



COMMUNICATION
SCQF Level 5
SQA Unit Code
F427 04

WORKPLACE CORE SKILLS UNIT

What are Core Skills?

Core Skills are skills and abilities that everyone needs in their work. This is true for every job in every workplace.

The Core Skills are:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

Employers look for Core Skills when they are appointing new staff. They also expect their existing staff to have these skills.

Core Skills are important because they help you work effectively in your present job and also prepare you for jobs that you will do in future. Developing your Core Skills helps you deal with today's rapidly changing world and improve your career prospects.

What is this Core Skills Unit about?

This Unit is about using your skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in workplace situations.

Your assessor will explain anything in this Unit that you do not understand.

What should I know or be able to do before I start this Unit?

You should either:

- ◆ have achieved the Core Skills Unit in Communication at SCQF level 4 or an equivalent qualification

or

- ◆ be able to show that you have some experience of communicating in the workplace, for example writing letters, reading instructions, giving a short talk to colleagues

What do I need to do?

You will need to carry out each of the following three tasks.

Task 1: Reading and understanding

Read, understand, and evaluate a document related to your work that presents and analyses factual content or a sustained point of view or central argument, for example a report, trade article, or equipment manual. The document should have some words that you are unfamiliar with and use some specialist terms. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ work out the purpose of the document, for example:
 - ◆ giving instructions
 - ◆ presenting information
 - ◆ explaining a point of view
 - ◆ to stimulate discussion
- ◆ pick out all the important ideas and key points in the document
- ◆ make links between the key information and ideas and the supporting detail
- ◆ evaluate the document's effectiveness in meeting its purpose and readers' needs by commenting on content, style, and format, for example:
 - ◆ is it clear and easy to read
 - ◆ does it contain all the information a reader needs
 - ◆ does it present both sides of a difficult issue
 - ◆ is it well structured
 - ◆ does it contain appropriate vocabulary, including technical/specialised words where necessary
 - ◆ do any graphics enhance the meaning?

Task 2: Writing

Produce a well-structured document or a collection of related documents that convey several items of information, opinions, ideas, or aspects of a subject.

To do this you will have to:

- ◆ decide who will read your document and your reason for producing it
- ◆ choose a format for your piece of writing that is appropriate to your readers and the subject matter, for example minutes of a meeting, a blog article, or a report
- ◆ choose layout, structure, vocabulary, and graphics (if appropriate) that make your piece of writing clear, emphasising your main points and varying sentence structure to suit the purpose and target audience
- ◆ select and include relevant information or ideas
- ◆ present your information/ideas with some supporting detail in a logical and effective order
- ◆ use spelling and punctuation that are consistently accurate and convey your meaning at first reading

Task 3: Speaking and listening

Either make a substantial contribution to a discussion on a topic related to your work or give a presentation on a work-related topic to one or more people. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ judge the degree of formality needed in a discussion or presentation and respond accordingly
- ◆ express your ideas clearly when speaking, for example choosing language that fits the topic and that your listeners will understand
- ◆ present your information or ideas in a logical order, linking related information or ideas
- ◆ vary tone, pace, and volume to emphasise the main points in what you are saying and help keep listeners' interest
- ◆ use your body language to improve your spoken communication, for example smiling, using gestures, making eye contact
- ◆ adapt your speaking to take account of sensitive issues or audiences, for example by giving examples to clarify certain points and avoiding jargon words
- ◆ listen carefully to any questions from listeners and respond accordingly, for example repeating information or re-phrasing what you have said
- ◆ pick out the main points another speaker is making
- ◆ interpret the way other speakers use their voices and body language to help get their message across, for example the tone of voice that they use
- ◆ listen carefully to what other speakers say and ask questions to clarify anything you do not understand

How will I show that I have achieved this Unit?

You will need to evidence to show that you have achieved all three tasks in this Unit.

For Task 1 Reading and understanding: you might have written evidence such as a short report you have written or your assessor may ask you questions, watch what you do, and make notes or a recording of what was said and/or done.

For Task 2 Writing: you may be able to use the document you have produced for Task 1 as evidence. Your document(s) may total 500 words or more.

For Task 3 Speaking and listening: your assessor will observe you and make notes or a recording of the activity, which should last a minimum of four minutes, including time for questions. You should also keep a brief note explaining the situation, for example:

- ◆ who was present
- ◆ what was being discussed
- ◆ what was the purpose of the discussion

This note might include a plan for your presentation/discussion and your evaluation of how well you think you performed.

You must show that you can do the whole of each individual task at one time. You are not allowed to gather evidence from different situations for different parts of the task.

What might be involved?

This Unit may be achieved in many ways. Examples of tasks you might do are:

- ◆ summarise the features and costs of equipment described in a detailed e-mail from a supplier, evaluating how well the e-mail has conveyed the key messages
- ◆ follow detailed on-screen instructions for a new piece of computer software, evaluating how effective they were
- ◆ write minutes of a workplace meeting, including the detail of issues discussed
- ◆ produce a report on the performance of your team with appropriate subdivisions and headings
- ◆ take part in an interview or meeting to decide on the best course of action in response to a work problem
- ◆ give a sales presentation, supported by visual aids, and respond to audience questions

What can I do next?

You could move on to the Communication Core Skills Unit at SCQF level 6.

You could consider doing other Core Skills Units in:

- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

Your assessor can advise you about this.

Guidance for assessors

Further information about delivery, assessment and evidence requirements for this Unit can be found in the corresponding Assessment Support Pack. In addition, the *Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills* provides further information on assessment.

Disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative competence standards for Units.

Additional advice and guidance for learners with disabilities and/or additional support needs should initially be discussed with the centre where the learner is registered.

If the centre is unable to offer a satisfactory solution then the learner, usually in conjunction with the centre, should contact the External Verifier of the Awarding Body where the learner is registered for certification.

Information on Awarding Body requirements to become an 'approved' Awarding Body is published in the SQA Accreditation *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)*.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/AccreditationAwardingBodyCriteria.pdf

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Credit value

6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5



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Tel: 0845 213 5249
Fax: 0845 213 5000
Website: www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills

Optima Building

58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DQ

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