

A Guide to the Planning, Delivery and Assessment of the Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) with SQA Advanced Diploma Frameworks in China

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The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ

Lowden, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, EH22 1FD

www.sqa.org.uk

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Introduction

This guide aims to provide support for developing good practice in how the Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) might be delivered, scheduled and assessed. All learners must complete the Research Skills Unit and the Workplace Communication in English Unit (HR1C 46) in addition to the Units in the SQA Advanced Diploma Group Award frameworks. This reflects best practice and:

- ◆ Provides a greater educational experience for learners by encouraging independent learning skills on the SQA Advanced 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 SQA Advanced Diploma programme.

The Research Skills Unit supplements all of the SQA Advanced Diploma frameworks and aims to enhance the capability of learners when undertaking research within the SQA Advanced Diploma programme, and beyond. This is a valued skill that is appreciated by universities and employers, and the Unit provides the opportunity to underpin existing research activities within the frameworks in the form of investigation-based project Graded Units.

The Unit aims to develop the learner's ability to access and evaluate information from a variety of primary and secondary sources by planning, carrying out and reporting on a specified research activity. 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 SQA Advanced Diploma 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.

The guidance given here 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 Unit (HR0Y 47), or any of the Units with which the Research Skills Unit integrates assessment, are updated, altered or replaced.

Research Skills Unit content

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 and analyse complex information from a range of primary and secondary sources.
- 3 Present findings of a research investigation.

Knowledge and Skills

The Knowledge and Skills for each Outcome are:

Outcome 1 — Plan a research investigation

- ◆ Research objectives
- ◆ Research methods
- ◆ Ethical and legal considerations affecting research
- ◆ Identification and selection of resources
- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of information
- ◆ Library classification and cataloguing systems
- ◆ Contact methods
- ◆ Preparation of interview questions
- ◆ Project management timescales

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

- ◆ Primary and secondary research techniques
- ◆ Contacts and networking
- ◆ Electronic information access and retrieval
- ◆ Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Accuracy and precision in summarising and recording information

Outcome 3 — Present findings of a research investigation

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

Evidence Requirements

The Evidence Requirements for the three Outcomes are combined.

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ define research objectives appropriate to purpose
- ◆ plan a research investigation
- ◆ implement a research plan
- ◆ analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ produce a referenced record of research activity and materials
- ◆ present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data
- ◆ use a format appropriate to the chosen medium

Findings should be a minimum of 1,000 words, or equivalent if presented verbally.

Assessment must be conducted in conditions where arrangements are in place to assure the authenticity of the learner's work.

Outcomes 1 and 2

Learners should be provided with a clear definition of primary and secondary sources appropriate to their investigation, and should be reminded that they must access both types when they are carrying out their research. Information from primary sources could be obtained by personal, telephone and e-mail interviews, surveys and observation, or other methods if appropriate. Learners should be familiarised with a range of interview types and techniques, and should adapt those that are relevant to their particular investigative research. Where possible, learners should be encouraged to access electronic information sources and use library classification systems. Criteria to support critical evaluation of the accuracy, currency and reliability of data should be provided. The need for efficient systems of recording and referencing sources, including the use of research logs/diaries, should be emphasised. Outcome 3.

The practicalities of collating and presenting all relevant data will depend on the remit that has been agreed with each learner. This will vary depending on how the Unit is assessed, and this guide will examine three possible approaches.

The mode of assessment will depend on the SQA Advanced Diploma the student is doing, and the opportunity to integrate the assessment of the Research Skills Unit with that for another Unit. Where it is possible, integrated assessment should be the preferred choice.

Delivery and scheduling

Delivery

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 SQA Advanced Diploma. It is therefore essential that you contextualise the delivery and assessment of the Unit with that of the Group Award being delivered.

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 currency. They should be encouraged to use technology in sourcing, storing and presenting information throughout the completion of the Unit.

Additional non-electronic sources of information, and in particular primary sources, should be used and evaluated.

Opportunities to interpret information in numerical, statistical and graphic forms will enhance skills in Using Number and Graphical Information. Accuracy in calculations and the effective presentation of data should be supported by access to appropriate software.

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.

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. The referencing approach used should be appropriate to the format of the evidence, and a system such as the Harvard Referencing System is most likely to be used because of its widespread use and international recognition.

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

Scheduling

The Research Skills Unit can be scheduled in different ways to suit the needs of each SQA Advanced Diploma. Scheduling 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 investigation-based project Graded Unit

In most cases the Research Skills Unit will have its assessment integrated with the assessment for another Unit, such as the investigation-based project Graded Units in the SQA Advanced Diplomas in Business. These are two-credit Units, and it is recommended that they be run over both semesters in SQA Advanced Diploma year 2.

2: Integration with a one-credit investigation-based project Graded Unit

The Unit could be assessed as part of a shorter investigation-based project Unit, such as the current single-credit Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48).

3: Stand-alone assessment

A further possibility is that the Unit could be assessed on a stand-alone basis with its own discrete assessment. It simply may not be possible to integrate the assessment of the Research Skills Unit with another Unit, depending on the SQA Advanced Diploma being delivered. For example, the case study-based Graded Unit project in SQA Advanced Diploma in Administration and Information Technology (HP6K 48) may not be suitable for integrated assessment. This does not mean to say that the learning undertaken as part of the Research Skills Unit will not benefit the case study-based project Units. The different assessment options will be discussed later in this guide.

A sample schedule is provided in Table 1 (next page) which illustrates the delivery of the Research Skills Unit over a 16-week period. This can be adapted and changed to suit the needs of the learners, and the scheduling of other Units where the assessment is integrated.

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

Table 1: Adaptable delivery schedule: Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47)

Semester One — Week	Activity
1	Introduction to the Unit Planning for your project
2	Brainstorming project idea
3	e-Resources , other secondary sources
4	Referencing Ideas — progress update
5	Conventions of research reporting Effective use of language. Register and style – using third person Ethics, confidentiality and safety
6	Aims & objectives Ideas — progress update
7	The research process Research methods — questionnaires 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	Researching and writing a literature review
13	Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data
14	Evaluative skills
15	Practical support for reporting writing & presentation skills
16	Practical support for individuals

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

Assessment and conditions

Approaches to assessment: general

Where integration is adopted, it is vital that the full delivery time for both of the Units is allocated and that appropriate tutors are tasked with delivering these 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 from the Research Skills Unit will not be fully realised.

It is equally 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.

