specifies research methods to be used
 - *Learners must identify methods and techniques to be used in their investigation.*
- ◆ produces a research timeline
 - *Learners must produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research investigation'.*

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 2

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources. The learner must:

- ◆ implement a research plan effectively
 - *Learners must show that the investigation has sought to meet objectives set out in their investigation plan.*
- ◆ select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives
 - *Learners must show that they have collected, analysed and critically evaluated information/data from a range of primary and secondary sources. A variety of primary research methods may be used.*
- ◆ produce a referenced record of research activities
 - *Learners must include an efficient system of recording and referencing sources using a recognised system or in a specified house style. Citations and a bibliography will normally be expected.*

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

Outcome 3

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can present a research investigation. The learner must:

- ◆ present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data

Information and conclusions will be a minimum of 1,000 words or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, not including references.

The assessment will be completed in open-book conditions.

The Research Skills Unit specification contains guidance on how to assess learners. Assessment decisions should be consistent with the evidence requirements and the standards associated with a unit at SCQF level 7.

The unit specification identifies three outcomes and learners must meet all of the evidence requirements specified.

A sample 'stand-alone' assessment and checklist for the Research Skills Unit are contained in Appendix C. The revised ASP for stand-alone assessment of the new Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 contains further information, assessment templates and checklists.

Appendix A: Integrated assessment checklists for Business graded units

The checklists in Appendix A may be used for integrating assessment of the Unit Research Skills (J1NB 47) with the following graded units:

Business: Graded Unit 2	HP7D 48
Business with Accounting: Graded Unit 2	HP07 48
Business with Marketing: Graded Unit 2	HP0E 48
Business with Information Technology: Graded Unit 2	HP0L 48
Business with Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2	HP7H 48
Global Trade and Business: Graded Unit 2	HP11 48

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 1: Planning (Brief 18 marks and Plan 6 marks)

Record of Performance

Developing a brief Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. Initial personal assessment of the learner's skills.	1	3				
2. An appropriate title of the project.	1	1			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives — in the form of an appropriate title.	
3. Statement of the issue to be investigated. This should cover how it involves meeting the needs of customers and who the relevant customers are.	1	2			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 5)	
4. Aims and objectives of the project.	1	2			Defines research <i>purpose and objectives</i>	

Developing a brief Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
5. Reasons for choice of issue, which must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the group award.	1	3			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 3).	
6. Justification for the choice of business or businesses involved.	1	2				
7. Explanation of the range of primary and secondary sources of information which will be used for the <i>Investigation</i> and justification for the choice of methods used.	1	2			Identifies primary and secondary sources to be used in the <i>Investigation</i> .	
8. Explanation of how the <i>Investigation</i> will be conducted with justification for the choice of methods used.	1	3			Specifies research methods and techniques to be used in the <i>Investigation</i> .	
Total marks available/awarded	8	18				

***The learner must secure at least one mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements, plus one additional mark.**

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the basis of the following criteria:

1. A detailed and realistic assessment of the learner's skills.
2. The strength of reasoning for the choice of the issue and its links with the course.
3. Clear objectives which are specific, realistic, measurable, achievable and time bound.
4. The range and variety of sources of information chosen.
5. The extent to which sources of information selected have been justified.
6. The extent to which the methodology is apposite and well-chosen.
7. The clarity and logical strength of justifications given for the choice of methods.
8. The coherence with which the assessment criteria are linked to the topic(s) in the AD group award.

Devising an action plan Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
1. Negotiated dates for the planning, development and evaluation of the project.	1	1				
2. Interim and final timescales and the dates for conducting the <i>Investigation</i> , which should be related to the objectives of the <i>Investigation</i> .	1	4			Produces a research timeline — a suitably detailed plan in order to demonstrate planning a research investigation.	
3. Identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the <i>Investigation</i> .	1	1				
Total marks available/awarded	3	6				

* The learner must secure at least one mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The coherence with which the timescales are related to the objectives of the Investigation.
2. The extent to which the plan demonstrates the links between the three parts of the Investigation.
3. The extent to which the timescales are realistic and achievable.
4. The way in which the plan takes account of the methodology proposed in the brief.

