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About HNCs and HNDs

HNCs and HNDs are designed to meet the needs of employers. We develop HNCs and HNDs in partnership with colleges, universities and industry.

Achieving an Higher National Certificate (HNC) or a Higher National Diploma (HND) is one of the best ways to achieve your ambition of a career with prospects.

There are HNC and HND courses in a huge range of subjects from Accounting to Video Production so whatever career you want to follow, there is sure to be a course for you.

What is a Higher National Qualification?

HNC and HND courses provide both the practical skills you need to do a job and the theoretical knowledge your employer will expect you to have.

All the courses are made up of Higher National Units.

- HNCs are made up of 96 SCQF credit points and usually take one year to complete
- HNDs are made up of 240 SCQF credit points and usually take two years to complete

HNCs and HNDs provide a pathway to higher education

Higher National qualifications don't just qualify you for work.

Some HNCs allow direct entry into the second year of a degree programme, and some HNDs allow direct entry to third year.

HNCs and HNDs can also give you the knowledge and understanding required for Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs).

Articulation

You may articulate to university degree programmes. Contact college Student Advisors or university External Engagement staff for more information.

Recognition of HNDs by professional bodies

Many professional bodies in the UK recognise the quality and value of an SQA HND qualification.

This has led a high number of bodies to enter into agreements with SQA which recognises this value by way of articulation and professional recognition:

- Exemptions (partial and full) to professional body exams
- Accepted as a membership entry requirement

Information about what agreements are in place can be found on the relevant qualification pages and in the group award specifications.

How to get started with an HNC or HND

The recommended qualification for entry to an HNC or HND course is one of the following:

- a programme of national Units appropriate to the course you want to study
- two passes at Higher or above
- an equivalent qualification

Many colleges and training providers provide flexible ways to study for HNCs and HNDs. This may include day release, part-time, evening or distance learning.