There can, however, be weaknesses in using a single tutor, as two tutors may have different skills and experience which, if used wisely, can enhance the success of the learners. Centres therefore have to give careful thought as to what is the best approach to adopt.

It is also possible for the Research Skills Unit to be assessed on a stand-alone basis, but there would be few reasons to do this if there is a suitable investigation-based project Graded Unit in the SQA Advanced Diploma.

When an integrated assessment approach is used, the format of the learner's evidence must match the Evidence Requirements of both Units. The evidence could be presented as a written or oral report, article, documentary or similar investigation.

Conditions of assessment

The learners should be given a date for completion of the assessments. Learners 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 investigation-based project Graded Unit is generated over time and will usually involve three distinct stages, where 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 issue from the outset of the investigation, regardless of whether integration is being used. Though the tutor should provide assistance to the learners, it is important that too much help is not provided. 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 agreed conditions will be necessary to ensure the authenticity of the work submitted. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the evidence produced is authentic, and that it is the work of the individual submitting it. Failure to do so will lead to actions being imposed when central verification takes place.

Retention of draft work, and of any tracking records or e-mail exchanges between staff and learners, can be a valuable aspect of quality assurance, mark 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 etc 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 that is 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 undertakes 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.

The way each centre allocates verification duties may vary, but the internal verifier and the tutor must be different people. A centre may use one internal verifier for both of the Units, or use two different verifiers to verify the different Units. In either case the verifier(s) must not be the tutor of the Unit(s) they are verifying.

In the appendices of this guide there are assessment checklists for all three possible assessment modes; two different examples of integration, and an exemplar of a stand-alone assessment for the Research Skills Unit. There are no required modifications to the assessment resulting from the integration of the Research Skills Unit. It is essential that learners are made aware of the requirements for both Units, 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.

In the example of the integration of the Research Skills Unit with the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48), the assessment instructions provided to learners will need to have the components of the Research Skills Unit signposted. This may require additional assessment tasks to be completed by learners, and if so, the instructions to this effect would need to be incorporated into the assessment instructions. Modified assessments should be submitted to SQA for prior verification. The integrated checklist signposts where the Research Skills Unit requirements are likely to be evidenced, and also flags up when an additional assessment task is required.

The stand-alone assessment is just one example of how the Research Skills Unit could be assessed on its own without integration with another Unit. The assessment provided could be adapted and tailored so that an investigation is planned and undertaken based on a range of different subjects. The example assessment needs to be submitted for prior verification before use, after passing through the centre's own internal verification system with suitable records maintained.

All Units are subject to external scrutiny by SQA as part of their quality assurance function. The Research Skills Unit will be subject to external (Qualification) verification by a subject expert for the English and Communication verification group. When the Research Skills Unit assessment is integrated with another Unit, then the combined assessment evidence could be scrutinised by two different External Verifiers. When this does happen each verifier will look at the evidence that relates to the Unit in their subject, 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.

Integration of assessment: scheduling

Full integration with a two-credit investigation-based project Graded Unit

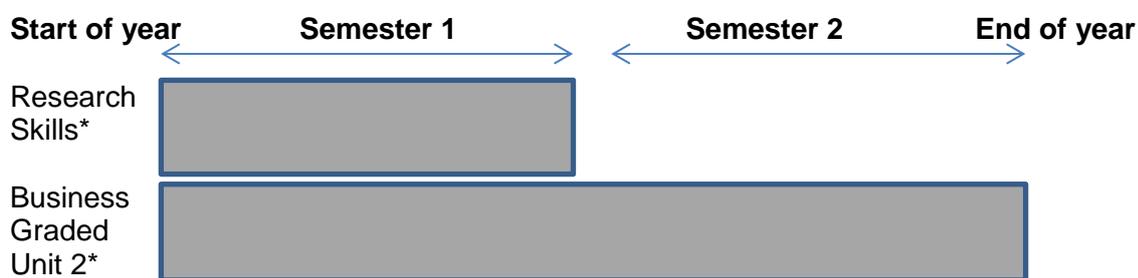
Where the Research Skills Unit assessment is fully integrated with the assessment for another Unit, it should be delivered at the same time as the Graded Unit; for example the two credit investigation-based project Business Graded Units. The term 'fully integrated' means that all of the activities required to produce the evidence for the Research Skills Unit are contained within the assessment for the other Unit, and there is no need for any additional tasks.

Both Units would start at the same time, at the beginning of the academic year. The first two parts of the investigation-based project Graded Unit, 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 undertake the final Evaluation stage of their project.

Option 1 for Graded Unit 2 within SQA Advanced Diploma in Business frameworks

When both Units are run at the same time, there are different approaches as to when is the best time to stop the delivery of the Research Skills Unit. From an administrative point of view, the easiest time to stop the delivery is at the end of the first semester, (see Figure 1). 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



*2 hours per week

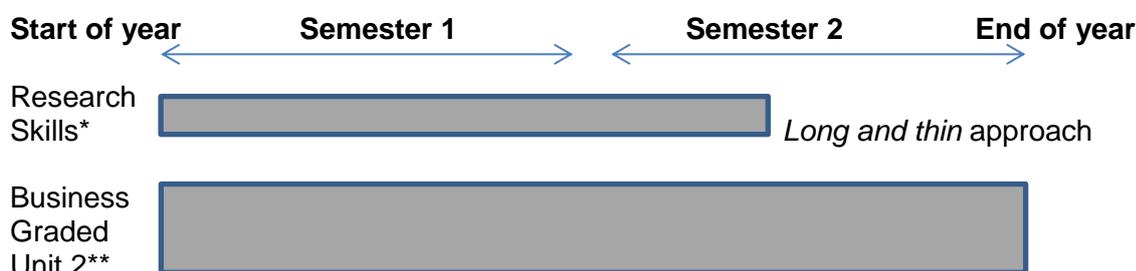
Much therefore depends on the delivery and assessment of the investigation-based project. It might be reasonable to expect submission of the Brief/Plan in late November or early December, followed by the Developing Stage in late March or early April; and finally the Evaluation Stage in early May. These are only suggestions — centres will have their own ideas about submission dates and consideration of verification requirements.