Activity log Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Acceptable log submitted	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Produce a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	No marks are allocated in the Planning stage, but a log including activities undertaken, resources used and time must be submitted.			

Planning stage	Marks	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Developing a brief.			
Acceptable activity log submitted (must be yes to proceed).	Yes/No		
Devising a plan.			
Total mark for the Planning stage		The learner has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defined research purpose and objectives 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified primary and secondary sources 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specified research methods to be used 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produced a research timeline 	
		Outcome 1 Achieved/Not achieved	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 2: Developing (52 marks)

Record of Performance

Developing Stage Report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. Detailed explanation of how the issue affects the organisation or organisations chosen. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered in the units of the AD group award. The explanation should be consistent with objectives at the Planning stage.	5	10				

Developing Stage Report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
2. Analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and data collected.	5	10			Select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources	
					Analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 3)	
3. Assessment of the implications of these effects for the chosen organisation or organisations should be analysed in relation to the organisation(s), the business environment and the impact upon customers and should make reference to concepts and topics studied within the AD group award.	6	12			Analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 2)	

Developing Stage Report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
4. 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 the customers.	4	8			Implement a research plan effectively — Demonstrate that the <i>Investigation</i> has sought to meet objectives set out in <i>Investigation</i> plan. Present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data	
Total marks	20	40				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the report makes explicit links to the brief and the plan of the *Investigation*.
2. The extent to which it is highly focused on the objectives of the *Investigation*.
3. The extent to which points made are justified with reference to concepts studied in the AD group award.
4. The extent to which the justification of points is logical and well thought out.
5. The careful and apposite selection of information to justify points made.
6. The strength and validity of points made to justify statements in the report.
7. How well the conclusions follow from the assessment.
8. How closely the conclusions are explicitly linked to the assessments.
9. The extent to which the conclusions are realistic and well thought through.
10. The coherence with which the report is linked to the topic(s) in the AD group award.

Activity log Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
Planning stage Producing a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	1 or 2	3			Implement a research plan effectively	
Development stage Producing a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	1 or 2	3			Implement a research plan effectively	
Total marks	2	6				

* The learner must secure at least one mark in each of the two stages, and a minimum of three marks in total.

**Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the basis of detail regarding activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated, and where reflection has been recorded.

Presentation of Development stage report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Learners must present their <i>Investigation</i> in a format suitable for a business report and which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contents page • a summary of findings • acknowledgements • references and a bibliography. 	3	6			Present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data.	
					Produce a referenced record of research activities.	
Total marks	3	6				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

**Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which it is well structured and uses language of a high standard.
2. Its accuracy and its technical content.
3. The way in which it makes use of appendices, diagrams, charts, etc to present information.

Developing stage	Marks	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Developing stage report		The learner has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implemented a research plan effectively. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selected data relevant to research objectives from arrange of primary and secondary sources. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysed and critically evaluated data relevant to research objectives. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produced a referenced record of research materials. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presented, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data. 	
Activity log		See above	
Presentation of Developing stage report		See above	
Total mark for the Developing stage		Outcomes 2 and 3 Achieved/Not achieved	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 3: Evaluating (24 marks)

Record of Performance

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. A brief outline of the <i>Investigation</i> .	1			Additional evidence may be gathered at this stage, however all evidence requirements should be provided in stages one and two of the <i>Investigation</i> .	
2. Assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the <i>Investigation</i> have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the <i>Investigation</i> and their importance, and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. Throughout, the assessment should be supported with credible reasons.	2				

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
3. Commentary on aspects of the Planning and Developing stages which worked effectively and why, and/or aspects of the Planning and Development 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.	2				
4. Assessment of the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information.	1				
5. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the <i>Investigation</i> . This should be suggested by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness.	2				

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
6. 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 <i>Investigation</i>) and aspects of the process or product of the <i>Investigation</i> (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.	2				
7. Assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the <i>Investigation</i> .	2				
Total marks	12				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

**Up to the maximum of 12 additional marks may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the evaluation demonstrates clear and explicit links between the three stages of the *Investigation*.
2. The extent to which it is highly focused on the objectives of the *Investigation*.

3. The extent to which it makes accurate and apposite reference to relevant concepts studied in the AD group award.
4. The strength and validity of the points made to justify statements.
5. The extent to which the justification of points is logical, credible and well thought out.
6. The extent to which reflection is considered and careful and relates explicitly to the learner's experience during the *Investigation*.
7. How well the recommendations follow from the learner's reflection and how well the report explicitly draws a connection between reflection and recommendation.
8. The extent to which recommendations are realistic.
9. The extent to which the evaluation as a whole is logical and directly related to the *Investigation* carried out by the learner.
10. The extent to which the assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the *Investigation* is reflective and evaluative.

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Appendix B: Checklist for Financial Services Graded Unit 2 (J02L 48)

The checklist in Appendix B may be used for integrating assessment of the Unit Research Skills (J1NB 47) with the Financial Services: Graded Unit 2 (J02L 48):

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 1: Planning (Brief 18 marks and Plan 6 marks)

Record of Performance

Developing a brief Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. Initial personal assessment of the learner's skills	1	3				
2. An appropriate title of the project	1	1			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives — in the form of an appropriate title.	
3. Statement of the issue to be investigated. This should cover identification of the issue and the organisation/agency and customer group being investigated.	1	2			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives by identifying the organisation/agency and customer group (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 5).	
4. Aims and objectives of the project	1	2			Defines research <i>purpose and objectives</i> .	

Developing a brief Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
5. Reasons for choice of issue which must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the AD group award.	1	3			Defines research <i>purpose</i> and objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 3)	
6. Justification for the choice of organisation(s) and/or agencies and customers involved.	1	2				
7. Explanation of the range of primary and secondary sources of information which will be used for the <i>Investigation</i> and justification for the choice of methods used.	1	2			Identifies primary and secondary sources to be used in the <i>Investigation</i> .	
8. Explanation of how the <i>Investigation</i> will be conducted with justification for the choice of methods used.	1	3			Specifies research methods and techniques to be used in the <i>Investigation</i> .	
Total marks available/awarded	8	18				

***The learner must secure at least one mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements, plus one additional mark.**

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. A detailed and realistic assessment of the learner's skills.
2. The strength of reasoning for the choice of the issue and its links with the course.
3. Clear objectives which are specific, realistic, measurable, achievable and time bound.
4. The range and variety of sources of information chosen.
5. The extent to which sources of information selected have been justified.
6. The extent to which the methodology is apposite and well chosen.
7. The clarity and logical strength of justifications given for the choice of methods.
8. The coherence with which the assessment criteria are linked to the topic(s) in the SQA Advanced Diploma Financial Services.

Devising an action plan Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
1. Negotiated dates for the planning, development and evaluation of the project.	1	1				
2. Interim and final timescales and the dates for conducting the <i>Investigation</i> , which should be related to the objectives of the <i>Investigation</i> .	1	4			Produces a research timeline — A suitably detailed plan in order to demonstrate planning a research investigation.	
3. Identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the <i>Investigation</i> .	1	1				
Total marks available/awarded	3	6				

* The learner must secure at least one mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The coherence with which the timescales are related to the objectives of the Investigation.
2. The extent to which the plan demonstrates the links between the three parts of the Investigation.
3. The extent to which the timescales are realistic and achievable.
4. The way in which the plan takes account of the methodology proposed in the brief.

Activity log Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Acceptable Log submitted	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Produce a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	No marks are allocated in the Planning stage, but a log including activities undertaken, resources used and time must be submitted.			

Planning stage	Marks	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Developing a brief.			
Acceptable activity log submitted (must be yes to proceed).	Yes/No		
Devising a plan.			
Total mark for the Planning stage		The learner has:	
		• defined research purpose and objectives	
		• identified primary and secondary sources	
		• specified research methods to be used	
		• produced a research timeline	
		Outcome 1 Achieved/Not achieved	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 2: Developing (52 marks)

Record of Performance

Developing stage report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. Detailed explanation of how the issue affects the organisation(s) and or agency chosen and the group selected. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered in the units of the AD group award. The explanation should be consistent with objectives at the Planning stage.	5	10				

Developing stage report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
2. Analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and data collected.	5	10			Select data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources.	
					Analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 3).	
3. 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 financial services environment and the impact upon customers, and should make reference to concepts and topics studied within the AD group award.	6	12			Analyse and critically evaluate data relevant to research objectives (Can also be covered against GU2 evidence requirement 2).	
Developing stage report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47)	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory

					evidence requirements	
4. Statement of the conclusions drawn from the Investigation and any appropriate recommendations to be made to the organisation(s)/agency. These should be explicitly related to the issues being investigated and the needs of the customers.	4	8			Implement a research plan effectively — demonstrate that the <i>Investigation</i> has sought to meet objectives set out in <i>Investigation</i> plan. Present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data.	
Total marks	20	40				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

** Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

- 1 The extent to which the report makes explicit links to the brief and the plan of the *Investigation*.
- 2 The extent to which it is highly focused on the objectives of the *Investigation*.
- 3 The extent to which points made are justified with reference to concepts studied in the SQA Advanced Diploma Financial Services.
- 4 The extent to which the justification of points is logical and well thought out.
- 5 The careful and apposite selection of information to justify points made.
- 6 The strength and validity of points made to justify statements in the report.
- 7 How well the conclusions follow from the assessment.
- 8 How closely the conclusions are explicitly linked to the assessments.
- 9 The extent to which the conclusions are realistic and well thought through.
- 10 The coherence with which the report is linked to the topic(s) in the SQA Advanced Diploma Financial Services.

Activity log Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Planning stage Producing a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	1 or 2	3			Implement a research plan effectively	
Development stage Producing a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.	1 or 2	3			Implement a research plan effectively	
Total marks	2	6				

* The learner must secure at least one mark in each of the two stages, and a minimum of three marks in total.

**Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the basis of detail regarding activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated, and where reflection has been recorded.

Presentation of Development stage report Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Learners must present their <i>Investigation</i> in a format suitable for a business report and which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contents page • a summary of findings • acknowledgements • references and a bibliography. 	3	6			Present, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data	
					Produce a referenced record of research activities	
Total marks	3	6				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

**Additional marks up to the maximum mark available may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which it is well structured and uses language of a high standard.
2. Its accuracy and its technical content.
3. The way in which it makes use of appendices, diagrams, charts, etc. to present information.

Developing stage	Marks	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Developing stage report		The learner has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implemented a research plan effectively 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selected data relevant to research objectives from arrange of primary and secondary sources 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysed and critically evaluated data relevant to research objectives 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produced a referenced record of research materials 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presented, to a professional standard, findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data 	
Activity log		See above	
Presentation of Developing stage report		See above	
Total mark for the Developing stage		Outcomes 2 and 3 Achieved/not achieved	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 3: Evaluating (24 marks)

Record of Performance

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
1. A brief outline of the <i>Investigation</i> .	1			Additional evidence may be gathered at this stage, however all evidence requirements should be provided in stages one and two of the <i>Investigation</i> .	
2. Assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the <i>Investigation</i> have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the <i>Investigation</i> and their importance, and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. Throughout, the assessment should be supported with credible reasons.	2				

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
3. Commentary on aspects of the Planning and Developing stages, which worked effectively and why and/or aspects of the Planning and Development stages which did not work as effectively as expected. Three separate aspects should be covered — one for planning brief, one for the plan and one for the development report.	2				
4. Assessment of the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information.	1				
5. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the <i>Investigation</i> . This should be suggested by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness.	2				

Evaluation stage Minimum evidence requirements	Minimum mark required*	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross assessment with Research Skills Unit (J1NB 47) evidence requirements	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
6. 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 <i>Investigation</i>) and aspects of the process or product of the <i>Investigation</i> (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.	2				
7. Assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the <i>Investigation</i> .	2				
Total marks	12				

* The learner must secure at least the minimum mark for each of the minimum evidence requirements.

**Up to the maximum of 12 additional marks may be awarded on the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the evaluation demonstrates clear and explicit links between the three stages of the *Investigation*.
2. The extent to which it is highly focused on the objectives of the *Investigation*.

3. The extent to which it makes accurate and apposite reference to relevant concepts studied in the SQA Advanced Diploma Financial Services.
4. The strength and validity of the points made to justify statements.
5. The extent to which the justification of points is logical, credible and well thought out.
6. The extent to which reflection is considered and careful and relates explicitly to the learner's experience during the *Investigation*.
7. How well the recommendations follow from the learner's reflection and how well the report explicitly draws a connection between reflection and recommendation.
8. The extent to which recommendations are realistic.
9. The extent to which the evaluation as a whole is logical and directly related to the *Investigation* carried out by the learner.
10. The extent to which the assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the *Investigation* is reflective and evaluative.

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Appendix C: Research Skills assessment: Guidance for learners

You are required to investigate the implications of a business issue for an organisation or a number of organisations.

The investigation has three stages:

1. You must plan a research investigation by preparing a research proposal and a working action plan.
2. You must carry out your research investigation by accessing, analysing and evaluating complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources.
3. You must present the findings of your research investigation by preparing a report comprising a minimum of 1,000 words or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, not including references.

The unit will be assessed holistically by the production of a research proposal/plan and a research investigation report linking the three stages. Each stage must be completed separately, with stage one being submitted for approval before moving onto stage two. While working on stage two you must arrange regular meetings with your tutor to discuss your ongoing progress.

Stage 1: Planning your research investigation

You must prepare a draft research proposal that should include:

- a title for your project
- an explanation of your research topic defining its purpose and linking the topic to an organisation or organisations
- appropriate aims and objectives of your project
- an identification of primary and secondary resources
- an explanation of the research methods you intend to use. You must include at least one primary method and identify appropriate secondary sources.

You must prepare a working action plan (research timeline) including:

- a sequence of tasks to be undertaken for each stage of the project
- timescales for completing the project successfully
- identification of the resources required for the project

In producing the evidence for the three stages it is important that you determine a suitable balance in your work. The evidence for stage 1 is essential but will not form the bulk of the work required for the successful completion of the unit. The draft proposal and action plan are working documents that can be submitted as supplementary/supporting evidence.

Stage 2: Carrying out your research investigation

You must carry out your research investigation by implementing your action plan. This will involve:

- implementing your action plan (research timeline)
- selecting data relevant to your research objectives from a range of primary and secondary resources
- analysing and critically evaluating data relevant to your research objectives
- producing a referenced record of research activities

Stage 3: Presenting the findings of your research investigation

You must present a research investigation report of a minimum of 1,000 words or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, (not including references) in a language and format that is appropriate for SCQF level 7 and the intended reader. The report must be presented to a professional standard, with findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data.

In preparing your research investigation report you may use the following structure:

- Title page
- Contents page
- Introduction — Explain the research objectives and purpose
- Research methods — Explain how you planned the research investigation and justify the procedures used. You must identify both primary and secondary sources.
- Analysis of data and findings — Present in detail an analysis and critical evaluation of the information/data gathered from secondary and primary sources. This may include graphical information such as tables, graphs, bar charts, pie charts etc.
- Conclusions — Based on an accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the data.
- Recommendations — Based on an accurate analysis and interpretation of the data.
- Bibliography/references — Referencing should use a recognised system or be in a specified house style.
- Appendices

Unit title and code: Research Skills Unit J1NB 47 — **Learner's assessment record**

Learner name _____ **Learner ID** _____ **Class** _____ **Group** _____

Evidence requirements	Comments	Satisfactory/ unsatisfactory
Outcome 1: Plan a research investigation		
Defines research purpose and objectives		
Identifies primary and secondary resources		
Specifies research methods to be used		
Produces a research timeline		

Outcome 2: Access, analyse and evaluate complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources		
Implements a research plan effectively		
Selects data relevant to research objectives from a range of primary and secondary sources		
Analyses and critically evaluates data relevant to research objectives		
Produces a referenced record of research objectives		
Outcome 3: Present a research investigation		
Presents to a professional standard findings and conclusions based on accurate analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data. Information and conclusions will be a minimum of 1,000 words or at least 10 minutes in oral equivalent, not including references.		

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:
