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This FAQ is maintained by [Bobby Elliott](#).

What is Internet safety about?

Internet safety is about the safe and legal use of the Internet. The Internet is used by lots of people, of all ages, for lots of purposes – ranging from chatting to friends to booking a holiday – and the use of the Internet is growing at a rapid pace. But there are risks involved in using the Internet. These risks include: unwanted e-mail, online fraud, identity theft, child grooming and viruses. There are numerous media reports about abuses and [new threats](#) are emerging all of the time. A [large survey](#) [PDF] carried out by Ofcom highlighted these two trends (growing use of the Internet, accompanied by increased threats to personal safety) and emphasised the lack of awareness about potential threats.

So Internet safety means knowing about potential threats when you are online; knowing what you can and cannot (legally) do when you are online; and knowing how to protect yourself from some of the risks that are involved in using the 'Net.

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Why is there a need for a qualification?

There are already lots of [short courses](#) available on Internet safety, so why create a formal qualification?

It was felt that a qualification would formalise the approach to Internet safety and standardise the advice given to students. And since it's a National Qualification, schools and colleges would be funded to deliver it.

We think that it's the first national qualification in Internet safety in the world and we're hoping that it will appeal to international students... and make a contribution to improving the safety of students across the globe.

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What's in the qualification?

The qualification is very straight-forward. It consists of a **single** National Unit at [SCQF level 4](#) (Intermediate 1). The Unit is entitled: "Internet Safety". There are **four outcomes**:

1. Identify threats that can exist when using the Internet.
2. Describe safety precautions which should be taken when using the Internet.
3. Describe legal constraints which apply when using the Internet.
4. Take appropriate safety precautions and operate within relevant legal constraints when using the Internet.

The unit specification is [available on the SQA website](#) [PDF].

The threats covered include [identity theft](#), [cyber-bullying](#), [grooming](#), [phishing](#) and [pharming](#) (Outcome 1). Advice is provided on how best to combat these threats such as how to set-up virus protection and firewalls, and how to recognise [online fraud](#) (Outcome 2). The unit also explains your legal responsibilities when using the Internet and discusses issues such as copyright restrictions and intellectual property rights (Outcome 3). The final outcome puts all of this into practice by ensuring that students can actually take precautions and work safely when they're online.

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How is it assessed?

Very simply. There are two assessments – one covering knowledge and one covering skills. The knowledge assessment consists of 25 multiple choice questions to assess students' knowledge of Internet safety (such as the meaning of words or how to avoid certain threats); the practical assessment involves maintaining a diary (or a blog) to describe student activities and demonstrate how they protected themselves.

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Who is the qualification designed for?

Anyone who uses the Internet. Although much of the media attention is on young people, mature users are just as likely to experience problems. So the unit is designed for school pupils, college students, adults who work with children, people who shop online, and "silver surfers". It's also relevant to a wide range of professional occupations such as teachers, librarians, policemen and health care workers who may want to know more about the potential dangers facing the people in their charge.

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How does my centre become involved?

If your centre is a Scottish school or college then you are already approved to offer the qualification. If not, then you need to seek approval by contacting SQA either by [e-mail](#) or telephone (0845-279-1000). Getting approval is normally very straight-forward.

Once you're approved, you will need to get hold of the support materials to help you deliver the qualification and assess your students. These materials are available from [Tony Hamilton](#).

Once you've been approved and you have the support pack, you're ready to offer the award.

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What support materials are available?

A comprehensive suite of teaching and learning material is available to centres. This material covers all of the outcomes and can be used in a variety of ways – from teacher-led delivery to student-centred learning. The materials are supplied on CD-ROM and can also be [accessed via the Internet](#). There's a [delivery guide](#) to explain how to use the material in a variety of different ways (such as face-to-face or distance learning).

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Can students use the material for self-study?

Yes. The supplied CD-ROM contains everything that students need to work through the Unit. The material is very

flexible and can be used in a variety of ways, ranging from traditional (classroom) delivery to remote (online) delivery... and everything in-between! It's well suited to self-study and some pilot centres simply gave the materials to students to work through at their own pace. The CD also contains the assessments that students can use for practice prior to sitting the formal assessment.

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Can I offer the qualification online?

Yes. The material on the CD-ROM is also available online. The delivery guide provides details about how to access these materials. This means that, subject to appropriate quality assurance safeguards, your students can undertake this qualification wherever there is an Internet connection... at home, in the class, in the library – or even on the bus using a suitable mobile phone!

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Is it suitable for S1/S2 pupils?

Absolutely! The qualification is an ideal introduction to using the Internet. By undertaking the Unit at the beginning of their Secondary education, pupils will ensure that they are aware of the potential dangers facing them when they're online – and also know how to avoid these dangers. A number of pilot centres offered the award to younger pupils and were very happy with the materials.

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How much does it cost?

SQA charges centres £6.75 per student. This includes all support materials, assessments and assistance from SQA staff.

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How do I find out more?

There is a [project blog](#) where you can keep up-to-date with developments. If you choose to offer the qualification there is an [online community to support you](#). If you want to speak with someone, please contact [Angela Lees](#).

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Please e-mail comments and suggestions about this FAQ to sqacomputing-owner@yahogroups.com.