Option 2 for Graded Unit 2 within SQA Advanced Diploma in Business frameworks

With these suggested dates in mind, the most effective way to schedule the Research Skills Unit would be by providing delivery time in the early weeks of the second semester (see Figure 2). This does not fit with the semesters, but it allows for practical help from the tutor when learners are creating questionnaires or other primary research instruments, 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 and the following examples we will assume two hours per week for a subject delivered in one semester. Similarly we could expect a two credit Unit run over two semesters to also 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



*1.5 hours per week

**2 hours per week

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. It is 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. For qualification verification, it should be noted that the investigation-based project Graded Unit and the Research Skills Unit fall into different verification groups. This means that they may be **subject to external quality assurance checks by two different Qualification Verifiers** who would each look at the learner evidence against the requirements of the Unit in their respective subject area. This could result in the same evidence being checked in relation to different Units, **therefore retention of evidence must take this into account.**

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 schedule provided earlier in the guide can be adapted (eg delivery lengthened), to match the needs of the learners as they complete the first two stages of the investigative project.

It is critical that the delivery and content of the Research Skills Unit is co-ordinated with the delivery and management of the investigative project. It is important that the learners are suitably managed. 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.

An example of a checklist that integrates the investigation-based project Graded Unit with the Research Skills Unit is provided later in the guide. Please also refer to the section on Internal and External (Qualification) Verification.

Integration with a single-credit investigation-based project Graded Unit

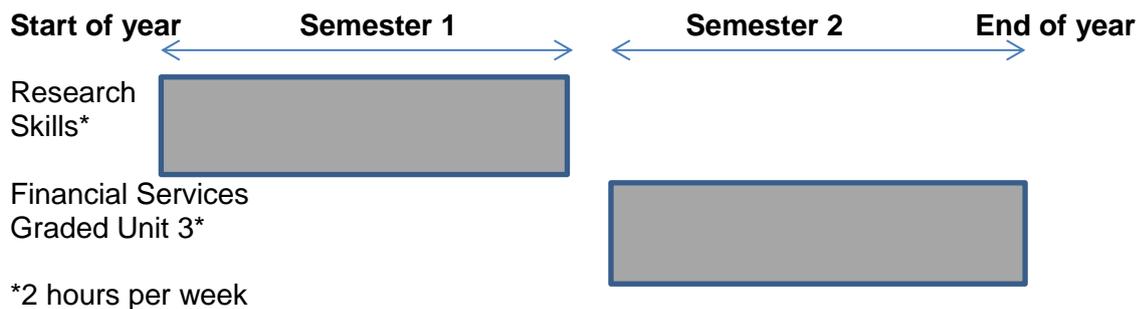
It is possible to integrate the assessment for the Research Skills Unit with a single-credit investigation-based project such as the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48). The integration of the assessment for the two Units may involve the creation of some additional tasks to those that fall naturally within the Graded Unit. Suitable instructions will need to be provided to learners about the assessment requirements for the Research Skills Unit. There are different options on how to schedule the delivery of the Research Skills Unit with a single credit investigation-based project Graded Unit.

Option 1 for Financial Services Graded Unit 3

The Research Skills Unit could, in theory, be delivered in semester 1 and then assessed in the investigation-based project starting in semester 2 (see Figure 3). However, this is not advisable, because if there is no overlapping delivery for the Units, the connection between them can be lost.

The Research Skills Unit tutor provides an additional source of guidance and support for the learners who are completing the investigation-based project, and the effectiveness of this support is significantly reduced if the investigation starts after the Research Skills Unit delivery had ended. A further major issue is that learners often struggle to tackle an investigation-based project Graded Unit when it starts in semester 2. This is too late for many learners and doesn't allow time for corrective action (if required). Also it can cause problems in having the required evidence available for central verification. This approach should be avoided. Also avoid starting both Units in semester 2.

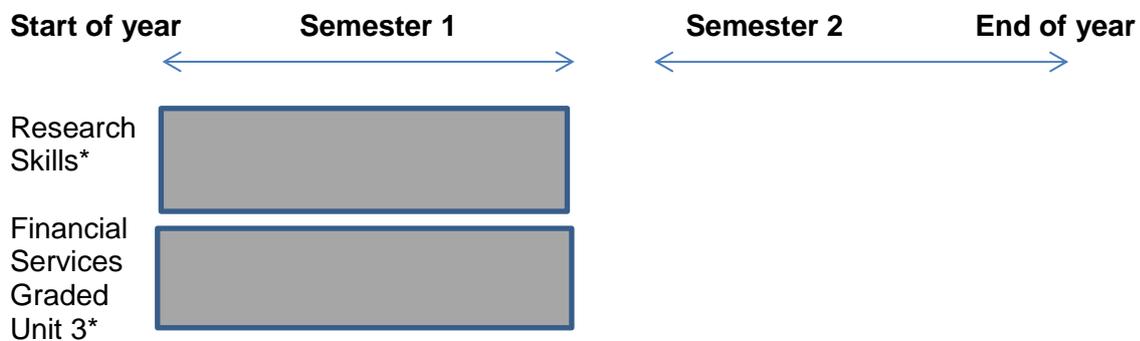
Figure 3



Option 2 for Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (Figure 4)

A better model is to overlap the delivery of the two Units. This is good practice and strongly recommended. One option is to run the Units in parallel, starting at the same time, which would allow for co-ordinating content and activities between the Units. A single credit investigation-based project can be challenging and the additional time and support gained by having the Research Skills Unit delivered at the same time would benefit the learners. This allows them to work on their investigation whilst at the same time utilising the time for the Research Skills Unit to prepare their plan and research instruments etc (see Figure 4). The weakness is that the Graded Unit is scheduled in a relatively short period for such an unfamiliar and challenging assessment. If the assessment of the Financial Services Graded unit could be extended into semester 2, that would help to alleviate the problem.

Figure 4



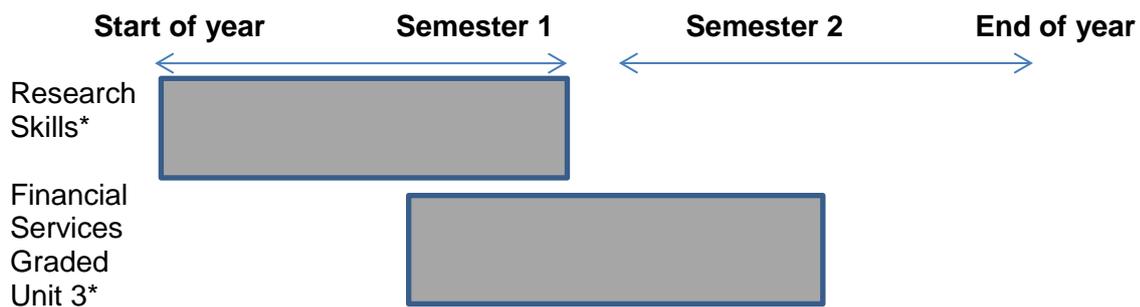
*2 hours per week

Option 3 for Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (Figure 5)

The best model involves starting the Research Skills Unit several weeks before the start of the investigation-based project. This can be difficult from a timetabling perspective, but it has real advantages. It allows learners to be more prepared for the investigation, so they can begin their investigation much sooner. The overlap allows learners to gain the additional support they need before and during the assessment of the investigation, which is critical for their success.

If the Research Skills Unit were to start approximately five weeks before the start of the investigation-based project, it could finish five weeks before the end of the investigation (see Figure 5). This should involve no additional cost to the centre.

Figure 5

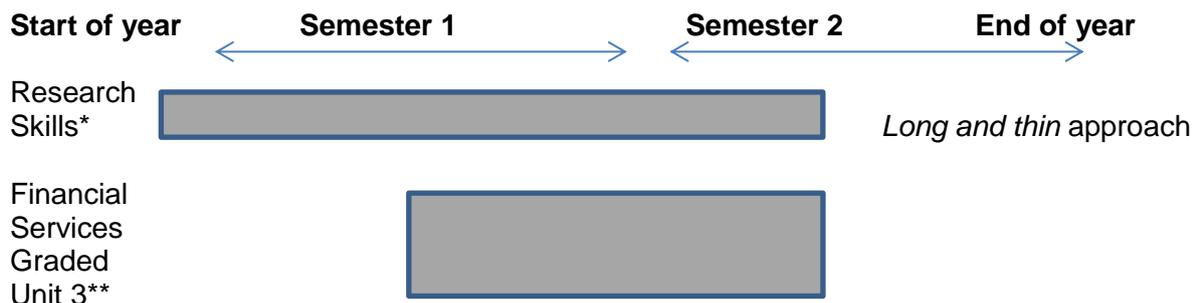


*2 hours per week

Option 4 for Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (Figure 6)

Another possible model also involves the Research Skills Unit starting a few weeks prior to the investigation starting, but running right through to the end of the investigation with a 1.5-hour session per week (*long and thin* approach) rather than the two hours (see Figure 6).

Figure 6



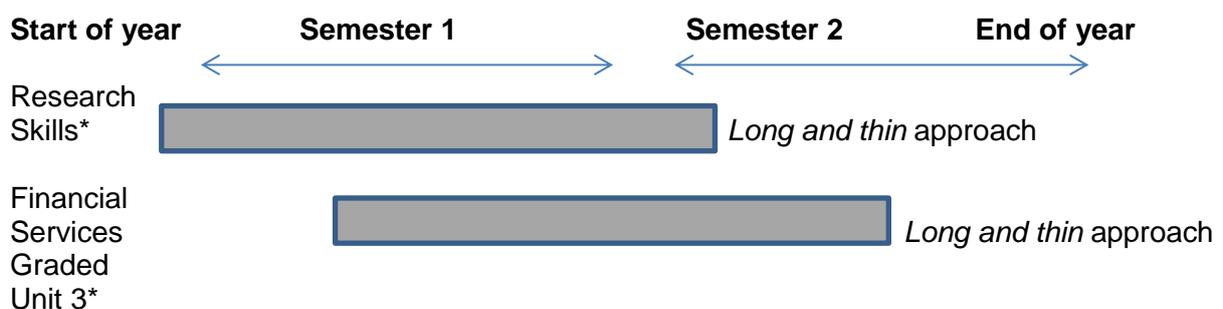
*1.5 hours per week

**2 hours per week

Option 5 for Financial Services Graded Unit 3

A final suggested approach (and possibly the best) is to stagger the start of the Units, and to run them both on a 'long and thin' basis (see Figure 7).

Figure 7



*1.5 hours per week

All of the approaches to delivering the Units identified in Figures 5, 6 and 7 have their advantages, which far outweigh the difficulties that may be encountered in timetabling. All will provide learners with the opportunity to get the extra support and time to maximise success.

Centres must give serious thought to the number of weeks required for a learner to have the best chance of success in producing an acceptable investigation-based project. The *long and thin* approach allows the Graded Unit to be spread over a greater number of weeks than when it is delivered in a single semester. The weekly delivery/supervision time is reduced slightly to compensate for the longer time allowed for completion. The benefits of the *long and thin* approach are that it gives more time for learners to successfully complete a complex and unfamiliar assessment task. This approach has had significant success in many centres and is strongly recommended.

Simply going for the easiest timetabling approach and starting the investigation-based project in semester 2 can lead to problems. If learners encounter difficulties, there is little or no time for them to remedy the situation. Also, a second semester starting point does not allow sufficient time for learners to complete the first two stages of the investigation before submission for central verification. The solution is to start both the investigation-based project and the Research Skills unit at some point in semester one.

By staggering the start of both Units in semester 1, many of these problems will be minimised. When the staggered start is combined with the *long and thin* approach, the optimum mode of scheduling has been created.

The benefits of such an approach will vastly outweigh the minor timetabling inconvenience, by providing learners the underpinning knowledge and skills needed for the investigation-based project before the project starts. It also allows more time for the investigation to be completed if a learner encounters difficulty. The overlap of the two Units allows for additional support for the learners at the time it is really needed, that is, whilst they are working on the project. In addition learners will have more time to generate the required evidence that may be required for central verification. All in all, it is a winning solution and is recommended as good practice.

An example of a checklist that integrates the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) with the Research Skills Unit is provided later in the guide. Please also refer to the section on Internal and External (Qualification) Verification.

In common with the example for full integration with a two-credit investigation-based project Graded Unit, it should be noted that the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) and the Research Skills Unit fall into different verification groups. This means that they may be **subject to external quality assurance checks by two different Qualification Verifiers** who would each look at the learner evidence against the requirements for the Unit in their respective subject area. This could result in the same evidence being checked in relation to different Units, **therefore retention of evidence must take this into account.**

No integration: stand-alone assessment

The Research Skills Unit can be assessed on a stand-alone basis. This approach could be adopted if the SQA Advanced Diploma concerned does not have a suitable investigation-based project Graded Unit with which the assessments could be combined.

For example, the Graded Unit case study project in the SQA Advanced Diploma in Administration and Information Technology may not be compatible, and therefore assessment of Research Skills may have 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 the case study based project Graded Units; merely that they may not be the best fit for generating assessment evidence to meet the Evidence Requirements. Careful consideration therefore needs to be given as to when the Research Skills Unit is run.

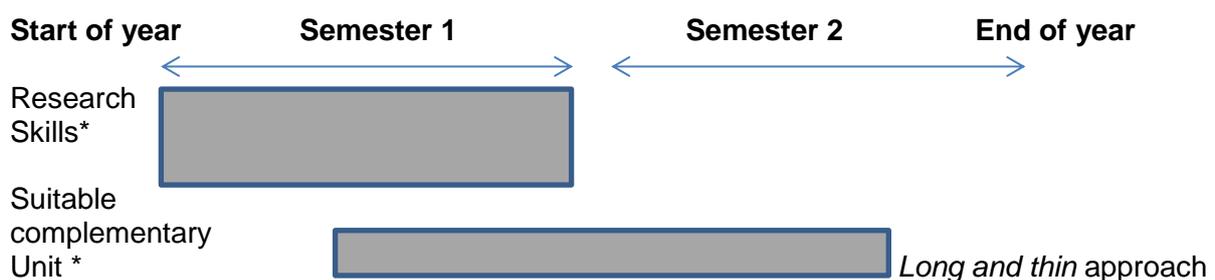
The case study based project Graded Units usually have a single credit value, and it is often best if they start in semester 1 and run with fewer hours per week over semester 1 and into semester 2.

Where separate assessments are used, the delivery of the Research Skills Unit can be co-ordinated with any Units where the learners could apply what they have learned.

Option 1: no integration

The ideal delivery model is the same as for the recommendation for the delivery of the Research Skills Unit, where assessment is integrated with a single credit approach. The preferred option is a staggered start with a *long and thin* delivery for the case study based project, or any other complementary Unit selected. In this case it is not so important if the Research Skills Unit is run only in semester 1 (see Figure 8) or runs on into semester 2 on a *long and thin* basis, (see Figure 9).

Figure 8

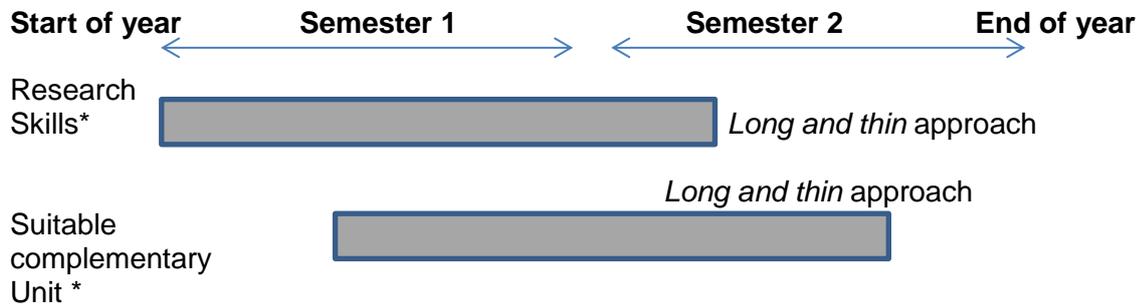


*2 hours per week

**1.5 hours per week

Figure 9

Option 2: no integration



*1.5 hours per week

This use of a stand-alone assessment approach will be largely dictated by the nature of the Graded Unit in each SQA Advanced Diploma, and circumstances may dictate that it is the only option. In the case of SQA Advanced Diplomas where the Graded Unit project is compatible with integration, a stand-alone assessment would not be desirable, as learners would be unnecessarily duplicating assessment effort.

An example of a stand-alone assessment for the Research Skills Unit is provided later in the guide. Please also refer to the following section on internal and external (qualification) verification.

Integrating of assessment: content

Full integration with a two-credit investigation-based project Graded Unit

Graded Unit 2 in the SQA Advanced Diplomas in Business (HP7D 48, HP07 48, HP0E 48, HP0L 48, HP7H 48 and HP11 48) are all two credit Units in the form of an investigation-based project. Assessment checklists integrating all Evidence Requirements for these Units and the Research Skills Unit can be found in Appendix A. The final assessment evidence produced by learners for the investigation-based project Graded Unit also allow learners to evidence the requirements for the Research Skills Unit.

Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) contains three Outcomes:

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

To achieve the Research Skills Unit, each learner must provide sufficient valid evidence at SCQF level 7 to meet the 7 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.

1 Define research objectives appropriate to purpose

- ◆ Clear identification of topic for research.
- ◆ Learners must 'define research objectives appropriate to purpose', by breaking down their topic of research into clear objectives.

2 Plan a research investigation

- ◆ Learners must identify primary and secondary sources to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must identify methods and techniques to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research *Investigation*'.

3 Implement a research plan

- ◆ Learners must show that the *Investigation* has sought to meet objectives set out in *Investigation* plan.

4 Analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources

- ◆ Learners must show that they have collected and 'analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources'. A variety of primary research methods may be used.

5 Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials

- ◆ Learners should include references for all sources used preferably using a standard referencing system.

6 Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data

- ◆ Learners must present conclusions which show that data has been analysed and interpreted accurately.

7 Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium

- ◆ Investigative reports/oral presentations must be presented in an appropriate format. Findings should be a minimum of 1,000 words.

Assessment must be conducted in conditions where arrangements are in place to ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

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

- ◆ identified research topic
- ◆ defined objectives
- ◆ identified primary and secondary sources
- ◆ planned research investigation

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

- ◆ implemented their research plan
- ◆ analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ presented findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data
- ◆ produced a referenced record of research materials and activities
- ◆ produced a report in a format appropriate to chosen medium

Business: Graded Unit 2, Stage 3 — Evaluating; provides further opportunities to collect evidence for the Research Skills Unit. However, learners should have provided this in Stages 1 and 2, ie the Planning and Developing stages of the investigation-based project Graded Unit.

Details of the assessment task are given in the Graded Unit Assessment Support Pack. 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 investigation-based project 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, therefore, refer closely to it when allocating marks for the Investigation. The specification also contains the minimum standards of performance expected of learners. The 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 all 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 in the investigation-based project Graded Unit. 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(s) 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 need to be undertaken.

Integration with an investigation-based project Graded Unit

Financial Services: Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) is a single credit project-based Graded Unit which takes the form of an Investigation. Assessment checklists integrating all Evidence Requirements for this Graded Unit and the Research Skills Unit can be found in Appendix B.

The final assessment evidence produced by learners for Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) must also meet the requirements for the Research Skills Unit. The evidence produced for the Graded Unit is not likely to cover all of the requirements for the Research Skills Unit without specific instructions being added to the Graded Unit instructions. Additional signposting must therefore be built into the assessment task instructions, signposting the additional evidence needed to ensure full coverage of the Research Skills Unit requirements. Additional guidance for the delivery of Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) when integrated with the Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) is provided in Appendix C. It is essential that this information is given to each learner and is fully explained.

Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) contains three Outcomes:

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

To achieve the Research Skills Unit, each learner must provide sufficient valid evidence at SCQF level 7 to meet the 7 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.

1 Define research objectives appropriate to purpose

- ◆ Clear identification of topic for research.
- ◆ Learners must 'define research objectives appropriate to purpose', by breaking down their topic of research into clear objectives.

2 Plan a research investigation

- ◆ Learners must identify primary and secondary sources to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must identify methods and techniques to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research *Investigation*'.

3 Implement a research plan

- ◆ Learners must show that the *Investigation* has sought to meet objectives set out in *Investigation* plan.

4 Analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources

- ◆ Learners must show that they have collected and 'analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources'. A variety of primary research methods may be used.

5 Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials

- ◆ Learners should include references for all sources used preferably using a standard referencing system.

6 Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data

- ◆ Learners must present conclusions which show that data has been analysed and interpreted accurately.

7 Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium

- ◆ Investigative reports/oral presentations must be presented in an appropriate format. Findings should be a minimum of 1,000 words.

Assessment must be conducted in conditions where arrangements are in place to ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

The Financial Services Graded Unit 3 specification contains 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, therefore, refer closely to it when allocating marks for the Investigation. The specification also contains the minimum standards of performance expected of learners. The Assessment Support Pack provides further guidance on the allocation of marks. Details of the assessment task are contained within the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 SQA Advanced Assessment Exemplar/Assessment Support Pack.

The Research Skills Unit specification identifies three Outcomes which must be achieved in order to meet all of the requirements of this specification.

The checklists in Appendix B show where Evidence Requirements may be identified in the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 (HP1A 48) Investigation.

The column on the right side 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 Financial Services: Graded Unit 3. 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 then supplementary work would need to be undertaken.

Where the evidence generated through the Graded Unit may be insufficient to meet a requirement in the Research Skills Unit, this has been signposted. This is identified in the first column of the checklist and signposted as a 'RESEARCH SKILLS TASK'. Suitable guidance must be provided to the learners to highlight the evidence required. These signposts explain the actions(s) required that will allow each learner to produce the necessary evidence.

Where evidence required for the Research Skills Unit is not relevant to the Graded Unit, this has been signposted as a 'RESEARCH SKILLS ADDITIONAL TASK'.

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.

Research Skills Unit HR0Y 47 contains 3 Outcomes:

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

To achieve the Research Skills Unit, each learner must provide sufficient valid evidence at SCQF level 7 to meet the 7 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.

1 Define research objectives appropriate to purpose

- ◆ Clear identification of topic for research.
- ◆ Learners must 'define research objectives appropriate to purpose', by breaking down their topic of research into clear objectives.

2 Plan a research investigation

- ◆ Learners must identify primary and secondary sources to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must identify methods and techniques to be used in their *Investigation*.
- ◆ Learners must produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research *Investigation*'.

3 Implement a research plan

- ◆ Learners must show that the *Investigation* has sought to meet objectives set out in *Investigation* plan.

4 Analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources

- ◆ Learners must show that they have collected and 'analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources'. A variety of primary research methods may be used.

5 Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials

- ◆ Learners should include references for all sources used preferably using a standard referencing system.

6 Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data

- ◆ Learners must present conclusions which show that data has been analysed and interpreted accurately.

7 Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium

- ◆ Investigative reports/oral presentations must be presented in an appropriate format. Findings should be a minimum of 1,000 words.

Assessment must be conducted in conditions where arrangements are in place to ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

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

- ◆ identified research topic
- ◆ defined objectives
- ◆ identified primary and secondary sources
- ◆ planned research investigation

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 which must be met in order that the learner's ability to access and evaluate information from a variety of primary and secondary sources by planning and reporting on a research investigation are developed. Learners must meet all of the requirements of this specification.

The assessment aims to allow learners to produce sufficient evidence that will satisfy all of the Evidence Requirements. A copy of the assessment and an assessment checklist is in Appendix D.

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 (HR0Y 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 HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 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			Clear identification of topic for research.	
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				

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 (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
4. Aims and objectives of the project.	1	2			'Define research objectives appropriate to purpose', by breaking down the topic of research into clear objectives.	
5. Reasons for choice of issue which must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma.	1	3				
6. Justification for the choice of business or businesses involved.	1	2				
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			Identify primary and secondary sources to be used in the <i>Investigation</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 (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
7. Explanation of how the <i>Investigation</i> will be conducted with justification for the choice of methods used.	1	3			Identify 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 SQA Advanced Diploma.

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 (HR0Y 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				
3. Identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the <i>Investigation</i> .	1	1				
					A suitably detailed plan in order to demonstrate planning a research investigation.	
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 basis of 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 (HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 47)	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
		Evidence Requirements	
Developing a brief.			
Acceptable activity log submitted (must be yes to proceed).	Yes/No		
Devising a plan.			
Total mark for the Planning stage.		Learner has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified research topic • defined objectives • identified primary and secondary sources • planned research <i>Investigation</i> 	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
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 as in the Units of the SQA Advanced Diploma. The explanation should be consistent with objectives at the Planning stage.	5	10			Demonstrate that the <i>Investigation</i> has sought to meet objectives set out in <i>Investigation</i> plan.	

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 (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
1. Analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and data collected.	5	10			Collect and 'analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources'. A variety of primary research methods may be used.	
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 section of the SQA Advanced Diploma.	6	12			'Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data' from their primary and secondary sources. Learners must show that they have analysed both quantitative and qualitative data.	

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 (HR0Y 47)	Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
					Evidence Requirements	
2. 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				
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 basis of 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.
- 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.

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 (HR0Y 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				
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				
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 mark required*	Maximum mark available**	Marks awarded	Criteria met for additional mark(s)**	Cross Assessment with Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47)	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
Minimum Evidence Requirements					Evidence Requirements	
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			‘Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium’.	
					‘Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials’.	
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 basis of 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 (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
Developing stage report		Learner has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implemented their research plan • analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources • presented findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data • produced a referenced record of research materials and activities • produced a report in a format appropriate to chosen medium 	
Activity log		See above	
Presentation of developing stage report		See above	
Total mark for the Developing stage			

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: _____ /Research Skills Unit HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 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 (HR0Y 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 basis of 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 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 3

The checklist in Appendix B may be used for integrating assessment of the Unit Research Skills (HR0Y 47) with the following Graded Units:

Financial Services: Graded Unit 3	HP1A 48
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Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: Financial Services: Graded Unit 3 HP1A 48 / Research Skills Unit HR0Y 47 – Learner's assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 1: Planning (Plan 20 marks)

Record of Performance

Planning	Marks available	Marks awarded	RA	Cross Assessment with Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
<p>Minimum Evidence Requirements are shown in bold</p> <p>RESEARCH SKILLS TASK: There must be a clear identification of a topic for research. Create a title page with an appropriate title for the research that you have been tasked with completing. The title page should include the title you have created, the names of the two Units and your own name or identification number. Suitable instruction regarding this task must be given to the learners.</p>				Clear identification of topic for research.	
<p>Two financial services listed on FTSE 100 selected and a realistic justification for the selection given</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A detailed justification of the selection citing more than one additional reason for the selection of the organisation. 	2				
	2				

<p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In depth review of the potential barriers identified, citing at least two barriers and proposing mitigating actions or alternatively, if only one barrier, giving conclusive and realistic explanation why there is only one barrier and why the learner is confident no other barriers apply. 	2				
<p>Project Plan showing the key milestones.</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Project Plan is detailed, realistic and takes account of dependencies and contingencies 	1 1			Produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research <i>Investigation</i> '.	
<p>Total marks available/awarded</p>	20			Learner has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified research topic • identified primary and secondary sources, methods and techniques • planned research <i>Investigation</i> 	

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: Financial Services: Graded Unit 3 HP1A 48 / Research Skills Unit HR0Y 47 – Learner’s assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 2: Developing (Investigation Report 40 marks)

Record of Performance

Developing Minimum Evidence Requirements are shown in bold	Marks available	Marks awarded	RA	Cross Assessment with Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
RESEARCH SKILLS TASK: Incorporate the title page created for the planning Stage. Update the project title if required. Suitable instruction regarding this task must be given to the learners.				Clear identification of topic for research.	
Clear SMART objectives set for information gathering and identification of the issues to review further. <i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i> ▪ The setting of a comprehensive set of SMART objectives for information gathering and all the relevant issues being identified for further review.	1 1			‘define research objectives appropriate to purpose’, by breaking down topic of research into clear objectives.	

<p>RESEARCH SKILLS TASK: Maintain a bibliography of sources, and appropriately cite sources within the project. To be attached at the end of the Developing and Evaluating Stages. Suitable instruction regarding this task must be given to the learners.</p>				Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials	
<p>Further methods for researching and gathering relevant information broken down as follows (1 mark per organisation)</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the background of the organisation 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ share price performance collected at least weekly 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three pieces of data re investment performance 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three relevant sources of Financial Performance information 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three current Savings/Investment products 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer Service Standards and Communication of statutory rights 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ three current relevant examples of media coverage 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ relevant stakeholder perception identified 	1				
<p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive and more extensive coverage of each heading, including additional comments (2 marks in addition for each factor, 1 per organisation) 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the background of the organisation 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Share price performance 	2				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Investment performance 	2				

-Financial Performance	2				
-Savings/Investment products	2				
-Customers Service Standards and Communication	2				
-Media coverage	2				
-Full range of stakeholders of the organisation (including government and regulatory stakeholders) identified	1				
Relevant methods and the sources/outputs of research presented in hard or soft copy. <i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i>	2				
▪ Presentations of a high standard showing evidence of the learner's creativity and innovation in their methods of presentation.	2				
Effectiveness of the Project Plan developed in Stage 1 reviewed with an Updated Plan where required. <i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i>	2			A second opportunity if required for learners to produce a suitably detailed plan in order to show that they have 'Planned a research <i>Investigation</i> '.	
▪ A detailed review of the effectiveness of the original Project Plan, where the learner shows evidence of critical self-reflection and with realistically Updated Plan (if required)	2				
Total marks available/awarded	40			Check that learner has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified research topic • implemented their research plan • produced a referenced record of research materials and activities 	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• produced a report in a format appropriate to chosen medium	
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Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Comments

Overall comments:

Integrated assessment checklist

Unit title and code: Financial Services: Graded Unit 3 HP1A 48 /Research Skills Unit HR0Y 47 – Learner’s assessment record

Learner name _____ Learner ID _____ Class _____ Group _____

Stage 3: Evaluation (Evaluation Report 40 marks)

Record of Performance

Evaluation Minimum Evidence Requirements are shown in bold	Marks available	Marks awarde d	RA	Cross Assessment with Research Skills Unit (HR0Y 47) Evidence Requirements	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
RESEARCH SKILLS TASK: Incorporate the title page created for the planning Stage. Update the project title if required. Suitable instruction regarding this task must be given to the learners.				Clear identification of topic for research.	
<p>RESEARCH SKILLS ADDITIONAL TASK: Maintain a bibliography of sources, and appropriately cite sources within the project. To be attached at the end of the Developing and Evaluating Stages.</p> <p>Relevant issue relating to the sector as a whole Relevant issue relating to the markets as a whole</p> <p>(One of the issues identified reflects the position on a national basis</p> <p>One of the issues should relate to the position on an international basis)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>			<p>Produce a referenced record of research activity and materials</p> <p>Collect and ‘analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources’. A variety of primary research methods may be used. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	

<p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least one additional relevant issue relating to the sector as a whole ▪ At least one additional relevant issue relating to the markets as a whole 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>				
<p>Evaluation of both organisations'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share price performance ▪ Investment performance ▪ Financial performance <p>Comparison between the two organisations and the market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share price performance ▪ Investment performance ▪ Financial performance <p>(One relevant comment for the mark)</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive analysis of the share price, investment and financial performance offering a range of informed comment ▪ Robust comparison offering logical explanations for variances in results between the two organisations 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>				

<p>Evaluation of three savings/investment products of each of the two organisations</p> <p>Comparison of the products of the two organisations</p> <p>(One relevant comment for the mark)</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <p>Additional comparisons between savings/investment products of the two organisations (1 mark per relevant comparison)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>			<p>Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	
<p>Evaluation of the methods used to communicate service standards and statutory rights to customers</p> <p>Comparison of the methods used to communicate service standards and statutory rights to customers</p> <p>(One relevant comment for the mark)</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional relevant points made when comparing the methods used to communicate service standards and statutory rights to customers of the two organisations (1 mark per additional relevant comparison) 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>			<p>Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	

<p>Analysis of the potential impact of the media reporting</p> <p>(1 mark per organisation)</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional relevant analysis of the appropriate media reporting (1 mark per relevant analysis) 	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>			<p>Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	
<p>Analysis of the impact of stakeholder expectations on the activities on one of the organisations (One relevant comment)</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional relevant analysis for the impact of stakeholder expectations on the activities on one of the organisations 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>			<p>Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	
<p>One relevant conclusion about the current performance of each organisation</p> <p>One relevant conclusion about the future performance of each organisation</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional relevant conclusions about the recent and likely future performance of the two organisations (1 mark per relevant conclusion) 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>			<p>Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data. (This may be evidenced in a number of sections of this Stage)</p>	

<p>Report presented in suitable format</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The presentation of the report being of a high standard and error free 	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>			<p>Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium</p>	
<p>Review of the effectiveness of the Project Plan</p> <p>One realistic lesson learned with valid comment about the impact on future learning</p> <p><i>Additional marks can be awarded for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional relevant points made about the effectiveness of the implementation of the Project Plan or the lessons learned and their impact on future studies (1 mark per relevant point) <p>RESEARCH SKILLS TASK: The learner must provide a short reflective evaluation as to whether the SMART objectives set in the Developing Stage have been met or not. Suitable instruction regarding this task must be given to the learners.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>			<p>Learners must show that the <i>Investigation</i> has sought to meet objectives set out in <i>Investigation</i> plan.</p>	

<p>Total marks available/awarded</p>	<p>40</p>		<p>Learner has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified research topic • implemented their research plan • analysed information from a range of primary and secondary sources (evidenced in a number of sections in the Evaluating Stage) • presented findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data (evidenced in a number of sections in the Evaluating Stage) • produced a referenced record of research materials and activities • produced a report in a format appropriate to chosen medium 	
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Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Overall comments:

Appendix C: Guidance for Learners: Financial Services Graded Unit 3

Your centre has chosen to integrate the assessment of the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 and the Research Skills Unit. Most of the evidence requirements of the Research Skills Unit are already covered in the Financial Services Graded Unit. This additional guidance highlights some additional activities you will need to do when completing your Financial Services Graded Unit 3 project to ensure you meet the full requirements of the Research Skills Unit.

1. You must come up with a title for your research. It is recommended that your title should be based on the justification you develop for your research at the Planning Stage.

You should create a title page with an appropriate title for the research that you have been tasked with completing. The title page should include the title you have chosen, the names of the two Units, your own name or identification number and the submission date.

2. In addition to the identification of secondary sources, at least one primary research method must be identified **and used** to gather information during the Graded Unit investigation.

You will need to include your primary research outputs at Stage 2 of the project and your analysis of the primary research at Stage 3. You will need to select a financial services topic that you will conduct the primary research about. This topic should relate to one of the research activities you are already investigating in the project so that you can complete an analysis in your report at Stage 3.

Examples of possible primary research could include surveys, interviews or questionnaires to find out about:

- ◆ Awareness or public perceptions of the organisations you are researching
- ◆ Awareness or public perceptions of issues affecting the financial services sector
- ◆ Awareness of comparative savings/investment products in China
- ◆ Attitudes to customer service standards in financial services organisations in China
- ◆ Awareness or public perceptions of methods of communication used by financial services organisations in China
- ◆ Identification of financial services organisations' stakeholder expectations in China

This list is not exhaustive. You can identify any relevant primary research relating to either the financial services sector in general or the individual organisations you are researching. You will find it easier to integrate your primary and secondary research in your report if you focus on a topic related to the existing Financial Services Graded Unit 3 activities.

You should not expect financial services organisations to participate in your primary research. You should therefore identify some relevant primary research involving other parties who use (or might use) their products and services.

3. When completing the developing and evaluating stage you should also include a title page, updating your project title if required.
4. You need to maintain a properly referenced bibliography of sources, and appropriately cite all sources within the project. You should however remember the project instructions about the need to complete your own charting activities.
5. At the conclusion of the project you must provide a short reflective evaluation as to whether the SMART objectives set in the Developing Stage have been met or not.

Each of the above tasks should be included at an appropriate point of your project and should not be inserted as an Appendix at the end. You will receive **no** marks for them in the Financial Services Graded Unit 3 assessment. You **must** successfully cover **all** these tasks if you are to meet the evidence requirements for the Research Skills Unit.

Appendix D: Guidance for Learners: Research Skills Unit

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

The investigation has three stages:

- ◆ You must plan your research investigation by preparing a research proposal and a working action plan.
- ◆ You must carry out your research investigation by accessing and analysing information from a range of primary and secondary sources.
- ◆ You must present the findings of your research investigation by preparing a report comprising a minimum of 1,000 words (or oral equivalent).

The unit will be assessed holistically by the production of a research proposal/plan and a research investigation report linking the 3 stages. Each stage must be completed separately with stage one being submitted for approval before moving onto stage two. Whilst 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 including:

- ◆ A title for your project
- ◆ A statement of your topic linking this to an organisation or organisations
- ◆ Appropriate aims and objectives of your project
- ◆ 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 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 accessing, collating and analysing information from a range of primary and secondary sources.

Stage 3: Presenting the findings of your research investigation

You must prepare a research investigation report of a minimum of 1,000 words (or oral equivalent) in a language and format that is appropriate for SCQF level 7 and the intended reader. In preparing your research investigation report you should 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
- ◆ Analysis of findings — Present in detail an analysis and interpretation of the information/data gathered from secondary and primary sources. This may include graphical information such as tables, graphs, bar charts, pie charts.
- ◆ Conclusions — Based on an accurate analysis and interpretation of the data.
- ◆ Recommendations — Based on an accurate analysis and interpretation of the data.
- ◆ Bibliography/references
- ◆ Appendices

Unit title and code: Research Skills Unit HR0Y 47 – **Learner’s assessment record**

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

Outcome 1: Plan a research investigation

Outcome 2: Access and analyse complex data from a range of primary and secondary sources

Outcome 3: Present findings of a research investigation

Evidence Requirements	Comments	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory
Define research objectives appropriate for purpose		
Plan a research investigation		
Implement a research plan		
Analyse information from a range of primary and secondary sources		
Produce a referenced record of research activity		

Present findings based on accurate analysis and interpretation of data		
Use a format appropriate to the chosen medium		

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Comments: